

Abstract

The purposes of this study were to find out which test techniques could accurately measure students' grammatical knowledge and performance, and also whether the multiple-choice technique, a popular test technique, was valid to test grammar. Knowledge, in this study, referred to the knowledge of grammatical rules whereas performance was related to the students' ability to apply their knowledge of the rules in comprehending and producing the English language.

The subjects were 40 students from the third year of Assumption University where English was the medium of instruction. The instruments used in this study were a multiple-choice test, a gap-filling test, a writing test, and an oral test constructed by the researcher. The content validity of the tests was approved by 4 experts. The arithmetic formulas, mean, and Pearson Correlation were used for data analysis.

According to the experiment, there were two stages of testing the subjects' grammar. The first stage required the 40 subjects to take the multiple-choice test, the gap-filling test, and the writing test. The experiment explored which of these tests was the most valid test technique to measure the students' grammatical performance. Thus, the scores of these tests were compared with the subjects' actual use of grammar. The oral test in the second stage was likely to be the representative of the actual use of grammar. In fact, both the writing test and the oral test required the subjects to produce the language authentically. However, the latter technique was chosen because of two reasons. First, there was the presence of the speaker and the listener. Although writing was also Two-Way Communication, the reader could not respond to the writer immediately unlike in the oral test. Second, the subjects did not have time to monitor their language when speaking unlike when they wrote the language. Therefore, the oral test was the closest to the actual use of the language.

Due to the time limitation, all the subjects could not take the oral test; only 10 from the 40 subjects were randomly selected to do the oral test.

The major results of the study were as the following:

1. The multiple-choice test was not valid enough to be the only device to elicit the students' use of grammar.
2. The writing test was valid to test the students' grammatical performance; however, it was difficult to control the grammatical elements needed to be measured.
3. The gap-filling test was not as valid as the writing test; however, it was easier to control the students to reveal the ability to use the grammatical elements which the tester needed to measure.

Therefore, it is suggested that both a writing test and a gap-filling test should be used to measure students' grammatical knowledge and performance. If a tester is obligated to use the multiple-choice technique to test grammar, other techniques such as a writing test and a gap-filling test should be provided in achievement of content validity.