

# Speaking / Oral mode of Testing for Assessment & Evaluation for Quality Learning

S.K. Meena Kumari<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Dr. K. Geetha<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Research Scholar, Education Department, Dr. MGR Educational & Research Institute, (Deemed University), Maduravoyal, Chennai, India.*

<sup>2</sup>*Principal, Department of Education, Dr. MGR Educational & Research Institute, (Deemed University), Maduravoyal, Chennai, India.*

*Email: <sup>1</sup>pcns.connect@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>geetha.bed@drmgrdu.ac.in*

## Abstract

Speaking, as against the other modes of Testing in Assessment and Evaluation is the most appropriate one to judge a student's / learner's knowledge. It may not be complete, but it is a more effective tool to assess and evaluate learning attained by a learner of any age. Speaking is one of the two skills for outward communication, the other being - Writing. But unlike Writing, Speaking is a straightforward possibility to judge a learner's learning outcomes actually attained. The paper focuses on to project the scientific aspects of Speaking which scores over Writing. The paper also highlights to say that in a situation where Writing seems to have better relevance and possibility to assess and evaluate the learners, Speaking, as a skill, corroborates learning having happened to the learner. Writing skill of a learner may not provide fool proof judgment possible, as Writing is possible from memory without understanding also, i.e. rote learning. The paper brings before the reader the required evidential connotations as to why Speaking has its advantages in testing of knowledge over writing, though Writing as a mode of testing has its own niche aspects of testing of knowledge acquired.

**Keywords** - Testing modes, Oral & Written - in Assessment and Evaluation- Soft Skills - Oral / Speaking skills for a comprehensive assessment - teaching, learning and evaluation - Competence & Confidence - Improvisation in presentations

## I. METHODOLOGY

The paper is a reflection of observations made by the authors on Oral / Speaking mode of Testing in Assessment and Evaluation - more in reference to the Students / Learners. The knowledge and the experience of the authors find expression in the paper with the supportive features observed by the other authors whose observations are sourced and shown in reference. No primary data collection is done since the observations are almost similar in different demographic samples and the times and they do not seem to show any dissimilarity. Secondary data is thus chosen as supportive evidence as references to the observations expressions made in the paper.

## II. INTRODUCTION

Speaking skill is the ability of a person, be it a learner or otherwise, to verbally express facets of knowledge and also about what is learned - conceptual, elaborative and specific points of what is learned. Speaking gains an advantage, as most of the times it is a real-time happening, so the speaker (a learner) does instantly summarize what is learned and also bring points of importance, highlighting to speak about them, so that assessment and evaluation of quality learning is possible.

The great advantage of speaking is it's a great innovative activity that the mind perhaps makes

possible. Speech was more conventional and popular much before the writing came into being. While speech was a natural sound based expression, writing became a later expression using script. Oral tradition was more in usage, especially, the ancient Hindu scriptures were orally chanted expressions, and the words of wisdom were sound based and they were handed down to the generations after generations using the oral form of communication as tradition.

Since Oral or spoken mode of communication is instant and spontaneous, it cannot be done away with. The digital advancement which could convert sound based words into script form has been only to highlight the importance of written mode of expression in the form of creation of documentation for futuristic records for reference. The practice also was in vogue when a telephonic conversation or points of oral discussions were written as document covering the gist of points discussed which was considered a confirmation for having discussed over phone or in person. *“But while speech is spontaneous, writing causes delay and takes time as feedback is not immediate.”* Ref: 01

### III.RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Oral communication is through speaking. It is not only conversations but discussions and one speaking to a large group of people. It is restricted to speaking as an element of expression in learning process. While it is direct interaction in communications, it is done for a knowledge delivery or transference and also for making an assessment of what has been learnt. The scope for speaking in the paper is more in the area of learning and learning process. Speaking brings spontaneity and also transparency. Ref: 02

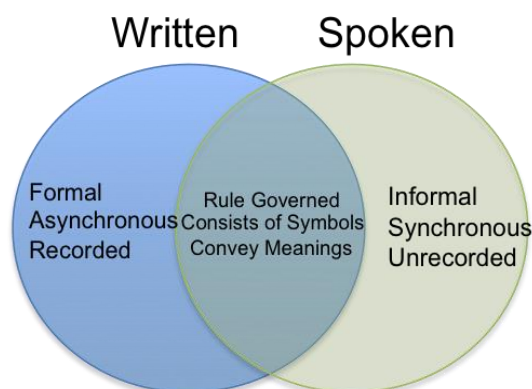
Hence most of the times, it is done for faster communication either face to face or through telephone or through virtual and the other media. Such communication is later formalized through writing of a letter or a report. So Speaking is instant, spontaneous and transparent. While now days the Speaking / verbal expressions also could be recorded for

making them as evidential, writing is still considered as more authentic and futuristic. The factor of authenticity is but questionable, as writing could be from somebody other than whoever is actually communicating. So the content, the words, the syntax would all emanate from the person who is writing on behalf of the other.

### ***Authentic and Transparent Assessment possible***

Assessment when done on oral mode will always be authentic and transparent, as the examiner and the student will face each other or in conversation with each other, so the responses to the questions will be instant and the oral responses vindicate the understanding whether effective or not. If responses are from rote memory and the understanding and learning are short of needed level, they could be easily judged from the facial expressions, and even if they are found to be doubtful, cross-questioning could be done to know if the learning is right and adequate.

*“Face to face interaction - orally questioning and receiving answers enables, easier grasp of conclusions from the movements and actions. Same points of expression will differ between oral expression and written expression. Oral expression will make possible the tone and also the body language, which makes the feeling of the person visible. Such visible expression apart from the tone and the voice modulation adds more than just reading the written text”*



While Written mode of communication scores over ‘Spoken mode of communication’

sometimes, Spoken mode has distinct advantages, which can happen fast, genuinely assessable and upgradable in real time, whereas Written communication, which is decoded at a later time than at which it is written, loses the advantage of the 'Real Time' activity, upgradability and genuinely expressible feature, all of which are the key-features of Spoken mode of communication. Further, many times the Written mode of communication has more possibilities of getting faked. Ref: 03

### ***Intervention easier since flexibility is high***

If responses are found to be doubtful, cross-questioning could be done to know if the learning is right and adequate. Since intervention could be done in real time, it would be easier done than through the other modes.

### ***Feedback - instant & spontaneous***

The responses to the Questioning would be instant and real time assessment and evaluation enables the teacher make an immediate assessment of additional inputs to be given, so that the positive results could be set as objectives and the activities planned for the ensuring the outcomes.

### ***Students can be asked to:***

- **Present posters**
- **Use presentation software such as Power Point**
- **Perform in a debate**
- **Present a case**
- **Answer questions from teachers or their peers.**

Ref: 04

### ***Saving of time and efforts***

Spoken mode of communication saves time in communication and also the efforts. When there is no need for confirmative communication, it is ideal to adopt spoken mode of communication. Taking examinations could also have a spoken mode of answering element supporting the written responses. Written responses oft-times do not portray the extensive knowledge surrounding the concepts

and also, in spoken mode of communication, especially answering or making a presentation, examples could be drawn into contextual expressions such as anecdotes. Choice of Spoken / Oral mode of testing will make the assessment more elaborate, comprehensive, wholistic, and judgment will have out of the context relevance and usages.

### ***Best to maintain Confidentiality***

Written communication cannot match with the Spoken communication as far as the 'Confidentiality' factor is concerned. While Confidentiality is difficult to be ensured for longer time durations through spoken and unrecorded communication, it is quite safe to use Spoken mode for shorter durations. Since Spoken mode is not futuristic and normally not recorded for conversations or one to one communications, unless needed specially.

### ***Choice of Spoken / Oral mode of taking tests***

Being able to write is good, but Oral test-taking is more beneficial in proper and wholistic testing. The results obtained through Oral Assessment can be drawn for a variety of ways of judgement of the students' skills

### ***Being Thorough with the Knowledge***

Casual talk, presentation or an oral expression on a topic could be judged to know whether the student or any learner for that matter has knowledge. Since what is spoken, how it is spoken, what supporting information was used, anecdotes, if any, will all enable the person judging to know whether the student is really knowledgeable

### ***Being able to present in an organized manner***

Oral presentation gets an enhanced and added feature by making it an organized document, sequentially arranged. Oral presentation content if prepared by the student or the learner would itself represent the mind's disposition. Even if the presentation content is an outcome of a couple of trials of rework, it is worth the salt, since such an effort would only be due to what one intends to say. Being able to prepare a presentation and also doing an actual oral

presentation going by the PPT, actually will be a reflection of one's knowledge and its intensity.

### ***Exhibition of Confidence through language skills.***

Oral presentation is a speaking effort. Speaking on a topic with a logical sequence and material of high relevance will reveal the ability of one to exhibit the oral presentation skills. The right sequence, adequate depth, intelligent choice of vocabulary, the expression and the feel would be a reflection of the confidence that one has on the subject. Confidence is a self acknowledgement and acceptance of one's ability to do something through the facial expressions of calm and composure. No other communication mode would reveal the Confidence like the Oral skills. Confidence actually speaks about the speaker's ability to have adequate or more often, mastery over the subject that's chosen for such presentation.

### ***Exhibition of Confidence through subject knowledge skills***

While general confidence is often seen as confidence, most of the times, the subject mastery or adequate knowledge only renders the person the real confidence when making oral presentation. It is not possible to cover up 'lack of adequate knowledge' easily through smartness alone. Subject knowledge has the real contribution in the confidence levels exhibited.

### ***Exhibition of Soft skills***

Soft skills are the moderation of the behaviour skills in a group or public. Behavioural patterns in terms of the spoken words of choice, bodily disposition and acceptable mannerisms are those which speak about soft skills. Soft skills actually make people to be accepted. Soft skills could sometimes be "make belief" practices of people, yet they are accepted and the people exhibiting them are acknowledged. The very need and the practice that such people find to adopt the accepted behavioural skills are amply acknowledged as their smartness to adjust to the situations.

### ***Improvisation***

Improvisation is best possible only while doing oral presentations or speaking sessions. Since improvisation is a change adopted depending on the situation or a scenario, it is easier to make necessary 'altered expressions of thoughts' if one is adept in doing that. Extensive knowledge in the subject of a good speaker opens up huge scope for improvisation. But improvisation often will be a need in small measures, depending on what was thought of and the actual situation, while the oral presentation is done. Improvisation is not possible in writing.

### ***Through Presentations (PPTs) Writing Skills along with Presentation (Spoken) skills could be exhibited***

Presentations if done totally by the presenter, it would be something highly appreciable. Both the preparation of the presentation file and also the actual doing of the oral presentation is an exhibition of the skills of the presenter, who will be able to make it visible through presentation that the presenter has **Subject knowledge skills** and the **Language skills (Writing and Speaking)**, apart from the **soft skills** that the presenter has to glorify the total presentation.

### ***Assessment & Evaluation would be very precise.***

Oral presentation or the speaking skills will have a greater scope than any other skill in communication, which can bring out multiple abilities of the learner / student. An Oral presenter can be successful at any given level only when the presenter depicts Subject Knowledge, Language skills (Written & Oral), Soft skills. The presentation and the way the presenter treats the subject while presenting would exhibit the other un-exhibited skills also - like the level of knowledge the presenter has, intentions of the presenter, the aspirations and the objectives behind the presentation. It is because of this that Oral Presentation is of high importance to the students/learners.

### ***Preparing students to choose to take Oral Tests***

Oral forms of assessment are very essential. Worldwide, Universities have a strong reason to develop in the students the abilities which matter most in the world of work and professional arena. Oral communication in fact dominates. Many a theory of learning considers it important that the students are vocal and expressive of their ideas and confidence while they communicate in the work environments.

***As an answer to the academic integrity, oral assessment.***

Academic integrity is now facing the test of time due to pandemic and other global issues. Oral assessments become litmus tests in this period of time for ascertaining that the performance is of the student, while it is not to belittle the written assessment, which has its own special importance.

*“Assessment can be exclusively oral, or, as is frequently the case, can be combined with other modes of communication, depending on the nature of the assessment task. What makes the assessment ‘oral’ is that at least part of the assessment, and part of what counts towards a student’s mark or grade, depends on what the student communicates by word of mouth”*

***Seven reasons for using oral assessment***

1. The learning outcomes demand it
2. It allows probing of the students’ knowledge
3. It reflects the world of practice
4. It improves learning
5. It suits some students
6. The meaning of questions can be clarified
7. It helps to ensure academic integrity

Ref: 05

Plato famously argued for the superiority of the spoken to the written word: writing would destroy the need for memory; students would receive information but without proper instruction and would therefore appear to be

knowledgeable while in fact being quite ignorant. On the other hand, the spoken word “is written on the soul of the hearer with understanding”, and the written word is only a pale shadow of “the living and animate speech of a man with knowledge” (Phaedrus, p. 98). Two-and-a-half millennia later, Kehm would describe one of the strengths of oral assessment as its ability “to distinguish superficial from real knowledge through in-depth questioning” (Kehm, 2001, p. 27).

*“Teaching, learning and assessment processes that strengthen students’ engagement with ideas, that develop identity, and that build relationships within communities of learning depend on multiple modes of communication.”*

Ref: 06

**IV. CONCLUSION**

The importance of Oral Assessment has been more than highlighted in the paper with the instances of usage by different assessors in the institutions or otherwise. The importance of it is clear and vivid with the rationale that goes to explain why Oral Assessment element both in formative and summative assessments matter much. Any assessment that is done without at least a part of it being ‘Oral’ will lose the essence of assessment, and the assessment and evaluation will not be complete without the Oral assessment element in the assessment process. It is also observed that there are challenges to make “Oral assessment”, but then there are rewards too for students and teachers.

**REFERENCES**

Ref: 01

1. <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/english-language/the-advantages-of-written-communication-english-language-essay.php>

Ref: 02

2. <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/oral-communication.htm>

Ref: 03

3. [https://www.answers.com/Q/What\\_are\\_the\\_advantages\\_of\\_speech\\_over\\_writing](https://www.answers.com/Q/What_are_the_advantages_of_speech_over_writing)  
Ref: 04
4. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/publications/2019/aug/oral-assessment>  
Ref: 05
5. <https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/FilestoreDONOTDELETE/Fileupload,213702,en.pdf>  
Ref: 06
6. <https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/FilestoreDONOTDELETE/Fileupload,213702,en.pdf>