

THE USAGE OF MULTIPLE CHOICE AND GAP FILLING IN MEASURING GRADE-SCHOOLERS' UNDERSTANDING OF GRAMMAR

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ABSTRACT

Grammar is one of the important elements in English that must be mastered or at least understood by the learners. In measuring students' understanding of grammar, teachers can use four kinds of tests. They are gap filling, paraphrase, completion, and multiple choice. Multiple choice and gap filling are commonly used in assessing grade-schoolers' understanding of grammar. Both of them are considered easy tests. Thus, there should be no difference in students' scores, whether using multiple choice test or gap filling test. This study is conducted to find a brief comparison of the usage of multiple choice and gap filling in measuring their understanding of grammar. This study also tries to determine which test is more influential in measuring the students' understanding of grammar. This study uses quantitative approach. The data collection is obtained from students' scores in both tests and the questionnaires. Through data analysis it is found that there is a significant difference in students' scores of multiple choice and gap filling test. Students' multiple choice scores are significantly better than their gap filling scores. It is also found that most of students believe that gap filling test is better than multiple choice test to assess their understanding of grammar.

KEYWORDS: *grammar, multiple choice test, gap filling test, paraphrase, completion*

Introduction

Something that we can not deny that English has become a trend among Indonesian society today. English is considered as an important language to be learned by everyone, since recently, English has become one of the capabilities that people should have in obtaining job opportunities. According to Gladdol (1997), English has a very dominant role in all human life, which is one of international languages. English is not only used as a means of global communication, but also as a vehicle of understanding science and technology. The phenomenon leads to the importance of learning English in every level of education, including primary level or elementary school. Therefore, the Indonesia government through the Department of Educational and Culture has issued the regulation of English instruction to be included in the curriculum for the elementary level of education as one of the local content subjects from grade four to grade six (www.depdiknas.go.id). It is found in the decree of the Minister of Education and

Culture number 060/U/1993 and updated in the decree of the Minister of Education and Culture, number 022/U/2006.

Essentially, learning English in primary level aims to introduce to the grade-schoolers the existence of English as a foreign language. However, on its journey, English has begun to be learned seriously in schools. We can see it from the emergence of standard competence of graduate set by the government. Here, students are expected to have communicative competence in oral act of language. To fulfill the objective of the subject, students have to learn four language skills; *speaking, listening, reading, and writing*. One of the materials that will be used in those four language skills is grammar.

Learning grammar for grade-schoolers must be adjusted to the level of the learners itself. Generally the materials given are still easy topics of grammar and tenses. The grammar includes such topics as the structures as well as the expressions which are easy to use, such as parts of speech. Whereas the tenses include (simple) present, past, continuous, and future tense. The purpose of learning grammar is to make students able to construct simple sentences for daily conversations. Furthermore, they are also expected to be able to understand the patterns and uses of tenses.

In assessing students' understanding of grammar, teachers can use several kinds of tests. The tests would be very useful to tell teachers what gaps exist in students' grammatical repertoire (Hughes: 2003). So, both teachers and students could take responsibility for filling the existing gaps themselves. The tests for testing grammar are gap filling, paraphrase, completion, and multiple choice. The most commonly used in primary level among those four types of tests are multiple choice and gap filling. They are considered relatively easy tests.

The background above leads to the investigation of whether or not there is a difference between the usage of multiple choice and gap filling tests in measuring grade-schoolers' understanding of grammar. The questions that arise are "Are there any differences between the usage of multiple choice and gap filling tests in measuring grade-schoolers' understanding of grammar?" and also "Which one is more influential between multiple choice and gap filling in measuring grade-schoolers' understanding of grammar?" The grammar focus in this study is simple present tense.

B. Literature Review

1. Multiple Choice test

According to David et.al. (1991), multiple choice test item consists of two basic parts; a problem (*stem*) and a list of suggested solutions (*alternatives*). The stem could be in several forms, such as question or an incomplete statement. The alternatives are a list of suggested solutions, one of which is an incorrect alternative or distractor. The distractor appears as plausible solutions to the problem for those students who have not achieved

the objective being measured by the test item. Hughes (2003) explains that the advantages of the multiple choice is that teachers do not have to take a long time in conducting, evaluating, and scoring the tests. Adisutrisno (2008) also says that multiple choice is the only test type that can be devised to measure the mastery of learning of many grammatical rules. Multiple choice can be used in conducting achievement test. However, Hughes (2003) adds that multiple choice may be a poor indicator of someone's ability to use grammatical structures. He shows several difficulties in conducting multiple choice to assess grammar as follows.

- Multiple choice is a kind of technique test that only asks students to recognize knowledge.
- Multiple choice gives the students a chance to just guess the answer without a serious consideration.
- The distractors in multiple choice are not always available. It may not possible to find three or even four plausible alternatives to the correct structure.
- It is very difficult for teachers to write successful items of multiple choice.
- Multiple choice probably will have a harmful effect on learning and teaching, since it will not usually be the best way for students to improve their command of a language.
- Students can cheat easily since the answer of multiple choice is just around *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, or *e*.

2. Gap Filling Test

Different from multiple choice test, gap filling test is thought to work well in tests of grammar instead of multiple choice. Riga (2004), and Alderson (1996:224) assume that gap filling is one of cloze test techniques. It also known as rational cloze technique. In this type of test, the teacher will delete several words from the passage but not to distort the meaning or mislead the students. Alderson (1996) also argues that cloze test or gap filling could be successfully used for testing grammar. Gap filling is more material based used to check students' knowledge of a particular topic.

C. Research Methodology

This study investigated the usage of multiple choice and gap filling tests in measuring grade-schoolers' understanding of grammar. Based on the problem statement, the study employed quantitative research. Data analyzed in this study were collected from the students' test results and their responses to the questionnaire. The test results included students' results in multiple choice and gap filling tests. Exactly, 26 students were purposively selected to do both kinds of tests. They were sixth grades students in Cisaranten Kidul 02 Elementary School in Bandung, Indonesia. The students are around 11 – 12 years of age.

The materials used to conduct in this study consist of multiple choice and gap filling test. Both of them discussed simple present tense (see Appendix). In both multiple

choice test and gap filling test, the students were provided with 20 questions; 10 questions based on the passage and the rest consisted of questions related to simple present tense. The texts given in both tests are different in order to achieve the validity of the study.

The procedure used to analyze the data in this study followed five steps. First was testing the students using two kinds of tests; multiple choice and gap filling. Both of tests were conducted in different time. There were 20 questions for each tests. Second, analyzing the difference between the usage of multiple choice and gap filling in measuring students' understanding of grammar using Paired Samples t-Test, with the following formula:

$$t = \frac{\Sigma d}{\sqrt{\frac{n(\Sigma d^2) - (\Sigma d)^2}{n-1}}}$$

Σd stands for the mean difference between two samples. t is a paired sample t-Test with $n-1$ degrees of freedom. Third, conducting the survey using the questionnaire to know students' opinion/attitude towards multiple choice and gap filling tests. The questionnaire is in the dichotomic choice format. The questions were printed in Bahasa Indonesia (see Appendix). Fourth, analyzing the data from the questionnaires using SPSS to conduct reliability analysis (Cronbach Alpha) and to find out the mean difference between the two tests. Fifth, discussing/interpreting the finding and drawing a conclusion based on it.

D. Data Analysis and Discussion

1. Data analysis of test

The collected data were analyzed through SPSS with the result shown below:

**Table 1
Paired Samples Statistics**

	Mean	N	Std Deviation	Std Error Mean
Pair 1 Multiple Choice	63.0769	26	11.32051	2.22013
Gap Filling	46.5385	26	14.95120	2.93217

**Table 2
Paired Samples Correlation**

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 Multiple Choice & Gap Filling	26	.249	.221

**Table 3
Paired Samples Test**

	Paired Differences				T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower				Upper

Pair Multiple Choice- Gap filling	16.53 846	16.35660	3.20779	9.93189	23.14504	5.156	25	. 000
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Based on the Tables above, it was interpreted as follows:

- In Table 1, the mean of multiple choice test was 63.0769 and the mean of the gap filling test was 46.5385. This means that multiple choice test was easier than the gap filling test.
- In Table 2, the standard deviation or the spread of scores of the multiple choice test (11.32051) is smaller than the spread of scores of the gap filling test (14.95120). It means that the scores of the multiple choice test are more homogeneous than those of the gap filling test.
- In Table 3, the correlation (r) between the multiple choice test and the gap filling test was 0.249. This means that the correlation was not significant for the observed r of 0.249 was smaller than the critical value of 0.3809 with df (degree of freedom) of 24, or p -value (0.221) is greater than 0.05.
- In Table 3, the observed- t value was 5.156 and the critical t value was 1.674 and sig(2-tailed) of 0.000 with df (degree of freedom) of 50 ($N_1 + N_2 - 2$) at the significance level of 95 % for two-tailed test. Since the observed- t value (5.156) was bigger than the critical t value (1.67), or sig(2-tailed) of 0.000 was smaller than 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis was accepted. In other words, it was proved that there is a significant difference between multiple choice test and gap filling test in measuring students' understanding of grammar.

2. Data analysis of Questionnaire

In addition, from the questionnaire, the data shows that item 2, item 4, item 5, and item 6 are not valid, since the scores are lower than r table (0.388). It means that most of students think that multiple choice is not a kind of test that only recognize their knowledge. As well as gap filling test, students need to understand the material first before doing the test using multiple choice. Multiple choice test does not make students become much easier in answering the questions. Cheating is not the way to facilitate them in answering multiple choice test.

In the second table, we can see that item 7, item 9, item 10, item 11, and item 12 are also not valid. Most of students say that gap filling test is more stressful than multiple choice. They believe that the absence of alternative answers made them difficult in answering the questions. However, most of them define that gap filling is better than multiple choice in measuring students' grammar achievement.

Table 4
Students' Responses to Questionnaire of Multiple Choice Test

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
item1	7.12	1.146	.212	.181
item2	7.31	1.102	-.014	.304
item3	7.77	.665	.505	-.249 ^a
item4	7.96	1.238	-.098	.329
item5	7.77	.985	.072	.238
item6	7.46	.978	.050	.263

a. The value is negative due to a negative average covariance among items. This violates reliability model assumptions. You may want to check item codings.

Table 5
Students' Responses to Questionnaire of Gap Filling Test

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
item7	7.50	1.380	.000	.396
item8	7.50	.980	.429	.047
item9	7.27	1.165	.163	.277
item10	7.12	1.306	.069	.347
item11	7.69	1.422	.095	.319
item12	6.96	1.318	.175	.274

Conclusion

In order to answer the research question: “Are there any differences between the usage of multiple choice and gap filling in measuring grade-schoolers’ understanding of grammar?”, the data has presented students’ scores in doing both tests and the answer to the question is “yes”. Eventhough most of them argue that gap filling test is as easy as multiple choice test, there is a significant difference in students’ score of multiple choice and gap filling test. Students’ multiple choice scores are significantly better than their gap filling scores.

In addition, taken from the questionnaire result, the next question: “Which one is more influential between multiple choice and gap filling in measuring primary students’ understanding of grammar?”, the answer is “gap filling test”. Most of students believe that gap filling test is better than multiple choice test to assess their understanding of

grammar. No alternatives answers make them more aware in answering the questions correctly. It means that they need to have more understanding of the material if they want to be succeed doing gap filling test.

References

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APPENDICES

1.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST

Read the passage carefully!

My Activities

My name is Diana. Everyday, i get up at 5 o'clock in the morning. After i get up, i take a bath at a quarter past five. When i take a bath, my mother prepares breakfast in the kitchen. I have breakfast at 6 o'clock. After that, i go to school at half past six. I study at school from seven o'clock in the morning until one o'clock in the afternoon. Three times a week, i stay at school in the afternoon because i have ballet class and i join music club. After my extracurricular activities finish, I get home. It takes me about thirty minutes to get home by bus. After i get home, i take a rest until four o'clock. At a quarter past four, i usually play with my friends in the park near my house. In the evening, before i go to bed, i always watch my favourite TV series. After that, i do my homework. My mother usually helps me doing my homework. I never go to bed late. On Sundays, i always visit my grandparents. Sometimes, we go to the restaurant in the town.

Choose the right answer! (For question number 1-10)

1. Everyday, Diana ... at 5 o'clock in the morning.

15. We do not ... at school on Sundays.
a. Go b. Goes c. Going d. gone
16. What do you do after you ... breakfast?
a. Has b. Had c. Have d. having
17. My brothers ... still at home at six o'clock in the morning.
a. Is b. Are c. Am d. has
18. He ... before he goes to bed.
a. Pray b. Prayed c. Prays d. to pray
19. ... Andi and Inda read newspaper?
a. Do b. Does c. Did d. done
20. Keyla : do you learn English?
Naysa : i learn English twice a week.
a. How b. How often c. What d. what time

1.2 GAP FILLING TEST

Complete the passage with the correct form of the verbs!

Andrew _____ (get up) at 7.00 and _____ (go) into the bathroom to take a bath. He _____ (wash) his face and _____ (brush) his teeth. Andrew's parents _____ (drink) coffee in the morning, but Andrew _____ (not drink) coffee. He _____ (like) milk better than coffee. At 7.45, Andrew Amit _____ (walk) to the bus-stop. He _____ (not want) to be late for school. Andrew and his parents _____ (come) home at 3.00 in the afternoon.

Complete the sentences using the simple present of the verbs!

Like Play Sleep Give Teach
Go Buy Do Does Cook

1. Ms. Astri _____ us English every Saturday.
2. The students _____ football in the field.
3. I don't _____ in the afternoon.
4. Does Nindya _____ to Bali by airplane?
5. Do your friends _____ to watch cartoon movies?

11. In doing gap filling test, we have to prepare the materials deeply.

Agree

Disagree

12. Gap filling test is better to use in measuring our grammar ability.

Agree

Disagree

1.4 STUDENTS' SCORES

1.5 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULT