B1 SINGLE SENTENCE DESCRIPTORS

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Abstract: Single sentences are commonly used to develop objective questions that are used to evaluate students' learning progress. It is crucially important to be able to develop objective questions of different difficulty levels consistently. Therefore, B1 Single Sentence Descriptors (B1-SSD) is invented to facilitate instructors who need to construct single sentences that are used for developing objective questions of three difficulty levels at B1 or the intermediate level of English proficiency. To date, there is no descriptors for single sentences found on Google Search. From the studies that have been published so far, there are limited readability formula for single sentences that can be used as guidelines for constructing single sentences of different difficulty levels. Moreover, the studies employ a strenuous process of determining of single sentence readability. Therefore, B1-SSD has specified the features for single sentences of three difficulty levels at B1 or the intermediate level of English proficiency that that are more easily determined. The features can be analysed by using free resources such as the sentence depth by using Enju at http://www.nactem.ac.uk/enju/demo.html and the vocabulary level by using Online Cambridge Dictionary at http://dictionary.cambridge.org/. B1SSD is significantly useful to facilitate instructors in in developing objective questions faster, more easily and economically. It also has a great potential in developingobjective qu tions for learning assessments and instructional games that have commercial values for a specified target group.

Keywords:single sentence readability, descriptors, difficulty level, objective questions

1. Introduction

All assessments of knowledge and skills require students to read the test items. Oakland & Lane (2004) emphasize that the test items should be developed with the appropriate readability according to the students who sit for the test in order to ensure that the readability of test items should not affect the evaluation of knowledge and skills. Thus, Oakland & Lane (2004) suggest that test items should be carefully developed by considering word choice, clarity and density of ideas.

With regard to objective assessments, single sentences are commonly used to develop objective questions for evaluating students' learning progress. It is important to be able to develop objective questions with appropriate readability at different levels of difficulty. Moreover, it is also crucial to achieve the consistency in the development of objective questions. Therefore, instructors need specific guidelines to refer to while preparing the questions. Hence, B1 Single Sentence Descriptors (B1-SSD) is inventedspecifically for facilitating instructors to develop objective questions for objective assessments at Level B1 that comprise three levels of difficulty namely easy, moderate and difficult.

B1-SSD combine single sentence features for Level B1 and the six cognitive levels in the Bloom's Taxonomy. There are four single sentence features involved. The selection of features are based on prior studies that suggest the features impact the readability of single sentences: (1) sentence length (Anealka, Chan, & Zubaidah, 2010; Homan, Hewitt, & First, 1994); (2) sentence depth (Anealka et al., 2010) , (3) vocabulary (Hewitt & Homan, 2004); and type of sentences (Anealka et al., 2010). These features that impact the readability of English text are similar to other languages such as Italian (Orletta et al., 2014), Russian (Karpov, Baranova, & Vitugin, 2014) and

Swedish (Pilán et al., 2015). The descriptions of sentence features for B1-SSD are based on a study which analysed the features of single sentences at the Intermediate Level in the database called SCoRe (Chujo, Oghigian, & Akasegawa, 2015).

The single sentence features are analysed by using free online resources. The first feature is the sentence length where the number of words used to construct the sentence is calculated manually. The second feature is the sentence depth that is analysed by a syntactic parser for English known as Enju 2.4. It can be accessed for free at http://www.nactem.ac.uk/enju/demo.html. The third feature is the vocabulary level of words used to construct the single sentences that are checked by using a free online dictionary, Online Cambridge Dictionary, accessed at http://dictionary.cambridge.org/. The final feature is the sentence type that is analysed manually by using the definition provided by Collins Online Dictionary at https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/. The descriptions of the three types of sentencesare: (1) simple sentences consist of a single main clause, (2) compound sentences contain at least two coordinate clauses, and (3) complex sentences contain at least one main clause and one subordinate clause.

Table 1 describes B1 Single Sentence Descriptors that contain three levels of difficulty namely easy, moderate and difficult. The descriptors consist of four sentence features (vocabulary, sentence length, depth of parse tree and types of sentences) and cognitive levels in the Bloom's Taxonomy (Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyse, Evaluate and Create).

Table 1 B1 Single Sentence Descriptors

Level of Difficulty / Description		Easy	Moderate	Difficult
Sentence Features	Vocabulary (CFER Level)	A1, A2 and B1	A1, A2 and B1	A1, A2 and B1
	Sentence Length	≤ 6 words	≤ 10 words	≤14 words
	Depth of Parse Tree	≤ 5 levels	≤ 6 levels	≤10 levels
	Types of Sentences	100% simple	50% simple 50% compound	50% compound 50% complex
Bloom's Taxonomy	Cognitive Level	Remember Understand	Apply Analyse	Evaluate Create

2. Problem Statement

It is crucial to develop objective assessments that are comprehensible according to students' level of proficiency and use the right cognitive levels in the Bloom's Taxonomy. Objective assessments are commonly developed by using single sentences. Therefore, it is important to determine that single sentences used to develop objective assessment are comprehensible by the students who sit for the assessments. Comprehensibility of single sentences is measured by their readability. Readability of single sentences is determined by their features. There are several formula developed to measure readability of single sentences, but the formula are complicated and involve strenuous process. Hence, it is a need to provide a less complicated method to determine the readability of single sentences. As for the cognitive levels in the Bloom's Taxonomy, it is also a need to choose the right cognitive levels different difficulty levels set for the objective assessment. As a result, B1-SSD is proposed for facilitating the instructors to develop objective assessment for Level B1 with three levels of difficulty.

3. Objective

The objective of introducing of B1-SSD is to facilitate in constructing single sentences used for the development of questions for objective assessments at Level B1 with three levels of difficulty namely easy, moderate and difficult.

4. Novelty

To date, there is no descriptors for single sentences found on Google Search. From the studies that have been published so far, there are limited studies on single sentence readability. B1-SSD does not emphasized on single sentence readability. It combines single sentence readability with the Bloom's Taxonomy to form descriptors for but also combine just readability formula developed by

5. Usefulness

B1-SSD can be used to construct single sentences in developing questions for objective assessments. Objective assessments can be in form tests, examinations and questions for instructional games.

6. Impact Towards English Language Teaching And Learning

The introduction of B1-SSD may greatly impact in reducing the time for developing objective assessments since the construction of single sentences with the right readability is guided by the descriptors as the sentence features are specified for Level B1. Moreover, the levels of difficulty of objective questions can be varied by choosing different levels of cognitive in the Bloom's Taxonomy. B1-SSD can also facilitate instructors to develop objective assessments consistently in term of readability and levels of difficulty. This is due to the sentence features and the levels of cognitive in the Bloom's Taxonomy are specified for the three difficulty levels of objective questions.
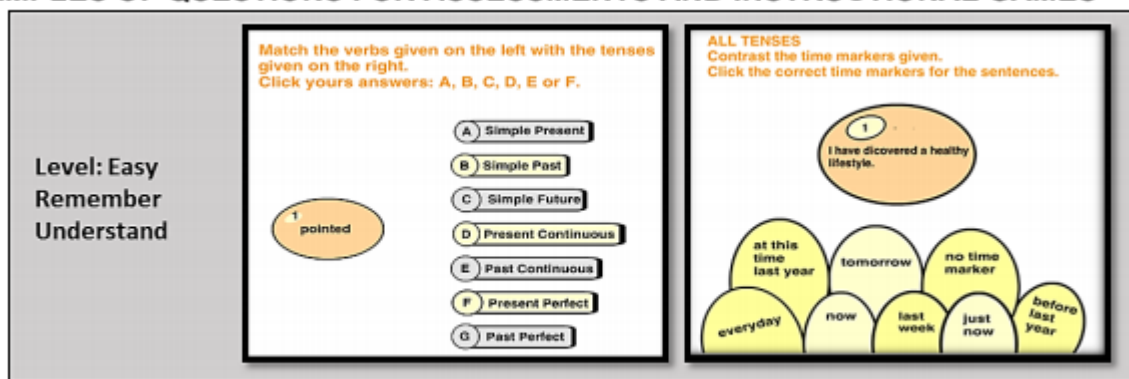

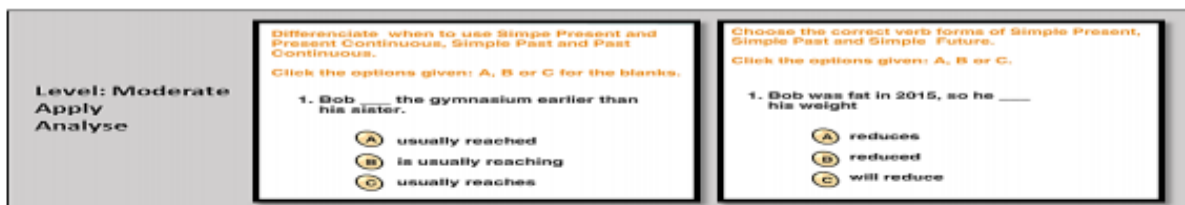Figure 1: Samples of easy questions in instructional games

Figure 2: Samples of moderate questions in instructional games

Figure 3: Samples of difficult questions in instructional games

7. Conclusions

B1-SSD is significantly useful for instructors in facilitating them to construct objective questions with three levels of difficulty for objective assessments at Level B1 consistently.

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