

# **LANGUAGE IN INDIA**

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## **Traditional versus Recent Trends in Evaluation relating to Language Teaching**

**Arvind Kumar Gautam, M.A.**

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### **Introduction**

A test is a systematic procedure for measuring a sample of a person's behavior such as Aptitude, Achievement and Proficiency, in order to evaluate these aspects against same predetermined standards and norms. Testing involves the setting of exercises and task to measure either the student's aptitude for a particular subject or his achievement in a particular subject. It is a smaller affair, it is held more frequently such as weekly, fortnightly or monthly, and its duration is normally shorter. The purpose of test is to find out what the pupil have learnt over a long period covering a longer curriculum area, and to grade them on the basis of their achievement.

Tests and examinations are tools or devices designed to measure a person's ability or knowledge or skills in a given area within a period of time, on which ultimately value judgment is made. Tests and examinations are an integral part of an educational system.

The modern concept of evaluation calls for the development of more adequate techniques of assessing pupils' growth and development. Thus the recent philosophy of education emphasizes the responsibility of the educator not only for the development of concepts,

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information, skills, and habits, but also for the stimulation of pupils' growth in attitudes, appreciation, interest, power of thinking, and social-persona adaptability. As these objectives have become clarified and defined in instructional practices, appropriate methods of assessment, both formal and informal, have been devised to gauge the adequacy of the schools' programmes. For example, evaluative tests have been devised to test such work-study skills as map reading finding topics in reference books using indexes or tables of contents; and reading charts, graphs or tables.

## **Objective**

The present paper tries to describe the various types of language tests, some important trends of language testing, the recent advancement in the field of language testing and the difference between traditional and recent trends in evaluation.

## **Test in General**

Test is an examination of somebody's knowledge or ability consisting of questions for them to answer or activities for them to perform: an IQ/Intelligence/Aptitude test, etc. (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 2005:1585).

## **Test according to Dictionary of Education**

According to Dictionary of Education it refers to the means of measuring the knowledge, skill, feelings, intelligence or aptitude of an individual or group. (Maqbool Ahmad, 2008:508)

## **Test according to National Testing Service-India**

Test is an objective and standardized procedure/device for measuring a behavioural sample such as ability, achievement, proficiency and other traits. It is conducted usually after a prior announcement and is designed to cover a specific unit of instruction as part of the learning process. In a regular teaching programme, class tests are usually conducted once in a week or fortnight. (Pon Subbiah, 2002:188)

## **Evaluation in General**

Evaluation in general is a process through which a value judgment or decision is made from a variety of observations. Evaluation is systematic determination of merit, worth, and significance of something or someone using criteria against a set of standards. Evaluation Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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often is used to characterize and appraise subjects of interest in a wide range of human enterprises, including the arts, criminal justice, foundations and non-profit organizations, government, health care, and other human services. (Wikipedia the free encyclopedia)

### **Evaluation according to Dictionary of Education**

Evaluation is the systematic process of collecting and analyzing data in order to make decision. Evaluation is concerned with the application of its findings and implies some judgment of the effectiveness, social utility or desirability of a product, process, or program in terms of carefully defined and agreed upon objectives or values. (Maqbool Ahmad, 2008:196)

### **Evaluation according to National Testing Service-India**

Evaluation is the highest of the six hierarchical levels of cognitive or scholastic part of personality as classified by Bloom (the other five levels are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis). In the area of Testing and Evaluation, it refers to the judgment of performance as process or product of change. In other words, it is the process of testing, appraising, and judging achievement, growth, product, process, or changes in these, through the use of formal and informal tests and techniques. It represents a broad concept that may be distinguished from the concerns of measurement, appraisal, and assessment in that the latter operations can form the basis for evaluation, but not the reverse. (Pon Subbiah, 2002:72)

### **Difference between Testing & Evaluation**

Testing is used more narrowly to denote only those formal modes of assessment that are officially scheduled, with clearly delimited time on task and strict limitation on available guidance. In test we measure behavioral sample such as achievement, ability, proficiency and other behavioural aspects. A test is generally conducted after a prior announcement. It is basically designed to cover a specific lesson from the whole syllabus. A test is conducted usually in a week, fortnight or in a month.

Evaluation on the other hand is the process of making judgments about performance as a process or product of change. We can say that evaluation is the process of testing, appraising and judging achievement of the learner. The process of evaluation is global in conception and application. Evaluation is about making judgments, assessing the value and quality of what is

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done. According to Gronlund (1976), evaluation is a systematic process of determining the extent to which the pre-determined objectives are achieved. It is also clarified as the process of making a value judgment based on factual information or evidence.

### **Types of Language Tests**

Language tests play a powerful role in many people's lives, acting gateways at important transitional moments in education in employment, and in naming from one country to another. Since language tests are devices for the institutional control of individuals, it is clearly important that they should be understood, and subjected to scrutiny. Various authors have given different classifications of tests. Not all language tests are of the same kind. They differ with respect to how they are designed, and what they are for; in other words, in respect to test methods and test purpose.

The nature or type of a test is determined by the particular purpose of measurement. A number of categories in these classifications may appear to overlap. These classifications give a broad idea of the extensive field of testing. If the structure of the test is analysed, it is quite possible to understand that there is an inherent pattern exist in their names. Many are based on the **components** that constitute the concept of the object being assessed (i.e. grammar, vocabulary, spelling, structure and meaning tests). Some of the names reflects the components that constitute the concept of the **procedures** or **techniques** being followed (i.e. formative, summative, pre, post tests), **mode** (i.e. speaking, writing, listening, reading tests), **medium** (i.e. oral, written, computer aided, languages lab tests), **techniques adapted** (i.e. announced, unannounced tests), the **nature of making** (i.e. teacher made, standardized tests), the **response pattern** (i.e. fixed, free, open, ended, close-ended tests), and **item types and categories** (i.e. matching, problem solving, objective, subjective categories) etc. (Pon Subbiah, 2004:5).

In terms of method, we can broadly distinguish traditional paper and pencil based language tests from performance tests. Paper and Pencil tests take the form of the familiar examination question paper. They are typically used for the assessment either of separate components of language knowledge (grammar, vocabulary etc.) or of receptive understanding, listening, and reading comprehension.

In performance based tests, language, skills are assessed in an act of communication. Performance tests are most commonly tests of speaking and writing, in which a more or less extended sample of speech or writing is elicited from the test taker, and judged by one or

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more trained raters using an agreed rating procedure. These samples are elicited in the context of simulations of real world tasks in realistic contents.

Language tests also differ according to their purpose. In fact the same form of test may be used for differing purpose, although in other cases the purpose may affect the form. The most familiar distinction in terms of test purpose is that between Aptitude, Achievement and Proficiency tests. In broadly speaking we can say that Aptitude tests are used for admission purposes, (it is designed to measure one's ability or potentiality in order to predict his likely success in a future programme of learning, training, etc.), Achievement tests are used for certification purpose (it is used to measure the extent of learning of the material presented in a particular course or programme of instruction), and proficiency tests are used for employment purpose (to check whether a person is proficient and he has mastered specific skills and requisites required for a particular job).

Language testing involves the assessment of some or all aspects of the language ability of individuals in given content and for some set of purposes.

### **Trends in Language Evaluation**

The term ***Traditional*** refers to being part of the beliefs, customs or way of life of a particular group of people that have not changed for a long time, following older methods and ideas rather than modern or different ones.

Traditional Assessment is the assessment that focuses on measuring basic knowledge and skills in relative isolation from tasks more typical of the outside world. (Maqbool Ahmad, 2008:516).

The term ***Recent*** refers to the incident that happened or began only a short time ago a recent development/discovery percent. There have been changes in recent years.

The modern concept of evaluation which has evolved largely, though gradually, in recent decades, stemmed from a newer philosophy of education which called for the development of mere adequate techniques of assessing pupil growth and development. Thus recent philosophy of education has emphasized the responsibility of the educator not only for the development of concepts, information, skills, and habits, but also for the stimulation of pupil growth in attitudes, appreciation, interest, powers of thinking, and personal-social adaptability. As these objectives have become clarified and defined in instructional practices, appropriate methods of assessment- both formal and informal have been devised to gauge the

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adequacy of the schools' programmes. For example, evaluative tests have been devised to test such work-study skills as map reading finding topics in reference books' using indexes or tables of contents; and reading charts, graphs or tables.

The modern teacher and the supervisor are concerned only with the important functional learning outcomes, many of which are less tangible and less easily measured than the concepts, skills, and abilities represented in subject matter tests of the past several decades. The concern for the total development of the learner's, physical, emotional social, and intellectual has resulted in an emphasis upon a sound understanding of child growth and development and individual and group differences, as well as upon the personal and social adjustment of the pupils. This represents an emphasis upon gestalt or organic, psychology, which recognizes the interrelationships of the multiple aspects of growth in an individual.

An increasing emphasis on the measurement of understanding and interpretation, rather than upon isolated information, skills and abilities, is particularly observable in present day tests of general educational development.

Tests of general educational development usually present information in verbal, graphic or other form, with the test exercises devised to measure the ability of the individual to comprehend and interpret the material presented. This contrast with the isolated test item which emphasizes the recall or recognition of items of information general educational development tests usually cover such areas as language arts, including literature, social studies, science and mathematics. The increased use of informal or teacher-made test exercises to supplement formal or standardized tests is also characteristic of recent evaluative programme. (David George, 2005:10).

### **Traditional versus Modern forms of Evaluation**

Modern evaluation differs from its older forms of appraisal in many ways.

- Modern evaluation attempts to measure a comprehensive range of objective of the modern school curriculum rather than the achievement in subject matter only.
- Modern evaluation employs a variety of techniques, methods and procedures of appraisal, such as different types of tests, observations, self report socio-metric techniques, performance tests, diagnostic tests, projective techniques, etc. in place of the very restricted use of one or two techniques in the older form of evaluation.

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- Modern evaluation includes integration and interpretation of various indices of behavior into an inclusive portrait of an individual. (K.S. Sidhu, 2007:15).

### **Difference between Traditional and Recent Trends in Evaluation**

Some important differences between traditional and recent trends in evaluation in higher education are indicated below:

<b>Traditional Trends</b>	<b>Modern Trends</b>
Written exams (end session exams)	Course work
Implicit (Hidden) criteria	Explicit (Open) criteria
Product evaluation	Process evaluation
Objectives based evaluation	Outcome based evaluation (goal free illuminative/ indicants)
Contents based evaluation	Competencies based evaluation

Explanation of the concepts mentioned above are given below:

#### **Written exam vs. Course work**

Written exams often are summative and one-shot measure and with no scope for remedial measures. In this methods nature of the task to be given to the examinees is also kept concealed to the moment of examination. But in course work students are asked to write term papers and seminar papers and dissertations and a list of topics are given in advance with the liberty to the student to select his/her choice and prepare it perfectly by using any means of study and consultation. During the presentation of seminar papers he/she has to satisfy the queries of not only his/her teacher but also that of his/her peers or who so ever is present in that open for all sessions. Supporters of this system say that this mode of assessment is more reliable and valid and there are multiple points to be checked and assessed such as speaking/communicative abilities, presence of mind, tolerance to the criticism, manner and so on. Course work is mainly formative in nature providing ample opportunities for detections and corrections of the weaknesses.

#### **Implicit Criteria vs. Explicit Criteria (of Evaluation)**

The traditional evaluation systems keep the criteria for evaluation implicit and are not revealed to the students. But in the recent trend criteria such as the points on which basis

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marks are going to be awarded and the skills and abilities which are intended to be tested are properly informed to the examinees well in advance and they are also encouraged to add (if they can) some more agreeable points to be treated as evidences while quantifying the answer scripts.

### **Product vs. Process Evaluation**

In traditional evaluation, stress is on the result of the teaching process but in recent trend the process of learning itself becomes the object of evaluation to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the process rather than that of the student. Product is the end and process is the means. The emphasis on the means is to help the students to develop strategies of knowledge seeking rather than knowledge receiving. Product evaluation is the evaluation of passive learning and process evaluation is the evaluation of active learning.

### **Objective based vs. Outcome based Evaluation**

Objective based evaluation is narrow in scope because it is concerned only with the predetermined objectives. Outcome evaluation is concerned with the 'all-round effects' of learning including the predetermined objectives and other intended and unintended outcomes considering all of them as the indicators of the growth of the learner in all the directions whether desired or undesired. Therefore, it is deemed to be more comprehensive when compared to the traditional ones.

### **Content vs. Competency based Evaluation**

Content evaluation is mainly knowledge-oriented whereas competence evaluation is understanding and application-based. It focuses on the transfer of knowledge into skills. Therefore, it is considered to be more practical than the traditional content evaluation.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude we can say that testing is a developing area. New ways and methods are being developing day by day. Earlier the emphasis of testing was to test only book knowledge of candidate but nowadays the emphasis is on to test the overall performance of the candidate, the societal need i.e. how candidate is going to benefit the society, because the ultimate aim of every education is to make candidate a responsible/good citizen. Modern evaluation

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system is better in comparison to older one because it attempts to measure a comprehensive range of objectives of curriculum rather than the achievement in subject matter only. The modern or recent trends are concerned with the important functional learning outcomes, they are more concern for the total development of the learner's physical, emotional social, and intellectual aspects of life.

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