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مقاله کوتاه

مقایسه آزمون تکمیل متن چند گزینه ای و آزمون تک به عنوان ابزار سنجش بسندگی در
زبان خارجی

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چکیده

این مقاله گزارشی است در زمینه مقایسه آزمون تکمیل متن چند گزینه ای و آزمون تک به عنوان ابزارهای سنجش بسندگی انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی. پس از انجام مراحل لازم برای تهیه آزمون تکمیل متن چند گزینه ای و آزمون تک آن دو با هم مقایسه گردید. ملاک تجربی برای روایی سنجی ای آزمونها آزمون تعیین قوه دانشگاه کمبریج بود. هر دو نوع آزمون از نظر روایی و پایایی قابل قبول بودند ولی آزمون تکمیل متن چند گزینه ای از نظر پایایی، روایی، آسانی ماده ها، قدرت تمیز ماده ها، و سهولت تصحیح برتر از آزمون تک بود.

A Comparison of the M-C Cloze Test and the C-Test as Measures of Foreign Language Proficiency

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ABSTRACT

This study reports on a comparison between the M-C cloze test and the C-test as measures of proficiency in English as a foreign language. Certain steps were taken to construct the M-C cloze test and the C-test. Then they were compared as two measures of language proficiency. The criterion for empirical validity was the CUPT (Cambridge University Placement Test). Both the M-C Cloze test and the C-test proved to be reliable and valid measures of language proficiency. However, the M-C cloze test was somewhat better than the C-test in terms of reliability, validity, item facility, item discrimination and ease of scoring.

Key Words: 1. C-test 2. Cloze 3. M-C Cloze 4. Integrative test

1. Introduction

The M-C cloze test and the C-test are among the so-called integrative tests. In contrast with discrete-point tests that take language skills apart and measure one point at a time, "integrative tests attempt to assess a learner's capacity to use many bits all at the same time." (Oller, 1979: 37). (See also Jafarpur, 1375/1997; Oller, 1973; Oller and Conrad 1971; Hughes, 1989; Baker, 1989). The "Cloze procedure, initially introduced by Taylor in 1953," (Farhadi and Keramati, 1996: 191) makes use of a passage in which every nth word except for the first and last sentences is deleted and the testees are asked to fill in the blanks with suitable words. In fact, the deletion of some parts of a passage may make it difficult to understand. Thus, its completion depends on the proficiency of the person who takes the test. It is claimed that the more proficient the testee is, the more complete the passage will be (Farhadi and Keramati, 1996).

The M-C cloze test is also based on the same principles and follows the same procedure for the preparation of the passage as the standard cloze. However, instead of asking the testees to supply words of their own for the blanks, four choices are suggested, and out of them the testees choose the correct response. According to Klein-Braley (1997: 60), "The M-C cloze test was first proposed by Jonz (1976) as a means of improving the procedure by increasing both objectivity and ease of administration."

The C-test is an adaptation of the cloze test (Clearly, 1988; Wéir, 1990). The letter C actually infers the relationship between the C-test and the cloze procedure (Klein-Braley, 1997). The C-test consists of a number of short passages on a variety of topics in

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which the second half of every other word (100 in all) is deleted and the testees are required to restore the passages.

Success with the M-C cloze has been reported by some researchers. (See Balyest and Norman, 1975). Substantial correlation between the M-C cloze test and the open-ended version has also been reported (Pike, 1973). Jonz (1976) also informs us of the reliability of the procedure. Moreover, some scholars such as Porter (1975), Bensoussan and Ramraz (1984), and Mauranen (1988) advocate its use. However, the approach is criticized for its "unfavorable text-item ratio" (Tavakoli, 1998: 30).

Concerning the C-test, Klein-Braley (1985) and Dornyei & Katona (1992), reported acceptable reliability and validity indices. However, Jafarpur (1995) questioned its validity. In a 3-way study, Klein-Braley (1997) compared the reliability and validity of the Cloze, M-C cloze and the C-test as measures of language proficiency in an ESL situation. On the other hand, Jafarpur (1995) conducted a two-way study and compared the reliability and validity of the Cloze with the C-test in both ESL and EFL situations. Nevertheless, a study that would compare the M-C cloze test and the C-test in an EFL situation had not yet been done. Hence, the present study was carried out.

2. Objectives of the Study

This study was carried out to find answers to the following questions:

1. How reliable and valid are the M-C cloze and C-test as separate measures of language proficiency?
2. To what extent do the two types of tests correlate with sub-tests of the CUPT?
3. To what extent do the two tests and the CUPT correlate with one another in ranking the testees?

3. Experiment

3.1 Instrumentation

Three tests were used in this study, an M-C cloze test, a C-test and the CUPT (Cambridge University Placement Test, 1991). For the M-C cloze test, a passage from the SRA series (Parker, 1992) was chosen and its readability was calculated through Flesch Reading Ease (See Table 1). Then five sample passages were randomly chosen from the students' textbook on reading (Hirasawa & Markstein, 1974) and for each passage the readability index was found (Table 1). The text chosen for the M-C cloze proved to be easier than all of the sample passages. Three lead-in sentences from the beginning and two lead-out sentences from the end were left intact. Then every 7th word was deleted.

The cloze test thus made was given to 37 junior students at the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics at Shiraz University. Their responses were then tabulated and the most frequent incorrect answers were isolated to provide distractors for the M-C format

The C-test version comprised 4 different texts to a total of 100 items. All four texts were chosen from the same level in the SRA series (Parker, 1992). Again the difficulty level was controlled and the texts were easier than the reading materials the students were currently using in their reading class (See Table 2). The first few lines from the beginning and few sentences from the end were left intact and then half of every other word was deleted.

The CUPT test (1991) consisted of two parts. Part A was a 25-item multiple-choice test on vocabulary and grammar. Part B, was a 15-item multiple-choice reading comprehension test based on 4 passages.

3.2 Participants

The participants were 30 undergraduate Iranian students at the same proficiency level majoring in English Translation and TEFL at the Islamic Azad University at Shiraz. They were chosen out of 65 sophomores based on their language proficiency level and ranged in age between 19 and 26. The sample was homogeneous with regard to nationality, language background and educational level.

3.3. Procedures

The M-C cloze test and the C-test were administered to the participants in the same testing session. The time allocated for the tests was 25 minutes for the M-C cloze and 30 minutes for the C-test. The CUPT was given on the following day. This test took one class-hour (50 minutes) for the participants to complete.

3.4. Scoring and Data Analysis

Each correct answer was worth one point. Therefore, the M-C cloze test was scored out of 25, the C-test out of 100 and the CUPT out of 40. Then the data were analyzed to find out the characteristics of the tests and the answers to the research questions. In addition to the descriptive statistics, the mean item facility and mean item discrimination indices for both tests were calculated. Reliability coefficients were estimated by KR-21 for the C-test and test-retest method for the M-C cloze test. As an external validity check, the two tests were correlated with the CUPT. The M-C cloze test and the C-test scores were correlated with the sub-test scores on the CUPT, using both Pearson product moment and Spearman rank-order correlation coefficients to indicate the degree of overlap between these measures. Of particular interest was also the correlation between the M-C cloze test and the C-test which was calculated by Pearson product moment and Spearman rank-order correlation coefficients.

3.5. Results and Discussion

The mean item facility and mean item discrimination indices are reported in Table 3. The M-C cloze shows superiority to the C-test in this respect. The C-test proved to be easier and less discriminating than the M-C cloze.

The reliability indices are reported in Tables 4 and 5. Again the M-C cloze had a better index (.95) than the C-test (.69). The validity of the tests can be inferred from the degree of correlation they showed with the criterion test (CUPT). This is shown in Table 6. The R coefficient for the M-C cloze was .94 and for the C-test .79, both significant at $p < .001$.

Accordingly, the first research question could be answered in the following way. Although both procedures proved to be reliable and valid, the results indicated that the M-C Cloze test was more reliable and valid than the C-test. With regard to the superiority of the M-C cloze test over the C-test, the findings of the research were in contradiction with those of Klein-Braley's (1997) which indicated that the C-test was more reliable and valid than the M-C cloze test.

The correlation coefficients between our tests and the sub-tests of the CUPT (Table 6) also revealed something about the tests. The M-C cloze test correlated more with the Reading Comprehension rather than with the Vocabulary & Grammar sub-test (.90 and .79). This in itself indicates that the M-C cloze measures higher-level abilities at the same time as it is able to tap lower-level procedures. Evidently, reading comprehension involves more complex mental processing than the discrete-point items such as vocabulary and grammar. This indicates that the M-C cloze test can be used to test

reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar in an integrative way. However, the correlation coefficients were not as high for the C-test (Reading Comprehension, .72; Vocabulary & Grammar, .71) and the difference between Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary & Grammar was not very significant. Thus the answer to the second research question becomes clear. Both tests showed meaningful correlations with the criterion test, but the M-C Cloze was better in this respect.

The rank-order correlation coefficients are presented in Table 7. Again the superiority of the M-C cloze is evident. It can be said, with regard to the third research question, that both the M-C cloze and the C-test are able to rank the testees in an acceptable way. However, the M-C cloze functions better in this respect.

3.6 Conclusion

In this study an attempt was made to compare the M-C cloze test and the C-test as measures of language proficiency in an EFL situation. The results indicated that the M-C cloze test was superior in terms of item facility and item discrimination. This superiority was also seen in terms of test reliability. So the M-C cloze with only 25 items could function better than the C-test which included 100 items. Moreover, with regard to the ease of scoring, the M-C cloze lent itself to quicker scoring. Finally, the most important fact brought into light in the present study was the possible equivalence of the M-C cloze test and the CUPT in ranking the testees. Actually, the M-C cloze test duplicated to a greater extent the placement accuracy of the longer examination (CUPT).

Table 1 : Statistical Features of the Testees' Book and the Cloze Test

	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3	Text 4	Text 5	Cloze Text
Flesch Reading Ease	35.2	48.5	39	67.1	61.2	99.8

Nowroozzadeh (2000: 26)

Table 2 : Statistical Features of the Testees' Book and the C-Test

Text-Book					C-Test				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	Mean
35.2	48.5	39	67.1	61.2	106.4	106	97.4	94.8	101.4

Nowroozzadeh (2000: 29)

Table 3 : Item Analysis of the M-C cloze test & the C-test

Tests	Mean IF	Mean ID
M-C Cloze	0.53	54.5
C-Test	0.74	47.5

Nowroozzadeh (2000: 37)

Table 4: Reliability of the C-test

Test	No of Items	Mean	SD	KR-21
C-Test	100	79.78	8.26	0.69

Nowroozzadeh (2000: 30)

Table 5 : Reliability of the M-C cloze test

Variable	No of Items	No of Pairs	Mean	SD	R Coefficient
MC1	25	32	12.84	3.36	0.95*
MC2			12.94	3.52	

Nowroozzadeh (2000: 28)

* P<0.001

Table 6: Correlation coefficients between the two tests and the CUPT and its sub-tests

	M-C Cloze	C-Test
CUPT	0.94*	0.79*
Vocabulary & Grammar	0.79*	0.71*
Reading Comprehension	0.90*	0.72*
M-C Cloze	---	0.86*

*P<0.001

Table 7: Spearman correlation between M-C Cloze, C-test and CUPT and its sub-tests

	M-C Cloze	C-Test
CUPT	0.92*	0.84*
Vocabulary and Grammar	0.73*	0.75*
Reading Comprehension	0.88*	0.76*
M-C Cloze	---	0.89*

*P<0.001

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