

Benefits of Measuring English as a Second Language Students' Learning

Abstract

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Received: January 02, 2025

Revised: February 29, 2025

Accepted: February 15, 2025

Keyword: ESL, Assessment, Evaluation, Curriculum.

1. Introduction

Language Assessment has emerged as an independent field of inquiry for language educators and applied linguists since the late 20th century. This kind of assessment is seen as a methodical and scientific way to evaluate a student's language capabilities or understanding. It consists of a structured set of methodologies. Language Assessment is crucial in identifying students' proficiency while they study English in the classroom environment. In fact, numerous studies on the instruction and acquisition of English as a second language have examined the significance of assessment and its evolution. Language proficiency evaluations offer an opportunity to enhance the quality and approach for learners of the language; thus, it is essential within education to ensure the requirements of the language assessment framework are upheld. Brindley (2001, p.139) notes;

"Many language tests and assessments currently utilized often feature activities that mirror the types of language-use scenarios individuals would face when communicating in daily life." Brindley (2001, p.139).

Language evaluation stands as a vital component of Applied Linguistics. Contemporary Linguists have developed specific theories that connect closely with language education and acquisition. Numerous studies are currently being conducted in this field. Assessing language skills is an inherent aspect of instruction. Teaching English as a second language without a thorough and organized evaluation is futile. The effects of instruction on language learners can solely be gauged by the linguistic expertise of their teachers. Evaluation is essential for mastering any language. It plays a key role in fulfilling the objectives of outcome-centered learning. The desired learning outcomes outline what students should understand and the methods for meeting curriculum goals through teaching strategies. Assessment tools are designed to enhance learning by providing students with significant information. The learning outcomes in English address the diverse needs of students and the specific application of the second language. Consequently, evaluation impacts both teaching and learning, as it influences instructional planning and execution.

Over the past forty years, significant advancements have occurred in both the theory and practice of English language assessment. Nevertheless, numerous fundamental challenges remain unresolved. A primary issue educators encounter is the absence of a clear explanation of the assessment process, which may help to clarify why the program is frequently scrutinized as a foundational endeavor, aimed at developing valid and justified recommendations. The proficiency examinations, as experienced by the teachers, focus on evaluating the knowledge acquired from the curriculum. This evaluation relates to its effects on the teaching and learning of the English language. Evaluative measures have become integral in education, often serving pedagogical purposes, such as motivating students to engage with their studies or facilitating the review of previously covered content.

Evaluation encompasses tools that serve as a framework to enhance learning by bolstering the effectiveness of instruction when educators can confidently develop teaching strategies based on collected data from appropriate sources. This notion suggests that instructors possess a predetermined theoretical framework regarding the curriculum and use evaluations to assess how well students have progressed in their educational journey. Evaluation involves the process of collecting data



regarding a learner's language abilities or accomplishments. It often represents a more extensive idea of measurement with the aim of assessing students' language competencies.

There has been a significant amount of debate surrounding the role of language assessment within applied linguistics and its connection to language instruction (refer to, for instance, Bachman and Palmer 1996). Generally, it appears evident that "...language assessment gains from the perspectives offered by applied linguistics as a field..." (Alderson and Clapham 1992:164), yet there are instances when assessment needs to take a lead role:

We hold the perspective that those who evaluate language should contribute to linguistic theory by investigating how their assessments function, how various elements connect, and what information they provide about the language abilities of test takers. Findings from such evaluations should aid in enhancing our comprehension of the aspects involved in language knowledge and usage (1992:164).

It appears that there is indeed a mutual influence: Assessment methods can influence classroom instruction (Cheng 1997, Wall 1996; 1997), while emerging theories of language education can bring about adjustments in testing methodologies (Spolsky 1995).

2. Research Background

The realm of language evaluation is extensive. Nonetheless, to effectively implement formative assessment within teaching, it is crucial to possess a clear understanding and management of learning goals, instructional approaches, and educational resources. Language evaluation pertains to instructional methods involved in creating tests, administering those tests, and assessing the learning outcomes. The focus of assessment is on enhancing teaching and learning techniques to achieve optimal results. It serves as a means to gauge the desired changes in student behavior. Language, in a broader sense, plays a vital role in facilitating communication. Assessment aids in remedial education. It fosters a stronger connection between instructors and students. It encourages active involvement from learners and is vital for nurturing their inherent talents.

Teaching constitutes the process of sharing knowledge, which raises awareness about the fundamentals of a second language. Hence, a significant question arises: what is the necessity and rationale behind language evaluation? Teaching and learning lack value without a suitable assessment framework. Evaluation is crucial for measuring the effectiveness of language instruction; teachers can utilize assessment guidelines to evaluate their learning goals. The conditions for learning and the outcomes achieved are key concerns for educators. An understanding of language evaluation supports teachers in making informed decisions regarding the methods they use for instruction and in assessing students' progress as well as identifying areas of difficulty. Evaluation equips educators with a clearer insight into both the advancements and gaps in the teaching and learning experience, as well as the realization of the desired objectives.

The essence of language instruction will facilitate evaluations that are absolutely appropriate to the psycho-metrical concept, making it essential to consider the foundational aspects of assessment to establish its validity. Language evaluation is a crucial element of the educational process, aiding students in enhancing their receptive and expressive language abilities. Assessment in education acts as a reflection, showcasing the learners' competencies in acquiring the English language. The importance of language evaluation lies in elevating students' skills based on their linguistic competence in English, and such assessments also affect the extent of teaching and learning. A balanced development of expressive (speaking, writing) and receptive (reading, listening) abilities is encouraged through language education programs. Every component related to the language teaching and learning process contributes valuable insights into understanding the language.

Assessment for instruction is an ongoing endeavor. This is a clear observation that primarily centers on improving knowledge among all learners. For a long time, assessment has been recognized as the practice that advocates for frequent evaluations and draws comparisons among students, encouraging those who excel to strive for even greater achievements. Within the confines of the classroom, teaching and learning assessments constitute an organized and empirical method to devise and assess tests. A variety of strategies are essential since relying on a single approach cannot yield adequate information regarding a student's advancement and comprehension; thus, multiple evidence-based methods are necessary to minimize bias. These procedures compile data as research instruments from diverse origins, with each piece of information being intricately linked. This comprehensive assessment method incorporates interdisciplinary facets of education. It addresses various aspects of a student's character, including knowledge, skills, performance, and aptitude, through a diverse range of activities that students partake in both within and outside the classroom, thereby creating a more thorough evaluation. Psychometric assessments evaluate students' psychological characteristics, aiming to identify their specific learning needs. This strategy is also applicable to the unique requirements of underrepresented students. Educators can develop and utilize a broad spectrum of resources and activities tailored to student needs. Teachers must respond to students' requirements with sensitivity. The needs of students are closely tied to the design and instruction of the educational modules. Assessment aimed at teaching and learning serves as a crucial element to foster student development continuously in the language acquisition process. The approach and methodologies may shift over time. Teachers document students' learning progress based on the data accumulated. Instructional advancement is a continual process that is logged as needed to enhance the student's profile.

Assessment for learning allows educators to discover what students are capable of and identify the reasons for any gaps in their learning. Once a teacher gains insight into a student's capabilities and their level of achievement, they can modify their

teaching methods to bridge this connection, making necessary adjustments to their instructions. These techniques support and promote student advancement and enhance their educational experience. While recognizing and assessing the gaps, it is essential for the teacher to create a coherent link between the current understanding and the more advanced knowledge. This necessitates that teachers deliver feedback to students that is precise, timely, and articulated clearly to foster further improvement in their learning.

Assessment and the teaching-learning process are interconnected and cannot exist as separate entities. This is a comprehensive approach that must be integrated rather than treated in isolation. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize that the assessment process aims to understand how students engage with the material. This method is viewed as a framework for evaluation, showcasing the extent of the curriculum, frequency of assessments, a compilation of tools and strategies, while also contemplating different testing cycles to evaluate student progress. Learning is an evolving practice with both lateral and hierarchical connections, requiring action and reflection from both teachers and students throughout the educational journey.

3. Learning Management by Teachers

As an educator, the teacher might have thought about how the information you learned is chosen and arranged. Teachers are viewed as key players in education. Their job is meant to provide students with access to various resources. A teacher should help students develop the ability to critically evaluate information, allowing them to analyze how different types of knowledge can be assessed in various manners. Critical evaluation could help students assess their language skills in relation to specific subject matters. An ESL teacher serves as a guiding light for the students. Educators can inspire language learners to pose questions and seek answers to understand concepts better. Teachers can identify the level of success achieved by their students. It's important for teachers to keep a balance between teaching and assessing to create a healthy learning environment. This learning environment involves ensuring that everything is appropriate and mindful of the students' levels. Key elements of teaching English are fundamental to the curriculum. Teachers design assessments by including relevant question types, giving both students and educators a true chance to grow and evolve together. The instructional module is thoughtfully organized and encourages structured interactions, enabling students to grasp the syllabus components. In extra help classes, students may find it easier to support one another when they need clarification. New topics, guidelines, and activities are designed to match the attention span of the students. They should be engaging rather than tedious, overwhelming, or boring. Variety brings excitement, interest, new energy, and improved learning experiences into the classroom. A detailed approach to teaching and assessment provides tools to measure what students have learned and how well they have grasped the material.

4. Wash Back

The idea of washback refers to how assessments impact teaching and learning. Generally, washback can be viewed as both good and bad. It is well recognized that a positive washback effect is beneficial and can be integrated into the curriculum. This is necessary for achieving high-quality teaching and enhancing student learning. The testing aims to find out if a positive backwash effect can help students who struggle with learning and boost their confidence in studying English as their second language. Teachers involved in the study can notice how washback plays a role based on the designed language test and existing research materials. Observing language teachers has always been seen as an important part of teaching languages and providing guidance, but lately, it is being recognized as a crucial player in the language classroom since survey data alone might not sufficiently explain the washback effect. Findings from research on language assessments indicate that more studies are needed to understand how language tests actually affect the behavior and attitudes of second language learners.

5. Curriculum Requisites

The syllabus content needed for teaching is important because educators cannot define assessment needs in an empty curriculum. Language assessment in education is mainly used to identify strengths and weaknesses. A teacher might find that a student can pronounce words well and speaks fluently in a second language but struggles with reading comprehension. Therefore, this information suggests that the teacher should continue to teach language skills to those students. Through ongoing assessment, a teacher can gauge the students' abilities. The assessment results also provide feedback from the students, allowing the teacher to adapt the curriculum and teaching methods over time.

A curriculum represents an educational program in its entirety. Designing a curriculum means looking at all aspects of the educational program, including the subjects involved, their roles in the school plan, the time allocated for each subject, and the materials to be used. Put simply, curriculum design needs to take into account the development of goals, content, implementation, and evaluation of the entire education system. A syllabus, on the other hand, refers to how the curriculum is interpreted in a specific situation.

The purpose of language assessment is guided by research aimed at creating various perspectives for teaching, learning, and evaluating English. This approach includes many teaching methods that provide the right framework for effective English teaching and learning. The method engages learners and is centered on the students, applying the most suitable aspects for teaching and learning. Research indicates that teaching and learning are most effective when language learners are interested



and motivated. English proficiency assessments are designed to reflect both research findings and exemplary teaching methods. The connection between assessment and teaching is grounded in the academic field to create solid theories and practices for learning a second language. The test design and organization of items stem from measurable research evidence, which also highlights the link between assessment and the consideration of evaluation criteria. Language assessments help establish the necessary curriculum to fulfill those needs.

- identify the range of learning goals for a specific lesson or group of lessons
- to review teaching methods in achieving the intended learning
- to identify what students might require next to enhance their learning
- to assess abilities based on particular standards
- to obtain outside certification
- to evaluate how students are likely to do in outside tests
- to track the information needed for the advancement of students
- to understand the framework for gaining proficiency in the English language.
- to evaluate how evaluations can support effective teaching.
- to establish the basis for assessments to receive necessary assistance for teaching English.
- to improve the ability to connect curriculum content with prior knowledge

6. Support for Innovation and Learning Development

The main goal of assessing language is to aid research and improve how languages are taught. Language assessment scores often serve as guidelines for measuring various research areas. Comparing these scores to research methods, textbooks, and visual aids provides important benchmarks. Scientific methods in assessment highlight effective teaching styles, learning strategies, and ways to present learning materials, while also describing the language's features, which helps set criteria for developing tests. Language assessment is closely linked to teaching and learning. Therefore, research suggests additional studies to enhance curriculum and learning experiences, whether it involves the native language or a second one. Theories related to learning and teaching materials will need to be compared under controlled conditions to distinguish between traditional and modern approaches. Language tests play a vital and essential role in research about language education. They can serve as a research tool in experimental studies within education. Continuous assessment focuses on monitoring to identify student strengths and weaknesses. Research in this field recommends ongoing changes to the curriculum over time. Advancements in language assessment represent a significant goal of education, as improvement is crucial. Both students and teachers gain from the innovative tools and methods employed in language instruction. Teachers aim to understand how well their students are doing and whether they have successfully learned the material. Progress may require a sensible and structured method for testing advancement, incorporating various testing techniques.

7. Supporting the Concept of Outcome-Based Learning

In education, all language tests and assessments show how they affect both teaching and learning. This situation is also known as the wash-back effect. Teachers are often impacted by this wash-back effect, but when we recognize that exams are happening, we should at least try to ensure that these exams are of high quality. Teachers need to work hard to ensure that the wash-back effect is positive and that it does not harm the essence of the curriculum or diminish the quality of teaching. Assessing proficiency gives students a clear idea of where they need to improve. A well-structured and diverse syllabus is crucial for a good exam, which should accurately reflect different levels of skill. The results from assessments suggest changes to the syllabus based on student needs. Learning English should always aim for some form of assessment. This assessment relates to the rules of the language, and these rules can be taught effectively. These rules help determine how well students perform. The main goal of teaching a language is to achieve results based on students' ability to use language features in different contexts. Actual knowledge of a language is referred to as competence, while the practical use of that knowledge is known as performance. Teaching is effective if students can use the language appropriately in various situations. A strong assessment must be reliable, valid, objective, and capable of distinguishing different levels of understanding. Teachers must understand the connection between the tests they provide and the expected outcomes.

8. Future Targets

The main focus of quality research in ESL evaluation is essential. Language assessment has developed into a complete area of study. Tests are created using advanced tools and methods. Educators and test creators can use software for test development to manage various aspects into similar measures. The field of educational assessment systems keeps interpreting real test score patterns with modern tools and techniques.

Assessments are foundational to meet the real needs of language. In a globalized world, assessments are central to teaching and learning. English as a second language also helps learners show their skills to use knowledge practically in the workplace, rather than just measuring knowledge in a specific context. Online testing software provides useful tools to make it easier to

create, deliver, and grade different types of assessments. The developments lead to more flexible, engaging assessments, automation, and candidate-focused approaches that help organizations adopt efficient assessment models that encourage and engage candidates. Software generated by computers is crucial for gathering information and assigning grades to students. Assessment goes beyond language skills and sets a standard as a powerful tool that can meet educational needs. All these factors promote fairness and ethics in language evaluation. This field has developed into a strong call for the growth of Critical Applied Linguistics as an area of study. The results are seen in shaping theories and practices, such as critical language assessments and other forms of evaluation. Therefore, we are in a globalization era that has transformed the education system significantly. Language tests are very common aside from academic purposes; for instance, professional testers develop and administer tests to help select suitable job candidates. Alternative assessments include journals, blogs, videos, audio recordings, teacher observations, self-evaluations, and peer evaluations.

9. Conclusion

The goal of this study was to create a theory about how teachers and students in India handle the challenge of balancing teaching and testing English as a second language. It examines the meanings and importance of assessments related to teaching and learning in today's context, as well as how educational policies and changes in curriculum affect the choice of English as a second language as a valuable subject.

It has been observed that current educational institutions have a variety of students with different language backgrounds, economic situations, and cultural experiences, which requires different ways of assessing them. This article carefully explains the framework of teaching and how it influences language assessment. Teaching a language is not deemed effective without a thorough and scientific approach to assessment. The data collected from tests offers crucial insights into the modifications that should be made in the curriculum or teaching strategies to reach the desired outcome-focused learning.

Assessment plays a role in revealing how much students understand the language. It establishes a starting point to gauge students' comprehension. Teachers can create appropriate tests related to the curriculum to track how students learn the language. Educational assessment theories are significantly influencing language instruction. Effective teaching and learning methods cannot be imagined without proper, systematic evaluation of assessment.

Therefore, assessment is described as an effort to understand what is happening in order to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. It is also helpful for reviewing the curriculum and identifying areas where students still need to improve. This makes assessment a crucial part of teaching English as a second language, necessary for formative and summative evaluations and providing guidance to support student progress.

Acknowledgments

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