



A MOCK TEST AS A PREDICTIVE AND REFLECTIVE TOOL IN LEARNING ESL

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Abstract

English teachers use a mock test as an evaluation tool to predict an English test, such as Cambridge check points. Some international schools use Cambridge check-points as their tool to evaluate the student competence in learning English as Second Language (ESL). And the English teachers may or may not feel satisfied with the results of their students' mock test using the past test paper, therefore, they discuss / review the student errors as a strategy to enhance the results of the real check-points later. This paper aims at testing the effectiveness of the mock test as a predictive evaluation tool and identifying the students' competence, motivation, and opportunities as efforts to enhance their English development through their interaction and activities in classroom setting and in daily life one. In short, there are two kinds of the learning results to study English here, namely, learning output and learning outcome. The mock test to predict Cambridge check-points in the forms of scores is the output of the students learning English while the student competence in using English in their interaction and activities is reflected as the outcome of the students learning. So, a mock test can be used not only as the prediction of the scores of their check-points (output) but also as reflection of the student competence (outcome) in using English in their daily interaction / activities.

Key words: mock test, predictive, scores, reflective, and competence.

Introduction

This paper aims at raising the English teacher awareness in becoming reflective teachers and in using strategies to enhance the student competence in learning English as Second language (ESL). The English teachers of some international schools use Cambridge International Achievement Test or Cambridge check-points in English as their tool to evaluate the student competence in learning ESL. Before having Cambridge check-points in English, the English teachers usually give some mock tests to their students. Mock tests are actually practice tests taken from the past actual Cambridge check points. It is called a mock test because it is conducted as the actual test should be.

Administrating the mock test is supposed to be similiar to that of the actual test in some ways, such as the seat setting of the testees, the arrangement of time and testing supervision, and the testing condusive atmosphere. Usually there are some practice tests and the last one is the mock test. After administrating practice tests or a mock test, the English teacher corrected the test papers, returned them to the students, and discussed the student mistakes/errors. And the results of the practice test could be seen as the output of the student learning and as the prediction of the results of the actual test. The English teachers assume that the practice test or mock tests could predict the student results of the actual test because the test papers used are also the standardized past papers of Cambridge check points. Besides, the results of the practice tests or mock tests could also reflect the students competence in using English in their daily interaction.

Later, the results of cambridge check-points can also be used as the diagnostic evaluation tool to predict the further Cambridge tests. As a matter of fact, the English teachers give adequate practice tests or mock tests not only to know the students achievements but also to review/discuss the student mistakes/errors of the tests so that the students could achieve better results of the actual





tests. To optimize the results of the actual tests, the English teachers have to use some strategies/adequate practice tests. For this purpose, the writer would like to ask some questions, such as are the practice tests as hard as the actual tests? Can the results of the practice tests predict those of the actual tests? What are the best strategies or adequate practice tests given to the students before taking the actual test?

Cambridge International English Achievement Test

In International schools in Indonesia, English is usually used as Second Language (ESL). The students usually use English in their daily interaction or in the English immersion programs of the schools. The International schools usually use the International English test, such as Cambridge International English Achievement Test or Cambridge checkpoint and others. Cambridge International English Achievement Test is the one of the standardized tests which provide uniform procedures for administering and for scoring the test. The test is reliable and valid for it has been developed from tryouts and experimentation. The output of the Cambridge International English achievement test or Cambridge checkpoints would be the checkpoint scores which consist of English reading, usage, and writing. And the scores on the Cambridge checkpoint scale are from 0,0 (the lowest level of ability) to 6,0 (the highest level of ability). Students achieving more than 5,0 have an excellent understanding of curriculum content. And students achieving between 3,0 and 4,0 have a sound understanding of the most of the curriculum content. While students achieving less than 2,0 have a basic understanding of the curriculum content.

Literature Review

In language teaching programs, evaluation (Richards et al, 1997) is the systematic gathering of information for purposes of decision-making about the quality of language teaching program and individual/student competences in the program. To evaluate the program or the individual/student competences in the program, tests and other measures are frequently used. According to Harris, tests are often used to measure the student progress in acquiring knowledge or skills. Tests can be teacher made tests or standardized tests. In standardized tests, the English teachers usually give some practice tests to the students take the actual one. The practice tests or mock tests are often taken from the past papers of the actual test. In this purpose, both the practice/mock tests and the actual test are standardized tests, such as *Cambridge International English Achievement Tests* usually provide uniform procedures for administering and for scoring the test. The standardized test (Richards et al, 1997) is reliable and valid for it has been developed from tryouts and experimentation. The mock test or the practice tests can predict the actual test when both tests have similarities. When the students/testees do the mock/practice test, they find that the practice test is as hard as or similar to the actual test. Therefore, the results of the mock/practice test could be as a predictive tool of the actual test.

To know the results of the mock/practice test, the English teachers could provide learning strategies for reviewing the student errors to enhance the output/scores of the actual test. When the English teachers obtain the scores of both the practice/mock test and the actual test, they could make simple analysis of the students test results. From eyeballing, the student's scores of the mock/practice test and the actual test, the English teachers compare, see the difference of both scores, and analyze the individual student scores whether the scores increase or decrease.



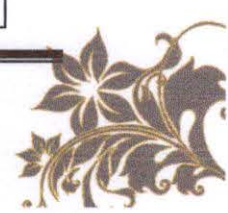


Moreover, the English teachers could use the mock/ practice test as a reflective tool. First, they could reflect on the implementation or administrating process of the mock/practice test, whether the mock/practice tests closely mimic the actual test and the testing environment/setting on the test day, and the scoring system, etc. Second, they could also reflect on the student competence (the learning outcome) in their English achievement/proficiency. Good English teachers have to do some reflection based on the results/scores of their student tests. Reflection is careful and analytical thought by teachers about what they are doing and the effects of their behavior on their instruction and on student learning (Arends, 1998). Reflection means that teachers have to think aloud and analyze what they have done in class by relating it to their previous experiential and received knowledge. In reflection, teachers have a chance to consider the nature of teaching thoughtfully and objectively (Richards, 1997).

Data Analysis

There are 30 respondents of Primary grade 6 from an International school in Surabaya. The writer collected two kinds of their data in 2012. The primary students scores of the mock/practice English test and those of the English Cambridge checkpoint (the actual test). From the mock/practice test, the English teachers score the test paper with the scoring scale from 0 to 100. In the actual test (the English Cambridge checkpoint), the scoring scale is 0,0 to 6,0. To compare these two data of the test scores, the writer has to change the mock/practice test scores by using the Cambridge scoring scale, so he converts it into the normalization scores. In the following table, the writer shows the mock/practice test English and the English Cambridge checkpoint of the primary students (Primary Grade 6).

No	Name of testees	Mock / Practice Test		Actual Test Scores	Difference
		Teacher Scores	Normalization Scores		
1	BJ	51	3,06	4,80	1,74
2	BC	71	4,26	4,90	0,64
3	BH	57	3,42	5,00	1,58
4	BT	36	2,16	3,80	1,64
5	CG	43	2,58	4,00	1,42
6	FS	73	4,38	5,70	1,32
7	FH	50	3,00	3,30	0,30
8	HB	60	3,60	4,40	0,80
9	JO	43	2,58	3,80	1,22
10	JE	56	3,36	5,50	2,14
11	KA	53	3,18	4,70	1,52
12	KF	50	3,00	3,80	0,80
13	MW	87	5,22	6,00	0,78
14	MC	29	1,74	2,10	0,36
15	NW	52	3,12	4,50	1,38
16	NV	60	3,60	5,10	1,50
17	PS	33	1,98	2,80	0,82
18	PE	61	3,66	5,20	1,54
19	RC	55	3,30	2,80	-0,50
20	TA	59	3,54	4,80	1,26
21	TS	56	3,36	4,20	0,84





22	WH	46	2,76	2,70	-0,06
23	WT	68	4,08	5,00	0,92
24	YK	52	3,12	3,20	0,08
25	AP	37	2,22	3,80	1,58
26	AV	60	3,60	5,20	1,60
27	DJ	82	4,92	5,90	0,98
28	RA	41	2,46	3,90	1,44
29	JC	70	4,20	5,30	1,10
30	DP	43	2,58	3,40	0,82
Average Score		54,47	3,27	4,32	1,05

H_0 : There is no correlation between the mock/practice test and the actual test

H_1 : There is correlation between the mock/practice test and the actual test.

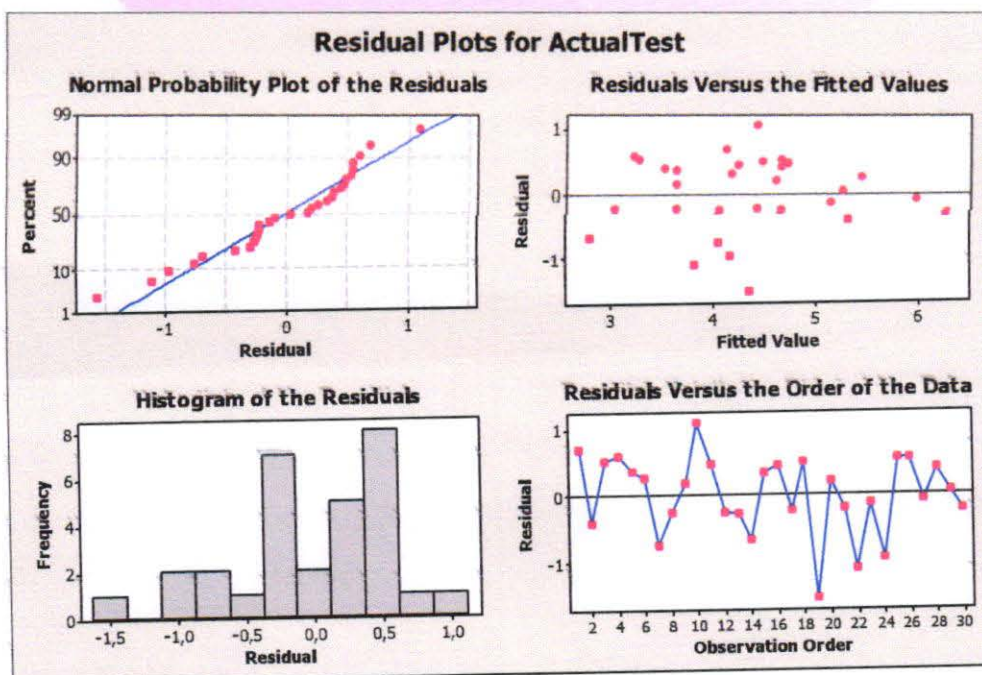
The results of the calculation

$\alpha = 5\% (= 0,05)$

The regression equation is (ActualTest = 1,03 + 1,01 MockTest)

Predictor	Coef	SE Coef	T	P
Actual test	1,0261	0,4578	2,24	0,033
MockTest	1,0079	0,1360	7,41	0,000

From the results of the calculation from mini-tab, it is shown that p-value ActualTest $< \alpha = 0,033 < 0,05$ and p-value MockTest $< \alpha = 0,00 < 0,05$. This means that H_0 is rejected so there is correlation between the Mock Test and the Actual Test.



From the scatter diagram above, it is seen that the scatter diagram from left below to right above, there is positive correlation or $R \sim 1$. And the correlation can be seen from the following equation:

$$Y = A + BX$$





ActualTest = 1,03 + 1,01 MockTest

if every additional one score of the mock test, the actual test will also add the score 2,04.

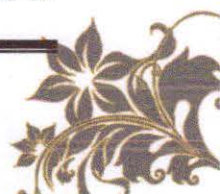
Findings and Discussion

Based on the data analysis above, the writer has found out and discussed the following findings:

1. The average score of the mock/practice test is 54,47 (the scoring scale 0-100) or 3,27 (the Cambridge scoring scale 0,0-6,0). The average score of the mock/practice test = 3,27 means the class average score of the students achieving between score 3,0 and 4,0 have a sound understanding of most of the curriculum content. The majority of the students/testers (16 students or 53% of the students) achieving scores between 3,0 and 4,0. And 5 students (17%) who got scores above 4,0 mean that they have very good/excellent understanding of the curriculum content. 9 students (30%) who got scores below 3,0 mean that they have a basic understanding of the curriculum content.
2. The average score of the actual test (Cambridge checkpoint) is 4,32. The class average score of the students achieving between score above 4,0 means that the students have more than a sound understanding of most of the curriculum content. There are 10 students (33%) who got scores above 5,0 students achieving more than 5,0 have an excellent understanding of the curriculum content. There are 8 students (27%) who got scores between 4,0 and 5,0. Students achieving scores between 4,0 and 5,0 have more than a sound understanding of the most of the curriculum content. And there are 12 students (40%) who got scores less than 4,0 but more than 2,0 and these students have a basic understanding of the curriculum content.
3. The average score of the difference between the mock/practice test and the actual test is 1,05. It means the gained score of the total class is 1,05. This might happen because of some factors, such as the sufficient practice tests that review the student errors and the strategies to do the actual test made the students have more self-confidence and do the actual test their best. The gained score or the difference between the mock/practice test and the actual test varies between -0,50 and 2,14. There are two students/testers who got the difference in minus scores (-0,50 and -0,06). This means that their actual test is worse than the mock/practice test. This may happen because of many factors, such as the student competence, the student condition, the student preparation, the anxiety on the real test day, etc.
4. The congruence coefficient of 0,81 has been seen as corresponding to a fair similarity, indicating that the factors can be considered to be equal. *There has been a positive correlation between the mock/practice test and the actual test.* The actual test is equal to $1,026102522 + 1,007924565$ mock test. It means that if every addition one score of the mock test, the actual test will also add the score 2,034027087. From the data above, the score of the actual test of the majority of the students increased. Their actual test scores are higher than their mock/practice test scores.

Pedagogical Implication

1. The mock tests or practice tests are important to predict the student English competence as the predictive tool of the actual test for both the practice/mock tests and the actual test are ensured to be standardized tests that are reliable and valid.
2. To make the practice tests as the predictive tool of the actual test, the English teachers should provide procedures for administering (time limits, response format, test paper) and for scoring the test which are similar to those of the actual test.
3. Adequate practice tests with indepth reviews on the student mistakes and relevant strategies for doing the tests might enhance the actual test. This means that the adequacy of practice tests depend on the student achievement and needs for the tests. The English teachers also need to





discuss/review the student mistakes of the practice tests until the students really comprehend not only the answer but also the concept or the process of solving the test problems. Besides, the teachers could also provide some relevant strategies for the students to do the test smartly, such as how to skim, how to scan, how to find the main ideas of the reading texts. (They learn how to learn)

4. To make the practice tests as the closest replication of the actual test, the English teachers have to mimic the actual test environment and settings in their practice. And they also have to value the student hard-work by making the practice test scores as a part of the student evaluation so that they would do the practice tests more seriously.
5. The practice tests or mock tests could also become the reflective tool for the students and the English teachers. The students would compare the test score with their own competence in using English in their daily interaction. Their English teachers would also compare the effectiveness of their teaching learning process with the results of their students tests. The teachers could reflect the test results with many related things, such as the completion of the materials and syllabus, the clarity of their teaching instruction, the sufficient practice for the students, the test materials whether are as hard as the actual test, the test preparation and environment, the anxiety and psychological condition of the students, the motivation and perseverance of the students, and other relating matters.
6. Besides the student hard-work/perseverance, the anxiety and motivation/passion on doing the tests could also influence the student performance on doing the tests. Therefore, it is also important for the teachers and the student parents to work together to support/encourage the students to do the tests their best.
7. The practice tests or mock tests should be selected form the updated past papers of the actual test but not from the retired forms of the actual one.

Conclusion

The mock tests or practice tests and the actual test of the standardized English test, such as Cambridge checkpoint have indicated a high degree of factor similarity, so that the practice tests could become the predictive tool of the scores (learning output) of their actual test and also the reflective tool of the student competence (learning outcome) in using English in their daily interaction. Their English teachers could also use the results of the practice/mock test as a reflective tool to see the effectiveness of the teaching, learning, and evaluating processes, such as the completion/mastery and clarity of the instruction, the sufficient practice, the adequate practice tests and in-depth reviews on the student mistakes, motivation/passion and perseverance to learn, and strategies in order to enhance the results of the actual test.

Suggestions

The writer would like to give some suggestions on this paper as follows:

1. The mock test/practice tests and the actual test, such as Cambridge achievement test have to be well-adequate (depending on the students' competence and needs). The English teachers should have enough time to review the student errors of the practice/mock tests and give some strategies for doing the actual test their best. Further survey on the real conditions of the test environments should be made.
2. The conditions of the mock/practice tests may be simulated but not perfectly matched with those of the actual test, such as the different anxiety between the mock/practice test and the actual test (Cambridge check-point).





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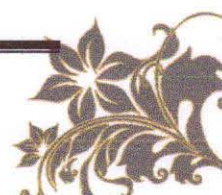
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