CHAPTER 5

MAKING MEANING:
A CLOZE-KNIT FAMILY

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

We recommend the research articles we referred to in this chapter. Lyle Bachman’s (1985) paper about fixed ratio versus the rational deletion approach to creating cloze passages raised important questions about what cloze passages measure. Hughes (2002) offered examples of both C-tests and cloze passages. And JD Brown’s (1980) early paper comparing four different methods for scoring cloze passages is a very readable analysis with clear practical implications for deciding on scoring criteria. Brown (2002) has also written an updated discussion of cloze testing entitled “Do cloze tests work? Or, is it just an illusion?”

One question that is sometimes raised is how C-tests would work with languages that are not written from left to right, or with students whose first language uses a written ordering other than left to right. Christopher Cleary (1988) conducted an interesting study with native speakers of Arabic, in which he used left-hand deletions instead of right-hand deletions. Lee-Ellis (2009) has written about the use of C-tests in Korean language assessment.

Roberta Abraham and Carole Chapelle (1992) investigated the relationship between the type of words deleted in cloze tests and the difficulty of each item. (The notion of item difficulty will make more sense after you read Chapter 9.)

Susie Llewelyn (1990) researched the language used by her adult ESL students in Australia as they tried to complete cloze passages in a groupwork format. Her article includes the cloze passages she used, as well as a very clear analysis of her students’ negotiations as they tried to fill in the blanks.

Cloze passages have been used to assess the reading ability of both first language and second language readers. See, for example, the paper by Williams, Ari, and Santamaria (2011) about college students’ reading comprehension. Gellert and Elbro (2013) wrote a paper called, “Cloze Tests May be Quick, But Are They Dirty? Development and Preliminary Validation of a Cloze Test of Reading Comprehension.” They used cloze passages with adult learners in Denmark.

The issue of the length of cloze passages was addressed by Shahnazari-Dorcheh, Roshan, and Hesabi (2012). They administered cloze passages to beginning, intermediate and advanced EFL
students whose first language was Persian. The results of the study suggested that a longer cloze passage was reliable at the advanced level, while a shorter cloze test was found to be reliable at the beginning and intermediate levels.


HELPFUL WEBSITES

For free, downloadable reference lists about cloze tests and other means of assessing L2 reading, please visit http://www.tirfonline.org/resources/references/ and scroll down the alphabetized list of topics.

Here is a website that provides a simple tool for making a cloze test. Copy and paste your text into the field on the screen and then you can choose the frequency of deletion or whether to delete specific types of words: http://l.georges.online.fr/tools/cloze.html.

This website http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/De/PD/instr/strats/cloze/index.html provides a basic introduction to designing cloze passages.