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Citation	[ ] no.[33] p.[45]-[52]
Issue Date	2013
Rights	
Version	Faculty of Regional Studies, Gifu University /Yokohama National University /Faculty of Regional Studies, Gifu University /Faculty of Regional Studies, Gifu University / Hokkaido University /SeDoMoCha Elementary School
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12099/47333

The METs 6, 8, and 10: Their Correlations 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), 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, a 5-minute English test, and the scores on the English Section of the University Entrance Examinations in Japan from 2002 to 2012 ($.59 \leq r \leq .72$).[1] See Maki (2010) and Goto, Maki, and Kasai (2010) for the details of the MET.

Maki et al. (2010) developed a new version of the MET, the MET 6, where every 6th word was a target word, and examined the correlation between the scores on the MET 6 and the scores on the CT 2009. They found a moderate correlation between the scores on the MET 6 and the total scores on the CT 2009 ($n=518$, $r=.57$, $p<.05$). Then, Maki et al. (2012) created another version of the MET, the MET 8, where every 8th word was a target word, and examined the correlation between the scores on the MET 8 and the scores on the CT 2011 ($n= 240$, $r=.66$, $p<.05$).

The purpose of this paper is to present yet another version of the MET, the MET 10, where every 10th word is a target word, and examine the correlations between the scores on the MET 6, 8, and 10 and the scores on the CT 2012. In this research, we found that the correlation coefficients between the scores on the METs 6, 8, and 10 and the total scores on the CT 2012 are almost identical ($.57 \leq r \leq 58$).[2]

The organization of this paper is as follows. Section 2 presents the materials (the Minimal English Tests (METs) 6, 8, and 10 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 Tests (METs) 6, 8, and 10

The Minimal English Tests (METs) 6, 8, and 10 are 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 METs were designed along the rules in (1).

(1)　Rules
　　　a.　　Every Xth word is left blank in the MET X, where X = 6, 8, or 10.
　　　b.　　Japanese words, years, and unpronounced words in parentheses are ignored.

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

The METs 6, 8, and 10 are simple tests which require the test taker to write a correct English word into each of the 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 METs 6, 8, and 10 have 65, 48, and 38 questions in total, and are illustrated in (2), (3), and (4), respectively.

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

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

1.   The majority of people have (   )^1 least one pet at some (   )^2 in their life.
2.   Sometimes the (   )^3 between a pet dog or (   )^4 and its owner
3.   is so (   )^5 that they begin to resemble (   )^6 other in their appearance
4.   and (   )^7. On the other hand, owners (   )^8 unusual pets
5.   such as tigers (   )^9 snakes sometimes have to protect (   )^{10} from their own pets.
6.   Thirty (   )^{11} ago the idea of an (   )^{12} pet first arose.
7.   This was (   )^{13} pet rock, which became a (   )^{14} in the United States
8.   and (   )^{15} to other countries as well. (   )^{16} paid large sums of money
9.   (   )^{17} ordinary rocks and assigned them (   )^{18}.
10.   They tied a leash around (   )^{19} rock and pulled it down (   )^{20} street just like a dog.
11.   (   )^{21} rock owners even talked to (   )^{22} pet rocks.
12.   Now that we (   )^{23} entered the computer age, we (   )^{24} virtual pets.
13.   The Japanese *Tamagotchi*---the (   )^{25} chicken egg---
14.   was the precursor (   )^{26} many virtual pets.
15.   Now there (   )^{27} an ever-increasing number of such (   )^{28} pets
16.   which mostly young people (   )^{29} adopting as their own.
17.   And (   )^{30} your virtual pet dies, you (   )^{31} reserve a permanent resting place
18.   (   )^{32} the Internet in a virtual (   )^{33} cemetery.

19.   Sports are big business. (   )^{34} Babe Ruth, the most famous athlete of (   )^{35} day,
20.   was well-known for earning (   )^{36} much as the President of (   )^{37} United States,
21.   the average salary (   )^{38} today's professional baseball players
22.   is (   )^{39} times that of the President. (   )^{40} a handful of sports superstars
23.   (   )^{41} one hundred times more through (   )^{42} contracts with manufacturers
24.   of clothing, (   )^{43}, and sports equipment. But every (   )^{44} produces
25.   one or two legendary (   )^{45} who rewrite the record books,
26.   (   )^{46} whose ability and achievements are (   )^{47} for generations.
27.   In the current (   )^{48} Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan are two such legendary (   )^{49},
28.   both of whom have achieved (   )^{50} mythical status.
29.   The fact that (   )^{51} large number of professional athletes (   )^{52} huge incomes
30.   has led to (   )^{53} competition throughout the sports world.
31.   (   )^{54} send their children to sports (   )^{55} camps at an early age.
32.   (   )^{56} kids typically practice three to (   )^{57} hours a day,
33.   all weekend (   )^{58} during their school vacations in (   )^{59} to better their chances
34.   of (   )^{60} obtaining a well-paid position on (   )^{61} professional team
35.   when they grow (   )^{62}. As for the many young (   )^{63} who do not succeed,
36.   one (   )^{64} if they will regret having (   )^{65} their childhood.

(3)   The Minimal English Test 8 (The MET 8)

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

1.   The majority of people have at least ( )^1 pet at some time in their life.
2.   ( )^2 the relationship between a pet dog or ( )^3 and its owner
3.   is so close that ( )^4 begin to resemble each other in their ( )^5
4.   and behavior. On the other hand, owners ( )^6 unusual pets
5.   such as tigers or snakes ( )^7 have to protect themselves from their own ( )^8.
6.   Thirty years ago the idea of an ( )^9 pet first arose.
7.   This was the pet ( )^{10}, which became a craze in the United ( )^{11}
8.   and spread to other countries as well. ( )^{12} paid large sums of money
9.   for ordinary ( )^{13} and assigned them names.
10.   They tied a ( )^{14} around the rock and pulled it down ( )^{15} street just like a dog.
11.   The rock ( )^{16} even talked to their pet rocks.
12.   Now ( )^{17} we have entered the computer age, we ( )^{18} virtual pets.
13.   The Japanese *Tamagotchi*---the imaginary chicken ( )^{19}---
14.   was the precursor of many virtual pets.
15.   ( )^{20} there are an ever-increasing number of such ( )^{21} pets
16.   which mostly young people are adopting ( )^{22} their own.
17.   And if your virtual pet ( )^{23}, you can reserve a permanent resting place
18.   ( )^{24} the Internet in a virtual pet cemetery.

19.   Sports are big business. Whereas Babe Ruth, the most famous ( )^{25} of his day,
20.   was well-known for earning ( )^{26} much as the President of the United ( )^{27},
21.   the average salary of today's professional baseball ( )^{28}
22.   is ten times that of the President. ( )^{29} a handful of sports superstars
23.   earn one ( )^{30} times more through their contracts with manufacturers
24.   ( )^{31} clothing, food, and sports equipment. But every ( )^{32} produces
25.   one or two legendary athletes who ( )^{33} the record books,
26.   and whose ability and ( )^{34} are remembered for generations.
27.   In the current ( )^{35} Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan are two such legendary figures,
28.   both ( )^{36} whom have achieved almost mythical status.
29.   The ( )^{37} that a large number of professional athletes ( )^{38} huge incomes
30.   has led to increased competition ( )^{39} the sports world.
31.   Parents send their children ( )^{40} sports training camps at an early age.
32.   ( )^{41} kids typically practice three to four hours ( )^{42} day,
33.   all weekend and during their school ( )^{43} in order to better their chances
34.   of ( )^{44} obtaining a well-paid position on a professional ( )^{45}
35.   when they grow up. As for the ( )^{46} young aspirants who do not succeed,
36.   one ( )^{47} if they will regret having lost their ( )^{48}.

(4)   The Minimal English Test 10 (The MET 10)

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

1.   The majority of people have at least one pet (   )^1 some time in their life.
2.   Sometimes the relationship between (   )^2 pet dog or cat and its owner
3.   is so (   )^3 that they begin to resemble each other in their (   )^4
4.   and behavior. On the other hand, owners of unusual (   )^5
5.   such as tigers or snakes sometimes have to protect (   )^6 from their own pets.
6.   Thirty years ago the idea (   )^7 an inanimate pet first arose.
7.   This was the pet (   )^8, which became a craze in the United States
8.   and (   )^9 to other countries as well. People paid large sums (   )^{10} money
9.   for ordinary rocks and assigned them names.
10.   They (   )^{11} a leash around the rock and pulled it down (   )^{12} street just like a dog.
11.   The rock owners even (   )^{13} to their pet rocks.
12.   Now that we have entered (   )^{14} computer age, we have virtual pets.
13.   The Japanese *Tamagotchi*---the (   )^{15} chicken egg---
14.   was the precursor of many virtual pets.
15.   (   )^{16} there are an ever-increasing number of such virtual pets
16.   (   )^{17} mostly young people are adopting as their own.
17.   And (   )^{18} your virtual pet dies, you can reserve a permanent (   )^{19} place
18.   on the Internet in a virtual pet cemetery.

19.   Sports are big business. Whereas Babe Ruth, the most famous athlete of (   )^{20} day,
20.   was well-known for earning as much as the (   )^{21} of the United States,
21.   the average salary of today's (   )^{22} baseball players
22.   is ten times that of the President. (   )^{23} a handful of sports superstars
23.   earn one hundred times (   )^{24} through their contracts with manufacturers
24.   of clothing, food, and (   )^{25} equipment. But every generation produces
25.   one or two legendary (   )^{26} who rewrite the record books,
26.   and whose ability and (   )^{27} are remembered for generations.
27.   In the current generation Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan (   )^{28} two such legendary figures,
28.   both of whom have achieved (   )^{29} mythical status.
29.   The fact that a large number of (   )^{30} athletes earn huge incomes
30.   has led to increased competition (   )^{31} the sports world.
31.   Parents send their children to sports (   )^{32} camps at an early age.
32.   Such kids typically practice (   )^{33} to four hours a day,
33.   all weekend and during (   )^{34} school vacations in order to better their chances
34.   of (   )^{35} obtaining a well-paid position on a professional team
35.   when (   )^{36} grow up. As for the many young aspirants who (   )^{37} not succeed,
36.   one wonders if they will regret having (   )^{38} 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 this year.
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 METs 6, 8, and 10 are 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 (5)-(6).

(5)   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

(6)   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 METs 6, 8, and 10 were 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 for the MET 6, 125 for the MET 8, and 118 for the MET 10. There was no significant difference among the average scores on the CT 2012 of the three groups, as shown in (7).

(7)   The Average Scores on the CT 2012 of the Three Groups

MET	n	Average Scores on the CT 2012
MET 6	127	161.66/200 (Reading)
		29.78/50 (Listening)
		191.44/250 (Reading and Listening)
MET 8	125	161.10/200 (Reading)
		29.48/50 (Listening)
		190.58/250 (Reading and Listening)
MET 10	118	161.37/200 (Reading)
		30.01/50 (Listening)
		191.38/250 (Reading and Listening)

We analyzed the data (the scores on the METs 6, 8, and 10 and the scores on the CT 2012) by a simple regression analysis (correlation analysis). The results are shown in (8). The significance level was set at .05 for each analysis.

(8)   Results of the Analyses of the Scores on the MET 6, 8, and 10 and the Scores on the CT 2012

Year	MET	Observations	Correlation Coefficient (R)	Regression Line
2012	MET 6	127	.52 (Reading)	y = 1.89x + 112.07
			.58 (Listening)	y = .56x + 15.02
			.57 (Reading and Listening)	y = 2.45x + 127.09
2012	MET 8	125	.54 (Reading)	y = 2.26x + 109.89
			.53 (Listening)	y = .53x + 17.46
			.58 (Reading and Listening)	y = 2.79x + 127.36
2012	MET 10	118	.53 (Reading)	y = 2.39x + 117.49
			.53 (Listening)	y = .60x + 19.03
			.57 (Reading and Listening)	y = 2.99x + 136.52

The above analyses show (i) that the correlation coefficients between the scores on the METs 6, 8, and 10 and the scores on the reading section of the CT 2012 are almost identical ($.52 \leq r \leq 54$), (ii) that the correlation coefficients between the scores on the METs 6, 8, and 10 and the scores on the listening section of the CT 2012 are again almost identical ($.53 \leq r \leq 58$), and (iii) that the correlation coefficients between the scores on the METs 6, 8, and 10 and the total scores on the CT 2012 are again almost identical ($.57 \leq r \leq 58$). This indicates that there is little difference among the three versions of the METs in terms of the predictability of the scores on the CT 2012.

We then examined whether there was a statistically significant difference among the three correlation coefficients for each of the Reading Section, the Listening Section, and the sum of the Reading Section and the Listening Section using the Fisher r-to-z transformation provided by VassarStats: Web Site for Statistical Computation (2013). According to VassarStats: Web Site for Statistical Computation (2013), the Fisher r-to-z transformation calculates a value of z that can be applied to assess the significance of the difference between two correlation coefficients, r_a and r_b, found in two independent samples. The results of the analyses show that there was no statistically significant difference among the three correlation coefficients of each of the Reading Section, the Listening Section, and the sum of the Reading Section and the Listening Section. This indicates that there was no difference among the METs 6-8 in terms of the predictability of the scores on the CT 2012.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we examined the correlations between the scores on the MET 6, 8, and 10 and the scores on the CT 2012, and found that the correlation coefficients between the scores on the METs 6, 8, and 10 and the total scores on the CT 2012 are almost identical ($.57 \leq r \leq 58$). We then examined whether there was a statistically significant difference among the three correlation coefficients for each of the Reading Section, the Listening Section, and the sum of the Reading Section and the Listening Section, and found that there was no statistically significant difference among the three correlation coefficients of each of the Reading Section, the Listening Section, and the sum of the Reading Section and the Listening Section, which indicates that there was no difference among the METs 6-8 in terms of the predictability of the scores on the CT 2012.

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Notes

*   We are indebted to Toshihide Hamazaki and Koichi Sawasaki for their valuable
comments on an earlier version of this paper. We are also grateful to Yuko Nagao,
Yoko Sugiyama, and Ying-Ling Yang for cooperating to help collect data. All errors are
our own.

1.   We follow Yanai (1998) in interpreting values of correlation coefficients. She
assumes the following 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

2.   See Maki et al. (2013) for a detailed analysis of the correlations between the
scores on the MET 6 on the one hand, and the scores on the Reading Section of the CT

2012, the scores on the Listening Section of the CT 2012, and the total scores on the CT 2012 on the other.