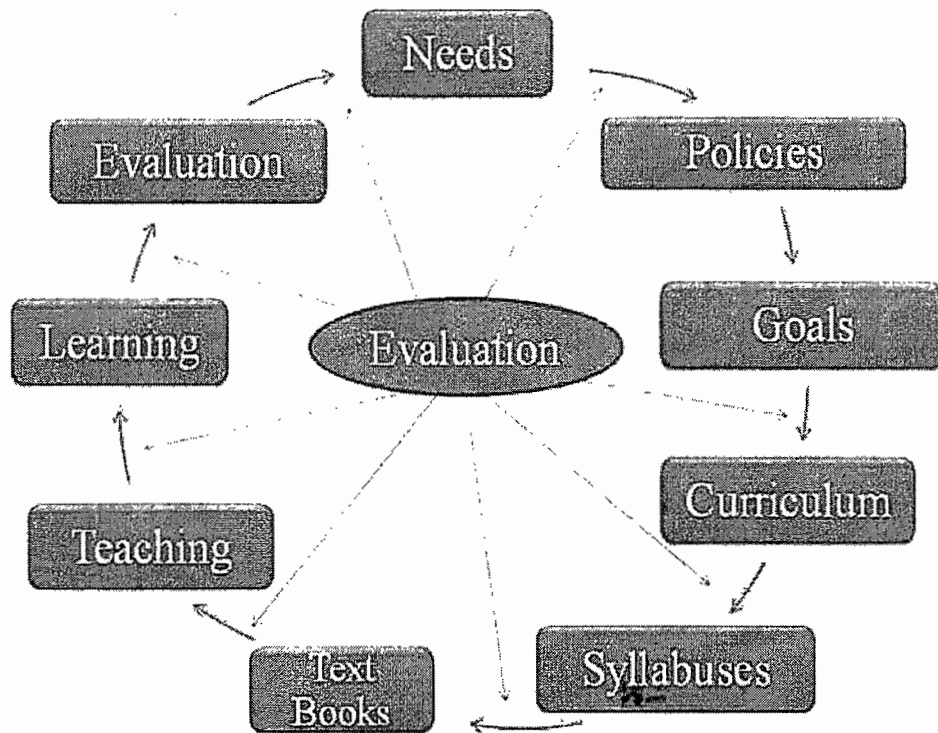


## TAXONOMICAL APPROACH IN TEACHING AND TESTING OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (TEO), popularly known as Bloom’s Taxonomy is a worldwide accepted document that guides the whole process of education, ranging from identification of needs to designing and administration of tools of testing. Formation of policies, fixation of goals, development of curriculum, designing of syllabi, preparation of textbooks, teaching and learning are the other stages of progression coming in between the two i.e. identification of needs and designing and administration of testing tools, as



shown in the below diagram.

Taxonomy is the visualization and practical realization of the universal idea that facilitating all-round growth of the learner’s personality is the ultimate objective of education, irrespective of disciplines, subjects, areas and trades. Learner’s growth is the purpose of teaching all the subjects. It is also known as the consequential effect of learning as shown in the below diagram:-

Teaching a subject → Consequential Effect → Fulfilling the Societal Needs  
 (Content input) (Learner’s Growth)

The same ideas and aspirations are stated in our recent National Education Policy [NEP], 2020. It says “The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture and values, in addition to science and mathematics, to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners.....” (P-3, NEP-2020)

“The National Educational Policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities - both the foundational capacities of literacy and numeracy and higher order cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving - but also social, ethical and emotional capacities and dispositions.....” (P-4, NEP-2020)

“The purpose of the educational system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive and plural society as envisaged by our constitution.....” (p-4,5 NEP-2020)

To further elaborate the concept of learners' growth or personality development, the illustrative framework of TEO was created. It considered human personality divided into 3 domains. For each domain virtues, abilities or skills were identified and categorized in a hierarchical manner and it was proposed that development of these abilities or skills is the development of human personality. The same is perceived as learner’s growth taking place as a consequential effect of teaching and learning. The below diagram shows the basic structure of TEO.

<b>Cognitive Domain (Connected to intelligence or process of thinking)</b>	<b>Affective Domain (Associated with attitudes and value system)</b>	<b>Psychomotor Domain (Action part of human personality)</b>
Knowledge	Receiving	Imitation
Understanding/ Comprehension	Responding	Manipulation
Application	Valuing	Precision
Analysis	Organization	Articulation
Synthesis	Characterization (1956-1964)	Automatization
Evaluation (1948-1956)		Prof. R.H. Dave-1969 Mrs. A.J. Harow-1972 Mrs. E.J. Simpson-1972

Note: Bloom et al never designed the psychomotor part of the taxonomy. There are three versions of this domain designed by A.J. Harrow, E.J.Simpson and R.H. Dave, of which NTS have opted for the Dave’s model of psychomotor domain of the TEO.

Here it is worth mentioning that cognitive domain skills or thinking skills were earlier known as 'Intelligence' part of human personality, affective domain skills were known as 'Attitude' part and psychomotor skills were always known as 'Action'.

### **1. Use of TEO in Language Teaching Learning and Testing**

Language teaching-learning has so many dimensions such as first language, second language, third/foreign language learning, which are very common. Apart from these three, National Testing Service-India of CIIL has identified and described two different dimensions of language teaching and learning. They are (i) Mastery over a language and (ii) developing basic linguistic skills in a language. It is also known as developing proficiency in a given language.

- a) Mastery over a language means the acquaintance of grammatical rules of a language, their different categories and possession of a substantially good vocabulary of that language. This goes with the competency in a particular language which is different from proficiency in a view that, here use of that language in real life communication is taken for granted and maximum emphasis is given on developing reading and writing skills of a learner.
- b) Basic Linguistic skills include all the four abilities of successful communication—listening, speaking reading and writing of which two are known as receptive skills (listening and reading) and two are called the productive skills i.e speaking and writing among these, more emphasis is given on developing speaking skills as it is most primary and real form of language use. Cognitive domain part of TEO is more relevant and useful for acquiring mastery of a language and the psychomotor domain portion of the TEO is more relevant for acquiring proficiency in a given language.

### **2. Mastery of a language**

Mastery appears to be a big sounding concept but as per the pedagogical view point it is confined to the minimum level of attainment of a subject matter prescribed under a course to satisfy the basic requirements of a teacher, board or a university. For this, acquiring three cognitive skills is considered enough to certify Mastery over a subject, including the languages. These are- (i) Knowing or knowledge of facts and figures of a subject (including a language), knowledge of traditions and conversations, trends, sequences and movements, methodologies, frameworks and systems of a subject and finally knowledge of rules, theories and principles of that particular subject, including the language.

- a) Understanding or comprehension of the above components of a subject; and
- b) Ability to apply the known-understood categories in real life situations at least in testing contexts.

Hence it is recommended that a language teacher should and must take these categories as reference points for designing a course or text book on language and at the same time take the same categories into consideration while testing the level of mastery of a student in a

particular language. This is what we mentioned as using Taxonomical concepts in teaching and testing a language.

In developing proficiency in a language, steps or stages of the psychomotor domain of TEO are of great use and help because they are specially meant for learning and improving physical skills and proficiency in a language is more physical in nature and basic linguistic skills are primarily physical skills only. Imitation is the first step in learning. In fact, we start learning with imitation which is defined as copying someone's action on a very rudimentary level. Impulse and overt repetition are the subcategories or actions involved in imitation. It is very useful in starting to learn any language and hence the ability to imitate can be taken as an activity while testing a productive linguistics skill of a learner.

After imitation comes the stage of manipulation. Following commands (of a teacher / trainer), selection of action with preference and acting accordingly are the three sub-categories of manipulation as a learning skill which can be utilized for imparting language training and skill development. Utilizing limited resources to negotiate with unlimited real life situations too is called manipulation. When a language learner acquires limited vocabulary and structures of any language and tries to deal with unlimited life context to communicate, it means that he/she is using and showing manipulative skills in language use.

Therefore, manipulation with its sub-categories can be used to test productive linguistic skills of a learner. Imitation and manipulation skills combined together prepare ground for development of precision level in language use. Precision in general is nothing but performing a task with speed and accuracy. Ability to increase, decrease and modify one's action is the basic virtue of precision. All sorts of grammatical correctness and perfect choice of vocabulary use fall under precision.

In normal situations, attaining the level of precision in language use is considered to be enough as far as functional purposes are concerned. But there are two more higher skills of proficiency (including the linguistic one) - Articulation and Naturalization or Routinization or Entermilization. Articulation is achieved when language is used with speed and accuracy with sequence and harmony. It encompasses all the aspects of suitability of a language used including its socio-cultural and pragmatic issues. For example- His father or my friend's father died is a precise expression but not an articulate one. Articulation demands to convey the same message as "my friend's father passed away / is no more / left for his heavenly abode", etc. which is more desirable in a social-cultural context.

Automatization / Naturalization / Habitualization or Routinization is perhaps the highest level of proficiency where a job is performed with accuracy and articulation without much thinking and effort. In other words when the above-mentioned linguistic skills, especially the productive ones become the part and partial of the personality of the user-we say that the highest level of language proficiency is achieved.

As far as teaching literature is concerned, it is of great convenience to use the taxonomical categories for fixing our instructional and assessment objectives. Researchers see it as an

utter surprise that although TEO was designed for all the disciplines and subjects, its dimensions, especially that of knowledge and comprehension are extremely suitable and adaptable for teaching and learning of literature as such. Therefore we can see the dimensions of knowledge and comprehension as mentioned in the TOE.

Knowledge:

- a) Knowledge of specifics: Terminology, facts & figures.
- b) Knowledge of ways and means of dealing with these specifics- Traditions, conventions, trends and movements, sequences, classifications, categories, frameworks, methodologies and so on and so forth.
- c) Knowledge of abstractions- Theories and principles.

Likewise, the sub-categories of comprehension such as – Translation, interpretation and extrapolation are widely used in literary studies including criticism. Here it is worth mentioning that the affective domain skills which are deeply concerned with the value system to be inculcated in the students are like main focal points of literature when compared to any other subject or discipline. And hence, these can be used to determine the educational and evaluation related objectives of teaching and learning of this subject.

Therefore, we can conclude that Taxonomy of Educational Objectives can serve as a guiding document to fix and state instructional objectives in a language teaching set up in more objective and observable behavioral terms so that those can be achieved and examined with a clear view in a systematic and scientific approach.

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