

## *Introduction*

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This is an exercise in research methodology. As such the present topic of investigation needs more rigorous and comprehensive work. The object of this investigation was to explore the possibilities of using the cloze technique for determining the naturalness of fabricated ELT materials. There are two sides to the problem. One is lack of any statement about what makes a text 'unnatural'. The second is how far the cloze technique can reveal this. So we were trying to do two things at the same time. We had no alternative given the state of knowledge regarding what constitutes an authentic text and by comparison what may be lacking in a fabricated text.

The use of the cloze technique is therefore exploratory and the findings tentative.

It was hypothesized that a native speaker's intuition about the structure of an English text might prove useful in judging its naturalness. One way of exploring this hypothesis was to ask some native speakers to comment on a given fabricated ELT text. Such an approach would be open-ended and would not yield definite results. We had therefore to control the native speaker's responses in some way. Perhaps a questionnaire would have helped. But a questionnaire needs some assumptions about what we are looking for. This as we have said we do not have.

In the circumstances it was decided to use the cloze technique. The rationale behind the use of the cloze technique for different purposes somehow seemed to suggest that it may be a useful too for our purpose as well. We selected a story fabricatd to teach the items when and while: afraid that, sure that, and certain that. Since the text is in the form of story, it does not appear to be quite unnatural. So the possible linguistic features involved would be rather subtle.

In chapter I an introduction to discrete-point testing has been given. The bulk of the chapter describes the cloze technique as a tool for integrative testing. The basis on which the technique was evolved is also discussed. At the end, the possible use of the technique for our purpose has been stated. The important properties of natural language like redundancy and creativity are suggested as possible bases for our work.

Chapter II describes the materials and methods used for the investigation. To begin with, the reasons why the particular story was chosen. It is followed by an account of how an exploratory cloze form was prepared. On the basis of the analysis of this initial form, the preparation of a final form and the pilot test. This is followed by the description of the administration of the cloze form to a set of native speaker informants.

Chapter III falls into three parts. The first part describes the data collected through the cloze form from the native speakers. The second part gives an analysis of the native

speakers' responses in respect of content words. The third part gives an analysis of their responses in respect of structure words. The responses are analysed in terms of exact-word replacement, synonyms, collocations and rephrasing. These general categories apply to structure words also but by the different meaning of synonymy. The significance of the native speaker responses which are not exact-word replacements have been discussed at the relevant places.

Chapter IV gives a summary of the findings. In other words it brings together in one place the differences between the original text items and the native speaker responses. Some statements are attempted by way of the possible features that may makes this text deviant from what a native speaker would produce. At the end the limitations of the present work are mentioned. Some suggestions are made for further research.

The various cloze forms evolved during the course of the investigation are given in the appendices. At the end consolidated bibliography of all the relevant works referred to in the body of this thesis is given. The documentation has been made in accordance with the MLA style in current use.