

Prototyping a Concordance-based Cloze Test: Preliminary Results

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Abstract

Language testing is a dynamic discipline seeking to, for one thing, innovatively measure linguistic competence with accuracy. Intending to satisfy this requirement of an innovative measure and investigate construct validity, this paper presents preliminary results of quantitatively prototyping a concordance-based cloze test (ConCloze). The initial test and item specification is first discussed. Then population and sampling are defined. Test and item responses are analyzed with descriptive statistics. The results are that (a) all of the prototyped ConCloze items have high reliability ($\alpha=0.84$), (b) their alphas-if-items-deleted are consistently high, and (c) the majority of examinees commented that the test was too difficult. With a collective analysis of multiple pieces of data, an inference is that ConCloze could be a measure of an underlying discrete construct, most likely testing knowledge of word associates in context. However, considering the examinees' comments and high dropout rate, it can be inferred that the difficulty level may be inappropriate for the intended population as it may raise response-validity issues. Some implications of ConCloze towards ASEAN English pedagogy and assessment are also summarized.

Keywords: Concordance-based cloze, validation, prototype, internal consistency