

# The Application of Scaffold to College Entrance Examination (III)—Cloze Test from 2018-2020

Ying Luo

China West Normal University, Nanchong, Sichuan Province, China.

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**Corresponding author:** Ying Luo, China West Normal University, Nanchong, Sichuan Province, China.

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## Abstract

English, a major subject of courses in high school, is paid much attention in College Entrance Examination. Cloze test, accounting for 30 scores in English test in College Entrance Examination, is seen as a difficult part in English subject. The aspects cloze test covers are capacity of identification of vocabularies, grammatical structures, and discourse understanding. Thus, cloze test can be seen as a helpful tool to evaluate students' kinds of competences. The mastery of cloze test can facilitate the reading, writing because they are integrated. However, it exerts much pressure on both students and teachers, bringing challenges to teaching and learning. It becomes an essential project for teachers to consider. Theories underlain cloze test is Gestalt Psychology, which contends that students always organize experiences and materials into a meaningful whole in a certain way. Thus, logic is required in cloze test to form a meaningful whole by utilizing students' own knowledge and personal ideas. In English curriculum standard, it proposes that students are expected to achieve thinking quality, and can develop logical thinking. This is consistent with the demands in cloze test. Many researches have investigated something concerning the learning and teaching strategies in cloze test, which proves the importance of cloze test. Thus, cloze test should be researched further from different aspects. Now, College Entrance Examination English paper has become vital reference materials to analyze testing center to more prepared for the English test in College Entrance Examination. Comment and appraisal lessons on English test papers deserve to be explored further. Scaffolding is based on ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development), which contends that there is a gap between students' current level and the potential level students can achieve. Scaffold actually means the help teachers provide. When students encounter obstacles, teachers can provide students with scaffold and the scaffold is used as a bridge connecting the current proficiency with the target proficiency. So, the purpose of the thesis is to analyze part of the cloze tests of English test paper (III) in College Entrance Examination from 2018-2020 based on the theory of scaffolding. Two research questions are as follows: (1) What are the current problems in Comment and appraisal lessons on English cloze test papers of College Entrance Examination (III)? (2) How can teachers analyze the discourse of cloze test based on scaffolding?

## Keywords

Cloze test, Scaffold, Context

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## 1. Introduction

The chapter introduces research background, research purpose, research significance and thesis structure, exposing the feasibility of the research. Research background means the previous studies concerning scaffolding or cloze test. Research purpose actually means that the purpose aims to solve some problems in teaching. Research significance, it is mainly in practice not in theory. And the last part of chapter 1 is thesis structure.

### 1.1 Research background

Cloze test combines multiple choices with reading comprehension to test students' capacity to apply English comprehensively and choose the most appropriate answer, making the discourse coherent and structurally complete (Hao Lirong, 2011). Cloze test covers more than one competence and students fail to complete it correctly without comprehensive ability. The improvement of understanding the logic underlain the discourse of cloze test paves the way for other question types of English test paper in College Entrance Examination, such as reading comprehension and writing which also have a command of logic and reasoning. Thus, the importance of cloze test cannot be ignored and teachers and students are supposed to pay more attention on it. Students are expected to achieve thinking quality, and can develop logical thinking, which is covered in cloze test. In cloze test, the whole overweighs the part, and students have to use parts to constitute a meaningful whole. It is the most challenging part for students. And sometimes, there is a strong connection between these parts, which give students chances to use their logic by having these hints. The problem is that students don't know how to use the contextual clues, which requires teachers' help. Besides, students may find it hard to figure out the discourse of cloze test because they overemphasize the parts instead of the whole, which may lead to a series of problems in both teaching and learning.

### 1.2 Research purpose

The paper aims to explore the application of scaffolding to College Entrance Examination (III)—cloze test from 2018-2020 by literature review. The paper aims to give teachers teaching implications, making teachers can provide scaffold to students in comment and appraisal lessons of cloze test and providing applicable suggestion to teachers in practice.

### 1.3 Research significance

Scaffolding theory is widely applied in writing and reading. For example, the application of teaching model based on scaffolding to English reading teaching in high school written by Miao Haidong. He points out that scaffolding teaching model can be applied in English reading teaching by following approaches—the deliberate election of learning resources before class; creating context; cultivating students' thinking quality and reading ability; cooperation, and paying enough attention to mutual evaluation system (Miao Haidong, 2015). Thus, the application of scaffold is feasible. Cloze test is kind of discourse, which demands students' linguistic competence, reasoning and analytic competence. It is worthwhile to explore the strategies to help students develop their competence via cloze test.

### 1.4 Literature structure

The thesis includes six chapters.

The first chapter illustrates research background, figuring out that requirements put forward by English curriculum standard. And the importance of cloze test cannot be ignored based on so many researches investigating cloze test. Then, the thesis introduces research purpose, which aims to give teaching implications. Besides, the paper introduces its research significance both in theory and practice.

The second chapter analyzes part of cloze test in College Entrance Examination from 2018-2019 and finds its basic features by analysis and literature review.

The third chapter finds out problems existed in cloze test according to literature review.

The fourth part talks about the scaffolding- the types of scaffolds, practical feature of scaffold and so on.

The fifth part illustrates the implication for teaching, urging teachers innovate and make progress in analyzing cloze test. For instance, a table of self-checking, creating a proper context for students, taking students' individual differences into account, the shift of teachers' role-from controller to guide and facilitator, and grouping students in a proper way.

The last part is conclusion. It summarizes what the paper has mentioned.

## 2. The analysis of cloze test in College Entrance Examination (III) from 2018-2020

**Table 1. 2018-2020 Cloze Word Count Analysis**

Cloze test	tokens	Word types
2018	254 words	155
2019	240 words	146
2020	259 words	157

Table 1 illustrates that the number of words is stable, from 240 to 260 words. The cloze test in 2018 is a narration, telling Dennis Williams treat stranger's messages seriously, leading to a moving story. The cloze test in 2019 is a narration, demonstrating a small town in Northern Europe without shine for half of a year, so a mirror device was installed on the top of a nearby mountain to reflect the sunlight into the square of the town. Whenever the light shines, people gather in the square to add a glimmer of light to the cold winter. The cloze test in 2020 is a narration interspersed with comments, telling a story that the author is a businessman who has met all kinds of crazy customers, and a customer who is captious, but became a regular customer. Finally, the author knows that the separation between her husband and her made the customer angry, so the customer spread his anger on others. The author learns a valuable lesson from this, that is to learn to release the contradiction with customers. All of three discourses actually deal with the theme between human and society. It is understandable and the discourse is common in real life, which can arouse learners' interest.

### 3. Problems in cloze test

The features of option settings are listed: vocabularies are covered widely; forms are various; answer uniformity; concordance of part of speech and context-dependent (Wang Juan, 2018). Firstly, in interpreting cloze test, the vocabularies play an important role in facilitating students' further understanding. Different words may have different meanings in a certain context, which requires learners to guess the correct vocabularies according to contextual clues. Vocabulary is the basis of grammatical rules. And students may cannot translate the whole sentence even they recognize all vocabularies. It is because that they don't master grammatical structure very well. In other words, many grammatical structures or complex sentences hinder students' further understanding. Secondly, testing forms are various, so each testing form must be clearly defined. Thirdly, in recognizing words, part of speech is important and we have to know whether it is appropriate to place word in a certain context. Fourthly, cloze test is context-dependent, misunderstanding of a word or a sentence is likely to lead to misunderstanding of the whole discourse, because the discourse is a meaningful whole. Learners may find it hard to choose correct answer by utilizing contextual clues.

Traditional comment and appraisal lessons of cloze test is mechanical. And most teachers just tell the answer or translate the whole article to students directly and they don't prepare for this kind of lesson very well. This will easily make those who have known the testing points of some tired. Students are receptive learners in the process, and teachers' role as a controller of the lesson, which constrains students' capacity to imagine and create. Students even still commit the same mistakes which means learners don't get the real testing point completely and they just grasp the point of a particular text rather than apply it into all discourses. Students are likely to lose interest in such a mechanical lessons. Besides, teachers are encouraged to research the discourse of cloze test not just translate the whole passage to students.

### 4. The scaffolding

Scaffolding instruction means teachers provide scaffold to students by asking questions, giving examples and giving hints. Besides, students are directed to explore based on the scaffold teachers construct (Miao Haidong, 2015). The scaffolding is the mutual inspiration between teachers and learners. Thus, the interaction between teachers and students is very important. Teachers have to adopt appropriate forms of scaffolds according to the real situation they are in. Practical features of scaffolding are as follows. Firstly, we should choose appropriate scaffold based on specific theme. Secondly, at first, teachers help students, gradually, students become autonomous. Thirdly, it is the "shift" from teachers' responsibility to students' responsibility" (Sheng Yan, 2015). The choice of scaffolding rests on many factors. For example, students' level of proficiency can be an important element and the contextual factors. Scaffolding is the process that assists the learner to the next point in development, in sociocultural theory consisting of social assistance by other people rather than of physical resources such as dictionaries (Vivian cook, 2008). The interaction is the means for teachers to construct scaffold for students. For example, they are able to make conversation, and students can ask for

help when they are talking and teachers can observe some problems existing in teaching, taking steps to solve them.

There are many types of scaffold. Teachers can construct scaffold for student by questions, samples, feedbacks, chart and so on. All of the ways can help students make progress. The construction of scaffold is flexible, resting on the context. That means teachers can change scaffold in practice according to students' reaction.

Students can also construct scaffold to their classmates. Group work is a helpful means to construct scaffold to each other. Students can discuss and exchange their ideas to gain better results. They can learn new things by learning from each other.

### 5. Implication

The researches of scaffolding are various, and these researches have something in common. The application of scaffolding into teaching is very crucial and functions very well in various types of researches. The purpose of scaffolding is to enable students become autonomous learners within their own capacity. The paper will analyze part of College Entrance Examination- cloze test from 2018-2020.

First, some methods should be cleared. Secondly, teachers give students a table of self-checking for students to find out their errors (for example in Table 2).

**Table 2. Student Self-Checklist**

Cloze test in 2018 College Entrance Examination				
Name:	class:			
The question number	Testing point	Cause of error	Error correction method	
1				
2				
3				
.....				

Students can organize their errors clearly by such kind of scaffolding. Students can bear their responsibility and more impressed by errors they commit in the process of organizing their types of errors.

Secondly, creating a proper context for students is crucial. Taking the cloze test of College Entrance Examination (III) in 2018 as an example. It is about Dennis Williams treat stranger's messages seriously, leading to a moving story. So, teachers can use question to connect students' personal experiences to the context.

Q: if you are Dennis Williams, what will you do?

The question scaffolding can relate students' personal experience to students' scaffolding, enabling students to understand the behavior of Dennis Williams and be more interested in the story.

Taking the cloze test of College Entrance Examination (III) in 2019 as another example. It is a story that a small town in Northern Europe without shine for half of a year, so a mirror device was installed on the top of a nearby mountain to reflect the sunlight into the square of the town. Whenever the light shines, people gather in the square to add a glimmer of light to the cold winter. Actually, the deep theme is sharing. Thus, a question can be asked to lead in deeper thinking.

Q: who would you most like to share with? This question is concerned with the theme of cloze test.

Taking the cloze test of College Entrance Examination (III) in 2020 as an example. It tells a story that the author learns a valuable lesson from this, that is to learn to release the contradiction with customers. Q: if you have a restaurant, how can you release the conflict with customers? Actually, it is kind of brainstorming, so students can think of various possibilities about how to take proper steps to cope with the contradiction with customers. This question not only create context for students but also arouse deep thinking for students.

Thirdly, students differ sharply. They differ in education background, learning styles, learning strategies and so on. In scaffolding, students' individual differences should be taken into consideration. For example, some people acknowledge most vocabularies of cloze test, but someone don't. Some like to study by themselves, some like to study in group. So, we can group students according to their individual features, letting them help each other. In grouping students, teachers must have an assignment design to guarantee that group work can go on wheels.

Fourthly, the purpose of scaffolding is to enable students become more autonomous to their target proficiency. Thus, compared with traditional teaching, in analyzing cloze test, teachers' role as a facilitator and guide. Actually, the shift of teachers' role is demanding for teachers, which means teachers are supposed to develop their professional competence.

For instance, teachers are required to organize structure clearly and lead students explore the theme by themselves in analyzing cloze test.

Lastly, teachers are supposed to organize group students properly. Group work refers to the time when students work in small groups, and each group may have 3, 4, or 5 students, depending on the activity. Besides, the teacher can join each group for a while, but only as a participant not as a leader or inspector (Wang Qiang, 2006). It represents the balance between teachers' role with group work.

## 6. Conclusion

College Entrance Examination English Paper is vital reference materials to analyze testing center for the College Entrance Examination. Cloze test covers many aspects and can promote students' core competence. The scaffold is widely used in writing and reading and some researches has proved that scaffold is useful. Thus, the application of scaffolding is of importance. Vocabularies are covered widely; forms are various; answer uniformity; concordance of part of speech and context-dependent. It has various implications for teaching cloze test. First, self-checklist is essential for students and students can cooperate with their partner. Second, question scaffolding can be helpful for students. The three cloze tests are partly talking about the relationship between people. Thus, teachers should help students to recognize the themes of article. Third, teachers should take students' individual differences into account, adopting proper scaffold to support students. Fourth, the major role of teachers has changed in order to shape independent learner. The scaffold is complex, so there are some things needing to be explored. Lastly, students can construct scaffold for each other by group work. In analyzing cloze test, it is kind of student groupings. It provides students an opportunity to learn from each other.

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