
Title	Book review [Review of the book <i>Cloze procedure and the teaching of reading and reading development and cohesion</i> , by Asmah Haji Omar and Noor Ein Mohammed Noor (eds.)]
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Cloze Procedure and the Teaching of Reading

James Rye

London: Heinemann Education Books, 1982

120 pp, (paperback)

Reading Development and Cohesion

John Chapman

London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983

147 pp, (paperback)

Reviewed by C. Sullivan

The terms *cloze procedure* and *cohesion* are associated with reading development. Specifically, cloze applies to the testing and teaching of reading while cohesion applies to a description of how the way in which reading material is written can affect reading development. Two books have been published recently dealing with both of these topics in detail.

The first, *Cloze Procedure and the Teaching of Reading*, provides a comprehensive analysis of cloze including its original conception by Taylor in the 1950's as well as its present day possibilities for use in reading, testing and teaching. Rye, an English teacher in England, set out to provide other English teachers with a readable, useful guidebook. The few technical terms included are defined in a glossary.

Rye builds a plausible case for using cloze by presenting the benefits and pitfalls of cloze as well as some alternatives such as readability formulae for measuring text difficulty and standardized tests for measuring pupils' ability. To demonstrate the severe limitations of the former alternative he states that the Spache Readability Formula was developed in 1953 using a word list dating back to 1931. Unfortunately, he presents an unfair picture by neglecting to acknowledge that the original formula and word list were revised as recently as 1978.* This point aside, Rye presents sufficient evidence that cloze procedure is a simple, effective readability measure which takes more factors of readability into account than do the formulae described. While the formulae measure text difficulty, cloze procedure measures the actual interaction between the reader and the text with the bonus of providing information about the reader's ability.

Rye also presents convincing evidence — without

overwhelming the reader with unending research statistics — that cloze results correlate sufficiently with standardized comprehension tests (from .73 to .84) to be considered a reasonably valid and reliable teacher made instrument for measuring comprehension ability. He stresses the importance of assessing both readability and reading ability in order to provide pupils with reading materials which are challenging enough to encourage the development of reading skills without being frustrating enough to block motivation — a delicate balance.

In his descriptions of how to use cloze effectively for testing purposes Rye includes sample class results to show how teachers can interpret and utilize their pupils' scores. He describes in detail how error analysis can be used to diagnose reading problems by means of a simple error classification system. Various teaching strategies are suggested for remedial instruction.

Rye does not ignore the possible difficulties arising in using cloze and he stresses that cloze results should not be used to make critical decisions about individuals. He lists the following as beneficial uses of results: dividing classes into smaller, more homogeneous groups; identifying the poorer readers and their problems; comparing overall reading ability of one class to that of another class by giving them the same cloze test; providing an approximate rank order of a class; comparing one textbook to another by giving the same pupils a cloze test from both books and statistically comparing the results (the formula and an explanation are included in an appendix).

In addition to testing, the benefits of using cloze

*Spache, George V. *Good Reading for Poor Readers* (revised 10th edition). Champaign, Ill: Garrard, 1978.

for developing reading ability are described. The author includes transcriptions of actual group discussions of particular cloze passages, illustrating how pupils process their ideas, developing higher level comprehension skills by reasoning out their choice of responses. In this nontesting situation, Rye stresses the importance of selecting passages of interest to the pupils, passages which they would want to discuss. Other factors of passage selection and preparation are reviewed also, such as position of word deletion, frequency of deletion, length of available context, all of which are factors of difficulty.

Finally, the usefulness of cloze procedure as both a teaching and testing tool in other curriculum areas is discussed. Such passages can be manipulated to indicate knowledge of a particular subject area or as a stimulus for discussion, in both cases encouraging reading for meaning. Rye includes examples from biology, French, geography, and literature and he suggests its usefulness in almost any subject area.

Cloze Procedure and the Teaching of Reading is a useful book for reading and content area teachers at all levels. It provides both descriptive and practical information about cloze in a readable, organized manner, written from a practising teacher's point of view.

Reading Development and Cohesion is less a how-to book than *Cloze Procedure and the Teaching of Reading* and more a description of the complexity of reading development and the part cohesion plays in this complexity. The book is divided into three main sections.

The first section covers the change of emphasis from reading as a *code cracking* process to reading as *communication*, or the reader's reconstruction process of the author's message. It also deals with the close relationship between the reading process and the reader's prior knowledge of both the systems of English and the world.

Chapman describes three areas of language: "syntax, the relationship between words in sentences; semantics, the relationship between words and their references; and pragmatics, the relationship between words and the way they are used." He stresses that the majority of successful schoolwork depends on the pupils' awareness of these three areas and that too frequently pupils are not taught explicitly about them. Also neglected are other factors relating to language ability such as

varieties of language in speech and print, the register of instruction, the themes of stories, and different types of text and cohesive system. Such neglect deprives pupils of useful language clues which aid in reading fluency.

In the second section, Chapman describes the specific characteristics and functions of cohesive ties following the proposals of Halliday and Hasan in their work *Cohesion in English* (1976). Five cohesive systems are presented in detail: the reference system, including personal, demonstrative and comparative references which Chapman considers to be the most important aids to fluent reading; the substitution system including, *one, ones, some, the same, do, so* and *not*, among the most frequently occurring words in English but which link words and clauses in complex ways; ellipsis, by which redundant words and phrases are omitted from the text; conjunctions connecting pairs and groups of ideas through addition, contrast, time sequence or cause and effect and flexional cohesion or the author's choice of vocabulary to build up relationships of words through synonymy (sameness), antonymy (opposition), or hyponymy (classification).

To clarify these five systems, Chapman has included examples and diagrams from Halliday and Hasan. He also has suggested some activities which teachers could use to make pupils aware of these aspects of text cohesion. He devotes an entire chapter to the use of cloze procedure for this purpose and agrees with Rye that cloze is a valuable tool for the development of inferential and predictive skills as long as pupils are encouraged to think out and discuss the reasons for their responses.

In the third section, Chapman summarizes the ideas already put forward, that reading is basically a process of communication and that comprehending is a constructing process involving awareness of the cohesive systems and varieties of language. He suggests that his book is only a preface to these concepts and serves as a jumping off point for further study.

Unlike Rye who writes for the average classroom teacher, Chapman assumes a "minimum level of linguistic knowledge" of his readers. Without this prerequisite knowledge the average classroom teacher will find his book of limited practical value. However, for those who are interested in pursuing the topic, *Reading Development and Cohesion* provides a comprehensive introduction. ■