

A Comparative Study of Students Ability in Reading Comprehension by Using Open-Ended and Cloze Test

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the differences in the cloze test result and open-ended test result as well as students' perceptions of the cloze test and open-ended test in reading comprehension. This research used descriptive quantitative method. The subjects of this study were 25 students in the first semester who took reading comprehension course in the English Study Program, Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. Researchers used tests and interviews as research instruments. The results of this study indicated of cloze test was higher than the result of open ended. From students' perception, they were familiar to both tests however cloze test was easier than open ended test. Researcher suggests students to be more familiar with many types of tests, so that students' reading comprehension can be further improved.

Keywords: *Cloze Test, Open-Ended Test, Reading Comprehension*

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A. Introduction

Reading is one important element in learning a language. Reading is also the basis for getting knowledge. Through reading, a lot of knowledge can be obtained, especially in learning English as a foreign language. Weaver (2009:10) says that reading is a process in determining what has been brought by the brain, emotions, and beliefs of a reader into reading that has been read. This means that reading is a way for a person or reader to interpret what he has read.

The purpose of reading is not just to read an article, discourse or material, but a reader must understand, interpret what is implied or what message is conveyed by an author to the reader through the reading. Thomas in Safitri (2019) considered four general purposes behind reading, namely to be entertained, to understand life, to understand oneself, and to understand others. If someone does not understand or just read without knowing the message or information conveyed by the author in the reading, then the person is not successful in reading. Because Broughton in Nurcholis, Safitri, and Sugiarti (2019) said that reading is a complex skill, that is to say that it involves a whole series of lesser skills. So, someone can be said to be successful in reading if he can understand what he has read. Especially in learning English as a foreign language, one must understand the words in writing or reading in order to understand the meaning of the reading. As stated by Wilson (1982) that

understanding involves the ability to bring meaning and understand sentences that are not recognized by the eye. The point is understanding is the ability to see a meaning in writing that is not conveyed directly by the writer into writing, so the reader must understand word by word, sentence by sentence in the writing in order to understand the meaning of the writing.

To evaluate a student's reading ability, a test is needed to see the student's ability. Palupiningsih (2011:1) has conducted research and explained that in language learning, tests are very important to know and measure the ability of students where students experience difficulties and obstacles in language learning, to explore progress or to see how well these students are in learning a lesson. This means that the test can be a benchmark to see how successful language learning has been given.

Eskey in Hinkel (2005:416) says that many students say that English is a foreign language (EFL). This is reinforced by the evidence that most English students rarely use or speak English in their daily lives so it is necessary to read a lot in order to get information in the language. As students who study foreign languages, much reading is needed and it helps to have a lot of information about language especially since it must have a lot of vocabulary because without having a lot of vocabulary, it will add to the difficulty in learning a foreign language. Therefore, tests are used to see the difficulties, achievements, and progress of students in learning the language.

In testing students' reading comprehension many testing techniques can be used such as word matching, sentence matching, true/false, multiple-choice, cloze procedures, open-ended, and so on.

Harris & McCann in Susyla and Anggraini (2017) said with regard to assessment, it is generally used to measure students' performance, diagnose the problems and measure the progress students make. So in this study, researcher tried to use the Open-Ended Test and Cloze Test to assess or measure students' understanding abilities. Richards & Schmidt (2002) said that the Open-Ended Test allows one to take the test and answer questions in his way that is different from the Multiple-Choice Test with limited answers. Meanwhile, according to Parvij and Soraya (2012:144), the Cloze Test is a section with a standard vacuum that replaces certain words that are erased and filled by students by filling in the correct words.

Lems, Miller, and Soro (2010:181) explain that the testing techniques are considered appropriate to test students' reading comprehension because they are by what is available to students and their metacognition and testing techniques are also practical. Testing through these techniques also do not have to use difficult tools because the test only provides tests through these techniques using the material they have learned so it is very easy to do classroom testing.

The reason researchers chose these two tests for testing is because through the Open-Ended Test can see the ability of students to understand the text, and students can also answer questions in their way. While the Cloze Test, students have the opportunity to choose words that are suitable or appropriate to answer questions. But in the Cloze Test, students do not have to understand the text in depth because they only answer the blanks in the questions. This is the purpose of researchers conducting this research to see student test results to determine the ability of students to work on the test.

Through these two tests, researchers can know which tests are easier to master by English students at Bengkulu Muhammadiyah University. Because based on the experience of researchers, English students at the University of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu still often experience difficulties in tests, especially understanding and analyzing a text, because many English students still have the minimal vocabulary, especially for the early semester. It is not uncommon for students in the early semester of English to fail in the process of reading, starting from those who lack understanding of the contents of the text due to minimal vocabulary or are bored reading long texts which cause them not to read the entire text and cause them not to capture the contents of the text.

In conducting this research, the researcher focused on the following questions: First, what are the differences in the results of testing using the Open-Ended Test and Cloze Test on English students at Bengkulu Muhammadiyah University?. Second, what do the students perception about the use of Open-Ended Test and Cloze Test in their reading comprehension test?. Where the hypothesis in this research is there is a difference of test result between Cloze Test and Open-Ended Test in reading of the first semester English Study Program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu.

B. Methods

1. Research Instruments

This research used a quantitative descriptive approach because researcher wants to describe the results of the research by exploring two different testing techniques that are applied in certain skills, then proven quantitatively.

2. Data Collection

The population is English students in the first semester of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu University. While the sample, researcher took a sample of half students the first semester.

3. Data Analysis

The data in this research analyzed by following the step below: First, researcher joined to google classroom with students. Second, researcher was open the online classroom of reading comprehension by using zoom application. Third, give the test to students that have been made using google form. Fourth, researcher conducted interview with several students. Last, find the result of the research. This particular study illustrates the results of students' reading comprehension tested using two tests using descriptive analysis. The data obtained analyzed using statistical procedures. First, researcher need to know the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of each test. This means that is the average score of all samples. To get this score, all scores of all samples are added. Then the score of the whole sample is divided by the number of samples.

C. Result

This study, which involved 25 students of English Study Program in the first semester of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu University, was carried out for two days, January 29th and 30th 2021. On the first day, the researcher conducted reading test which consisted a cloze test of narrative text and open ended test on the second day. So, the students had to answer the questions based on the text. The results of the tests are mentioned in this table below:

Table.1 The Result of The Tests

No	Name	Cloze Test Score	Open Ended Score
1	RTR	56	53
2	DENB	70	53
3	HF	66	63
4	UH	66	66
5	FFM	63	66
6	MI	50	66
7	MOA	56	63
8	DH	56	53
9	ADA	73	63
10	MG	46	56
11	RR	46	56
12	ANSP	66	70
13	AA	60	60
14	RR	66	73
15	MJS	70	56
16	TK	66	50
17	BES	70	53
18	IP	76	63
19	SUQ	66	56
20	RA	60	66
21	VP	70	53

22	SNI	73	46
23	FDF	70	50
24	DAF	73	56
25	AL	33	0
N=25		1567/25	1410/25
Total Score		63	56

Based on the result above, the highest score for cloze test is 76 and the lowest score is 33. While the highest score for open ended test is 73 and the lowest score is 0. It is clear that students' scores on the cloze test are higher than on the open-ended test.

In score analyzing, the researcher used statistical of mean and standard deviation. The average scores of the students (mean) could be obtained by applying the following formula:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where:

- \bar{x} : Mean
- $\sum fx$: Sum up the score
- N : Number of sample

Meanwhile, the formula for standard deviation (SD) based on Sugiyono (2013:57) is :

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\sum x}{N}\right)^2}$$

Where:

- SD : Standard deviation
- N : Number of sample
- $\sum x^2$: The sum of the values to be squared

Here is the sum up for Cloze test score:

a. Mean

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{x} &= \frac{\sum fx}{N} \\ &= \frac{1567}{25} \\ &= 62.68 \\ &= 63 \end{aligned}$$

b. Standard Deviation

$$\begin{aligned} SD &= \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\sum x}{N}\right)^2} \\ &= \sqrt{\frac{100.797}{25} - \left(\frac{1567}{25}\right)^2} \\ &= \sqrt{4031.88 - 3928.78} \\ &= \end{aligned}$$

$$= \sqrt{103.1}$$

$$= 10.15$$

$$= 10$$

Here is the sum up of mean for Open Ended test score :

a. Mean

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{x} &= \frac{\sum fx}{N} \\ &= \frac{1410}{25} \\ &= 56.4 \\ &= 56 \end{aligned}$$

b. Standard Deviation

$$\begin{aligned} SD &= \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\sum x}{N}\right)^2} \\ &= \sqrt{\frac{83970}{25} - \left(\frac{1410}{25}\right)^2} \\ &= \sqrt{3358.8 - 3180.96} \\ &= \sqrt{177.86} \\ &= 13.34 \\ &= 13 \end{aligned}$$

After summed up, the scores can be seen on the table below.

Table.2 Descriptive statistics for students' performance on the cloze test and open ended test

Name of Tests	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cloze	25	33	76	63	10
Open Ended	25	0	73	56	13

The table.2 presents the ability of students reading comprehension. The mean score of subjects in cloze test (63) is higher than the mean score in the open ended test (56).

The results of highest score for cloze test is 76, while open ended test is 73. So, the score of cloze test leads 3 points higher than open ended test. While minimum score of cloze test leads 33 points higher than open ended test.

From the test analysis, the researcher can conclude that the results of the reading comprehension ability of the first semester students of the English Study Program at Muhammadiyah Bengkulu University are more dominant on the cloze test than the open-ended test.

As explained in the previous chapter, interview was one of the techniques used to get information that support this research. In this interview, the researcher tried to figure out the students' perceptions about cloze and open ended test on their reading comprehension ability. There were 8 students interviewed and were selected randomly based on their scores in result of the test. Therefore, the interviewees were 4 representatives of higher score and lower score. The following is the list of students chosen.

Table.3 Representatives of Interviewee

Group	Cloze Test	Open Ended Test
Higher	IP and ADA	RR and ANSP
Lower	R and MG	DH and RA

There were 6 questions asked, including students' familiarity with the tests, their preference between both tests, their understanding about types of questions of both tests, their perception of the appropriateness of the test to measure their reading comprehension ability, and the challenges faced when they answered cloze and open ended test. The following is the analysis:

The first question is related to types of assessment which the students are more familiar with whether cloze or open ended tests.

According to the data taken from the interview, there were 4 of 8 students answered that they were more familiar with open ended test, while 4 of 8 students answered that they were more familiar with cloze. Students who chose open ended or cloze provided the same reasons that are both types of assessment were frequently given by their teacher in their books or exercise.

The second question is related to their preference between cloze or open ended test, and their reason for the choice.

While the first question focused more on students' familiarity with both of the tests, the second one highlighted their preference of those tests. Seven of eight students answered that they preferred cloze test, and their reason were similar because it was easy to answer. While some students said that open ended questions were easy, other students stated that if they knew the contents and words meaning in the text, they would be able to understand the story better. The conclusion for this question are: more students preferred to do cloze test, there were seven person who chose cloze test, although not everyone who preferred one of the tests obtained higher score in their favorite test.

Third, the question focused on the type of the tests' question, which one is easier to understand and answer according their ability in apprehending the text, cloze or open ended test.

This question was connected with the previous question as what tests they preferred to do. Obviously, their reasons with this question should be related because they stated before that the tests were easy to answer. But here, the focused of the question was about their understanding toward the text, not on how they answered the questions.

As what the researcher got from the interview. The most difficult factor while reading was about understanding the content of the text. For this question the results are 3:5, means 3 students chose open ended test while 5 chose cloze test. Students' reasons choosing cloze test because the question's answer has already. From their responses can be analyzed that the type of cloze test questions is different from the open-ended test. In the cloze test, the answers are provided in the form of random choices, and students only complete the text with the correct words that have been provided. This can help students understand the content of the text by matching the right words. Whereas in the open-ended test, they were not given a choice of words and had to answer according to their knowledge in understanding the text.

Fourth question, was related to the appropriateness of the tests to measure students' reading comprehension ability.

Students must provide their own perceptions about which test is more appropriate to measure their reading comprehension. The analysis takes into account their understanding of the story, their opinions and choosing the right words. Almost all students, namely 6 from 8 students, concluded that the cloze test was more appropriate to use in the reading test. The reason was different such as cloze test is more appropriate to measure students comprehension ability because they could understand the text, so they can choose the right words to fill in blank words so that the text can be understood correctly. Other reason is that the open ended test was more appropriate to measure the students' reading comprehension ability because not only can see reading ability but also can see remembering ability in interpreting something. In conclusion, 6:2 students considered cloze test to be more appropriate for measuring their reading comprehension ability than open ended test. Because students must understand the contents of the text first before answering or determining the right words to fill in the blank words.

Fifth, challenges the students faced in answering cloze test.

Three students said they did not find any challenges in answering the cloze test questions. their perception is relevant to the score. Meanwhile, 5 other people answered that they experienced several challenges including the choice of answers that looked similar, had to consider the right answer, confusion in choosing.

Last question, challenges the students faced when they do open ended test.

For this question, two students did not find challenges when they took the open-ended test. Meanwhile, six students found challenges when doing open-ended tests as mentioned by several students who were interviewed. One important factor to learn a different language from our mother tongue is by knowing the meaning of each word of the language. Such as what we do to study English as foreign language. The fastest way is by mastered each vocabulary of English. And this become the general problem faced by learners. When they do not know meaning of an English word, it can be problem to construct the correct meaning for a sentence. There are other problems faced by students in taking the open ended test. Especially for open-ended story types, such as tests they have done previously given by the researcher. The problem is because of difficulty understanding the content of the story, lack of vocabulary and must think critically to answer.

D. Discussion

The most dominant points of the result are highlighted and discussed below. This discussion section is also provided to answer the research questions of this study, which is about the comparison of students' ability in reading comprehension by using cloze and open ended test.

The first research question was "what are the differences in the results of testing using the Open-Ended Test and Cloze Test on English students at Bengkulu Muhammadiyah University?" After the researcher conducted the test, the results of students' scores were different when tested using cloze test and open ended test.

Students' scores on the cloze test were higher than their scores in the open-ended test. As explained, a standard cloze test is a passage with blanks of standard length replacing certain deleted words which students are required to complete by filling in the correct words or their equivalents. And this test became a measurement of reading comprehension. Oller (1979) believed that this type of deleting provide an actual sampling of real-life language. Cranney (1972) argued cloze test in both respects, item construction and avoiding misrepresentation of author's meaning, seem to offer an improved method of measuring reading comprehension. For this first research question, the researcher concluded that the difference between the cloze test and the open-ended test occurred because students' understanding and ability to understand the meaning was better in the cloze test than in the open-ended test. Because they can choose the right answer by following the story line in the text. For the further discussion, the interview has been conducted to as answer the second research question.

The second research question is "what do the students perception about the use of Open Ended Test and Cloze Test in their reading comprehension test". The result are that the students are familiar with both of tests but more preferred to do cloze test than open ended test. And the majority of students found that cloze test is also easier to understand, either the story of the text or the question. This means their comprehension on the story text are better using cloze test. These perceptions strengthen the differences of the students' scorer on the first research question finding.

However, more students still faced difficulties in answering cloze questions because lack of vocabulary and don't know the content or the plot of the story text. Then there is a similarity in the vocabulary so that it becomes difficult for students in the process of answering the cloze test. McBeath (1990: 45) says that the difficulty level of the cloze test demands carefulness in choosing reading materials.

However, students perceive the cloze test as a test that can better measure students' reading comprehension ability because students must be able to understand the text and choose the right answer to complete the text, as said by Jacobs (1988: 46) cloze can be fun, like doing a puzzle but a puzzle is not that much fun if you can't put most of the pieces together. So that students experience challenges in doing the cloze test rather than the open-ended test.

In conclusion, based on students' scores and their perceptions of the open ended test and the cloze test. Researchers can conclude that the cloze test is more suitable for measuring the reading

comprehension ability of the first semester students of English Language Students at Muhammadiyah Bengkulu University.

Based on the hypothesis, this study aim to reveal whether there is difference in result between Cloze test and Open-Ended test to test students' reading comprehension. The results of the t-test in this study are as follows:

$$t = \frac{\bar{d}}{Sd/\sqrt{n}}$$

$$t = \frac{127/25}{13.2159/\sqrt{25}}$$

$$t = \frac{5.08}{2.64} = 1.924$$

With $df=24$ and $\alpha=0.05$, based on t-test obtained value of $t\text{-critis} = 2.060$. Because $|t\text{-obs}| < |t\text{-critis}| = |1.924| < |2.060|$, so the hypothesis accepted. From the result of the t-test, the conclusion is that the 5% real level is proven that there is difference of test result between Cloze Test and Open-Ended Test in reading of the first semester English Study Program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu.

E. Conclusion

Based on students' score of open ended and cloze test, and their perception's on both tests, some conclusions can be drawn as follows: Students' scores in cloze test are higher than that of open ended test. Related to types of assessment and students' preference between both test, students familiar with both test by comparison 4:4. Students find it easier to understand cloze test rather than open ended test. More students found difficulties when they took cloze test because they lack vocabulary and therefore they cannot understand the contents or the plot of the story text. Students perceive cloze test can better to measure students' reading comprehension ability.

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