Innovative Evaluation Techniques in English Classroom

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Introduction:

English is a foreign language that is imparted to India during the colonial regime by memorable Macaulay’s minutes to prepare Indians for the clerical jobs available in the east-India company. Our Indian scholars find it difficult to master the language skills due to the insufficiency of accessibility towards the English language outside their classroom. The present study entitled “Innovative Evaluation Techniques in English Classroom” The present study concentrates on the development of evaluation techniques and tools. This study amply validates the present day evaluation techniques and tools used and here in I prescribe some evaluation techniques which foster development on all the spheres of language skills. Also it details on the aspects of classroom management while administering these testing devices.

Evaluation Defined:

Evaluation can best be defined as “systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of information about any aspect of a course or a programme as a part of a recognized process of judging its effectiveness, its efficiency and any other outcomes it may have.” In this definition, there are six key factors. They are,

- Systematic collection of information
- Its analysis
Here in the evaluation process the aspects of the course and the outcome of the information, so collected gets a prominent place. Aspects of the course with the intrinsic features of the course and its requirements to be met out while teaching the course. In other words it may be stated as the broad aims of teaching a course. The outcomes are the learning objectives of a particular course. For behavioural psychologists, it is the expected modification in the behaviour of the learners as a result of learning the course. For example learning and teaching English may be aimed at importing the four basic skills i. e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. The learners are expected to attain mastery in these four basic skills on completion of the course.

Evaluation is avery important for the education system. It fulfills various purpose in the system of education. It plays an effective role in questioning or challenging the objectives, keeping in view of the learning experience and learner appraisal. This can be best represented in the following diagram.
Contemporary Evaluation: A Critique:

At present there are quarterly, half yearly, annual examination and periodical test conducted to evaluate the level of the students in the school education system. Though there are semester pattern in the system, the grades or marks secured in the periodic test, quarterly and half yearly examinations are not taken into consideration for fixing the attainment level of the students. Attainment level is measured keeping in view of the marks secured by the learners in the final annual examination. That is we are measuring a year’s achievement of the learners only by a means of a three or two and half hours examination. This becomes the major flaw in the system. Again the test so conducted evaluates only the scholastic achievement of the learners, keeping aside the non-scholastic achievement.

At the college or level there are semester systems which evaluate the students’ scholastic ability in a certain period of time. In that system also the non-scholastic aspects are dispensed with. Evaluation in English is partial that it almost always measures the memory power of the students. An analysis of the question paper at the university level examination for the English literature course gives the following type of questions,

- Some short essays and detailed essays
- Annotations from the literary works
- Some objective type questions from the syllabus

And the analysis of the part II English question paper gives different scenario

- Some essays again from the syllabus prescribed
- Some objective type questions
Some grammatical exercises which test the memory power of the students

It is forgotten now-a-days that English is a skill based subject and is evaluated as a Knowledge based subject just like science, maths and all. The present day teaching of English also focus on getting through the examination system. So we have a exam oriented teaching programme and hence the teaching of English language does not impart skills to the learners. As a result of which our learners are in a miserable condition that even after their completion of a Post Graduate degree, they cannot even write in English properly, though they study English as a subject right from their Kinder Garden level.

In short evaluation in English language in the present scenario is not fullfledged and fully developed to assess the learners’ attainment level in the language skills which is the requirement of teaching English in the broad concept of education. So it is mandatory that the evaluation techniques and tools must be rejuvenated.

**Evaluation Tools in English:**

In this section we are going to deal with some tools that can best be used for the purpose of evaluating the language skills. While testing in English, it should be kept in mind that the intrinsic features of the English language must find a prominent place.

**Listening skill:**

Students ability to understand what they listen to in English can be assessed through various items. Here are some activities.

1. The students has a written sheet with four options he listens to the questions read out by teacher and tick the right option from his list.
2. The students may be given a sheet on which some sentences are written. The teacher says a sentence and the learners listen to
it and choose the most appropriate closest in meaning to the one said by the teacher.

3. The students may be made to listen some recording in a dialogue form. Then they be supplied a sheet on which some answers are written. The teacher asks a question and the students choose the appropriate answer in the sheet supplied to them.

**Speaking skill:**

1. The students are given a situation and example of the responds demanded. They then produce the desired response.

2. A picture may be given to the students and they may be asked to comment on the picture.

3. Two similar pictures may be given to two students and they be asked to find out the difference between the two picture by the medium of dialogue between them.

4. Information gap activities may be used.

5. Role play and group discussion may be organized.

**Reading Skill:**

1. To test the reading skill we may be use the reading comprehension technique to the students.

2. Teacher has to tell the students a story without the climax and the students may be asked to find out climax by reading the book.
Guide lines for Evaluating English Skills:

The testing tools we use to test language skills should have validity, i.e. with how well test relate to real life situations and contexts, as opposed to reliability. Cyril Weir summerises the the current trends in testing as follows:

This communicative /real-life approach in testing might be said to be characterized by the following features

- Focus on meaning,
- Contextualisation,
- Activity that has an acceptable purpose,
- Use of genuine stimulus material,
- Authentic real life-tasks on texts,
- Performance under real psychological condition,
- Judgements made on achievement of communicative purposes.

The performance of the students can be assessed keeping in view of the above said norms. Besides this the teacher has to evaluate all criteria like fluency, appropriateness, grammatical correctness, vocabulary and pronunciation. Such grading is impressionistic and hence it may be subjective. Analytic marking schemes evaluate the learner separately on each criterion. This marking is more detailed and objective. So it is mandatory for the teacher to develop a holistic scoring system.

Role of the teacher:

As it is already said in the earlier section of this paper that tests, i.e. final exams, which are conducted by boards and universities determine to a very large extent what teachers and learners do in the classroom. If the exam is good one, that is to say a
language skill based on where learners are required to listen, speak, read and write at the
time of exam, it will make the students and teachers engage in the similar activities in
class. Teacher will also construct similar class tests. Then there is a lot teacher need know
and can do about such language tests. They have to build a pressure group, keep a
dialogue going with the board or syllabus committee and so on. In any case the teacher
has to know what they can do in class by way of better testing and in fact what changes to
press for.

**Summing up:**

In the present study I focused on the developments that English teachers need
understand and act appropriately as far as the teaching testing of English is concerned.
The present study enumerated some evaluation tools and techniques to be followed in the
English classroom. But one should not forget that there are more tasks that can be done
and followed as tools in the testing of English language. Though I have discussed some
shortcomings in the present evaluation techniques and tools, one cannot dispense with the
present examination pattern. It can be fruitful that the techniques and tools enumerated in
the paper can be used in combination with the present testing tools.

**Sources**


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