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The Minimal English Test: Its Correlation with the University Entrance Examination (English Part) 2012*

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1. Introduction

Maki, Wasada, and Hashimoto (2003) developed the original version of the Minimal English Test (MET), a 5-minute English test, which requires the test taker to write a correct English word with 4 letters or fewer into each of the 72 blank spaces of the given sentences, while listening to the CD. Since then, the Maki Group has found statistically significant correlations between the scores on the MET and the scores on the English Section of the University Entrance Examinations in Japan. See Maki (2010) and Goto, Maki, and Kasai (2010) for the details of the MET.

Maki, Tokugawa, Kato, Hasebe, Kasai, Umezawa, Munakata, and Dunton (2012) revised the MET, which they call the MET 6B, where every 6th word was a target word. See Maki, Tokugawa, Kato, Hasebe, Kasai, Umezawa, Munakata, and Dunton (2012) for the details of the MET 6B as well as the MET 6A.

In this research, using the MET 6B, we found (1) that the scores on the MET 6B and the total scores on the CT 2012 had a moderate correlation ($n=127$, $r=.57$, $p<.05$); (2) that the scores on the MET 6B and the scores on the reading section of the CT 2012 had a moderate correlation ($n=127$, $r=.52$, $p<.05$); and (3) that the scores on the MET 6B and the scores on the listening section of the CT 2012 had a moderate correlation ($n=127$, $r=.58$, $p<.05$), which was the highest among the three correlation coefficients (the one with the total scores, the one with the scores on the reading section, and the one with the scores on the listening section).

The organization of this paper is as follows. Section 2 provides the materials (the Minimal English Test (MET) 6B and the University Entrance Examination (English Part) 2012 (CT 2012)) to be employed in this research. Section 3 reports the results, and Section 4 concludes the paper.

2. Materials

2.1. The Minimal English Test (MET) 6B

The Minimal English Test (MET) 6B is based on Lessons 1 and 2 of the textbook for first year university students written by Kawana and Walker (2002) and the CD that accompanies it, exactly like the original MET. The MET 6B was designed along the rules in (1).

- (1) Rules
 - a. Every 6th word is left blank in the revised MET.
 - b. Japanese words, years, and unpronounced words in parentheses are ignored.

Rule (1a) guarantees that the MET 6B has the form of a cloze test, where every 6th word is left blank, no matter how many letters the word may consist of.

The MET 6B is a simple test which requires the test taker to write a correct English word into each of the 66 blank spaces of the given sentences, written on one piece A4 paper, while listening to the CD on which the sentences are recorded. The CD lasts about 5 minutes with a speed of 125 words per minute. The MET 6B is shown in (2).

(2) The Minimal English Test 6B (The MET 6B)

Name: _____ Date: Month ___ Day ___ Year _____

The Score on the Reading Section of the University Entrance Examination (English Part) 2012: _____/200

The Score on the Listening Section of the University Entrance Examination (English Part) 2012: _____/50

Please fill an English word into each blank spot, while listening to the CD.

1. The majority of people have () least one pet at some () in their life.
2. Sometimes the () between a pet dog or () and its owner
3. is so () that they begin to resemble () other in their appearance
4. and (). On the other hand, owners () unusual pets
5. such as tigers () snakes sometimes have to protect () from their own pets.
6. Thirty () ago the idea of an () pet first arose.
7. This was () pet rock, which became a () in the United States
8. and () to other countries as well. () paid large sums of money
9. () ordinary rocks and assigned them ().
10. They tied a leash around () rock and pulled it down () street just like a dog.
11. () rock owners even talked to () pet rocks.
12. Now that we () entered the computer age, we () virtual pets.
13. The Japanese Tamagotchi---the () chicken egg---
14. was the precursor () many virtual pets.
15. Now there () an ever-increasing number of such () pets
16. which mostly young people () adopting as their own.
17. And () your virtual pet dies, you () reserve a permanent resting place
18. () the Internet in a virtual () cemetery.
19. Sports are big business. () Babe Ruth, the most famous athlete of () day,
20. was well-known for earning () much as the President of () United States,
21. the average salary () today's professional baseball players
22. is () times that of the President. () a handful of sports superstars
23. () one hundred times more through () contracts with manufacturers
24. of clothing, (), and sports equipment. But every () produces
25. one or two legendary () who rewrite the record books,
26. () whose ability and achievements are () for generations.
27. In the current () Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan are two such legendary (),
28. both of whom have achieved () mythical status.
29. The fact that () large number of professional athletes () huge incomes
30. has led to () competition throughout the sports world.
31. () send their children to sports () camps at an early age.
32. () kids typically practice three to () hours a day,
33. all weekend () during their school vacations in () to better their chances
34. of () obtaining a well-paid position on () professional team
35. when they grow (). As for the many young () who do not succeed,
36. one () if they will regret having () their childhood.

The test taker is verbally given the following 4 instructions in advance.

1. Write the score on the University Entrance Examination (English Part) that you took in 2012.
2. Fill an English word into each of the blank spaces, while listening to the CD.

3. The CD lasts about 5 minutes.
4. There is about a three-second interval between Line 18 and Line 19.

After the above instructions are given, the volume of the CD is checked, and the MET 6B is administered.

2.2. The University Entrance Examination (English Part) 2012 (CT 2012)

The University Entrance Examination Center (2012) provides the summary of the CT 2012 results shown in (3)-(4).

(3) The Reading Section of the CT 2012

Observations	519,867
Full mark	200
Number of questions	50
Average score	124.15
Standard deviation	42.05
Time limit	80 minutes
Date	January 14th, 2012

(4) The Listening Section of the CT 2012

Observations	514,748
Full mark	50
Number of questions	25
Average score	24.55
Standard deviation	8.03
Time limit	30 minutes
Date	January 14th, 2012

The reading section of the CT 2012, contains questions about pronunciation, grammar, reordering of sentences, and reading comprehension, and the listening section of the CT 2012, contains questions about listening comprehension.

3. Results

The MET 6B was administered at two institutions during the period from mid April to the end of May of 2012. The total number of the data was 127. We analyzed the data (the scores on the MET 6B and the scores on the CT 2012) by a simple regression analysis (correlation analysis). The results are shown in (5)-(7). The significance level was set at .05 for each analysis.

(5) Correlation Between the Scores on the MET 6B and the Total Scores on the CT 2012

Regression Statistics	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	.57
R Square	.33
Adjusted R Square	.32
Standard Error	28.72
Observations	127
P-value	2.36E-12

(6) Correlation Between the Scores on the MET 6B and the Scores on the Reading Section of the CT 2012

Regression Statistics	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	.52
R Square	.27
Adjusted R Square	.26
Standard Error	25.52
Observations	127
P-value	4.99E-10

(7) Correlation Between the Scores on the MET 6B and the Scores on the Listening Section of the CT 2012

Regression Statistics	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	.58
R Square	.34
Adjusted R Square	.33
Standard Error	6.45
Observations	127
P-value	9.85E-13

The above analyses show (1) that the scores on the MET 6B and the total scores on the CT 2012 had a moderate correlation ($n=127$, $r=.57$, $p<.05$); (2) that the scores on the MET 6B and the scores on the reading section of the CT 2012 had a moderate correlation ($n=127$, $r=.52$, $p<.05$); and (3) that the scores on the MET 6B and the scores on the listening section of the CT 2012 had a moderate correlation ($n=127$, $r=.58$, $p<.05$), which was the highest among the three correlation coefficients (the one with the total scores, the one with the scores on the reading section, and the one with the scores on the listening section).

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we found that unlike the result of the survey in 2011, the scores on the MET 6B and the scores on the Listening Section of the CT 2012 had the highest correlation coefficient ($n=127$, $r=.58$, $p<.05$) among the three correlation coefficients (the one with the total scores, the one with the scores on the reading section, and the one with the scores on the listening section). Note, however, that the difference between the correlation coefficients (between the one with the scores on the listening section and the one with the total scores) is so small that it is necessary to continue to observe the

correlation coefficients for them before claiming that the nature of the MET 6B changed (or the nature of the CT 2012 was different from that of the past CTs).

For the sake of future research, a comparison of the results of the analyses of the scores on the MET 6 (either MET 6A or MET 6B) and the scores on the CTs from 2009 to 2012 is provided in (8), where the correlation coefficients between the scores on the MET 6 and the total scores on the CTs are more or less consistent (from .53 to .60).

(8) Results of the Analyses of the Scores on the MET 6 and the Scores on the CTs from 2009 to 2012

Year	MET	Observations	Correlation Coefficient (R)	Regression Line
2009	MET 6A	577	.533 (Reading)	$y = 1.34x + 93.19$
			.589 (Listening)	$y = .49x + 12.49$
			.592 (Reading and Listening)	$y = 1.83x + 105.68$
2010	MET 6A	1188	.48 (Reading)	$y = 1.45x + 109.12$
			.52 (Listening)	$y = .45x + 23.14$
			.53 (Reading and Listening)	$y = 1.90x + 132.26$
2011	MET 6B	217	.54 (Reading)	$y = 1.60x + 117.46$
			.56 (Listening)	$y = .51x + 19.75$
			.60 (Reading and Listening)	$y = 2.13x + 136.36$
2012	MET 6B	127	.52 (Reading)	$y = 1.89x + 112.07$
			.58 (Listening)	$y = .56x + 15.02$
			.57 (Reading and Listening)	$y = 2.45x + 127.09$

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Note

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1 We follow Yanai (1998) in interpreting values of correlation coefficients. She assumes the following correspondence between correlation coefficients and their characteristics shown in (i).

(i) The Correspondence Between Correlation Coefficients and Their Characteristics

Correlation Coefficients	Characteristics
$0 \leq r < .2 $	almost no correlation
$.2 \leq r < .4 $	weak correlation
$.4 \leq r < .7 $	moderate correlation
$.7 \leq r < .9 $	strong correlation
$.9 \leq r < 1 $	extremely strong correlation