Multiple-Choice, Cloze, and Integrative Production-Based Tests as Predictors of L2 Vocabulary Use: A Case of Iranian Advanced EFL Learners

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Abstract

Vocabulary plays a salient role in foreign and second language learning and as asserted by Macis and Schmitt (2017), vocabulary knowledge is the most important sub-skill underlying all four language skills in L2. More recently, L2 vocabulary knowledge has been defined as the ability to recognize and produce the needed vocabulary, i.e. vocabulary knowledge should have both perceptive and productive adequacy (Nation, 2013). On the other hand, L2 vocabulary is currently measured by different discreet-point vs. creative integrative tests. It seems that type of vocabulary test may somehow predict the use of vocabulary in oral and written production. Accordingly, the present study attempted to examine the relationship between multiple-choice, cloze, and integrative production-based tests at one hand and Iranian EFL learners’ use of L2 vocabulary and scrutinize their predictability strength. A group of 62 advanced EFL learners studying English language translation and language teaching at Imam Khomeini International University in Qazvin were selected for the purposes of the current study based on their performance on Nation and Belgar’s (2007) standardized vocabulary size test. A validated researcher-made multiple-choice vocabulary test including 40 items based on the vocabulary book 1100 Words You Need to Know (5th edition) was given to the learners. Afterwards, a test including four cloze passages based on the same book was given. Then, the participants were asked to write 3 paragraphs using three groups of related words introduced in the above-mentioned book. Finally, 20 words from the book used in the three measures was given to the learners to use them in at least two written example sentences. The grammaticality and socio-pragmatic appropriateness of the sentences produced in the short paragraphs and the vocabulary use test were judged and scored by the help of an native speaker of American English.

Data analysis, using multiple regression, revealed that cloze test and production-based vocabulary performance correlated with L2 vocabulary use. It was also found that cloze test was a stronger predictor of L2 vocabulary use than the production-based vocabulary test. The findings of the current study suggest that EFL teachers can use cloze test and other integrative tests in their classrooms to enhance L2 vocabulary use.

Keywords: Cloze test, Multiple-choice test, Production-based test, L2 vocabulary, Vocabulary use