LLT Journal, e-ISSN 2579-9533, p-ISSN 1410-7201, Vol. 26, No. 2, October 2023, pp. 760-769

LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching
http://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/LLT
Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

EFL TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT LITERACY

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https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v26i2.3654
received 3 September 2021; accepted 26 October 2023

Abstract
Due to the importance of assessing students' learning, teachers have to allocate specific time for assessment during the teaching-learning process. For the sake of implementing effective assessment, adequate knowledge and skills of teachers in assessment are badly needed. However, there is an important question related to teachers' knowledge and skills in assessment, "Do EFL teachers have a good understanding of effective assessment for their students?" This study tried to answer such curiosity by conducting a survey assessment literacy of EFL teachers. The EFL teachers involved in this study were English teachers at several secondary schools in an Indonesian context and the information on their assessment literacy was obtained through a set of Assessment Literacy Inventory (ALI). It was found from this study that the EFL teachers' assessment literacy was relatively low, indicating their limited knowledge and skills in assessment. Consequently, more continuous and ongoing training, workshop and other teacher professional development are essential to improve the EFL teachers' assessment literacy.

Keywords: assessment, assessment literacy, EFL learning, English teachers

Introduction

Assessment serves as one anchor point in the instructional design. This makes sense since all stages in the instructional design starting from planning of teaching to grading students' learning cannot be separated from assessment (Orrell, 2006; Sahinkarakas, 2012).

Basically, in terms of its purposes, assessing students' learning can be carried out in two modes: summative and formative assessment. As pointed out by Dunn and Mulvenon (2009), summative assessment is aimed at assessing students' academic progress after a specified period (for example after finishing a unit of material or at the end of an entire school year) based on an established criterion. On the other hand, formative assessment aims to provide feedback and information about teaching teaching-learning process for students, teachers, and educational stakeholders. These two modes of assessment have traditionally been considered to be mutually exclusive (Girgla, Good, Krstic, McGinley, Richardson, Sneidze-Gregory, & Star, 2021). However, along with the development of assessment theory, there is a paradigm shift regarding effective assessment in students' learning in which the formative assessment is recommended to enhance

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students' learning by providing immediate feedback to both teachers and students and encouraging all students to be active learners and take responsibility for their learning (Olutola, Daramola, & Ogunjimi, 2016).

Such knowledge of assessment trends, issues, and effective assessment should be taken into consideration by the teachers when effective assessment is sought. The importance of effective assessment in students' learning is highlighted by Hattie and Timperley (2007) stating that without involving the process of assessing students' learning, the teaching and learning process will not be effective. Thus, teachers must allocate most of their teaching time for assessment. However, providing most of the teaching time for assessment is not sufficient for effective assessment unless the teachers have adequate assessment knowledge and skills.

The need for the teacher's knowledge and skills to conduct an effective assessment becomes more urgent when it comes to assessment in language learning because it involves assessing many language elements (Hidri, 2021). Giraldo (2018) suggests language teachers have three core components in language assessment that consist of knowledge, skill, and language assessment principles. For such a complex reason, this study was aimed at revealing the EFL teachers' knowledge and skills in conducting effective assessments.

Assessment Literacy

When understanding and skills in implementing effective assessment are concerned, it has something to do with the term of assessment literacy. This is in line with the statement by Gareis and Grant (2015) which defines teachers' assessment literacy as teachers' knowledge, skills, and ability to develop and use appropriate and reliable assessment instruments and techniques in the teaching-learning process to improve students' learning" (p. 11). Such a definition seems to support the earlier definition proposed by Stiggin in 1990 (as stated by Herrera & Macias, 2015) in which being assessment literate is defined as having a rudimentary knowledge of assessment theories and being able to apply that knowledge to measure students' achievement. From those two definitions, it can be emphasized that being assessment literate means having theoretical and practical competence related to all aspects of assessment for effective student learning.

Since assessment literacy is very much related to teachers' theoretical and practical competencies of assessment, several aspects of assessment are considered as competencies that should be possessed by teachers. Herrera and Macias (2015) mentioned that teachers should have knowledge and skills in designing, administering, grading, evaluating, and reflecting on the impact of all types of assessments to be considered assessment-literate teachers. More specifically, seven competencies are listed by Stiggins (as quoted by Mertler & Campbell, 2005) namely competence to link assessments with clear purposes, competence to clarify achievement expectations, competence to apply proper methods of assessment, competence to develop excellent assessment exercises and criteria for appropriate scoring and sampling, the competence to avoid bias in assessment, competence to communicate student achievement effectively, and competence to use assessment as an instructional intervention" (p.7). However, Mertler and Campbell (2005) claimed that these seven competencies listed by

Stiggins were already included in the five standards for measuring the competence of teachers in the educational assessment of students developed by the National Education Association (NEA), the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in 1987. The five standards consist of teachers' skills for selecting and developing appropriate methods of assessment, administering, scoring, and interpreting the results of assessment, using assessment results for decision-making and grading, communicating assessment results, and identifying unethical assessment practices.

The development of standards for measuring teachers' competence in assessment shows that assessment is not a simple and unimportant thing for the teachers even though every day they deal with numerous procedures of assessment in their classrooms such as having assessment activities in their classroom, developing tests, etc. (Vogt, & Tsagari, 2014). Indeed, Vogt and Tsagari (2014) claimed that the new development of teaching and learning as well as educational policy require new competencies of the teachers in assessing their students' learning. Therefore, having sound educational knowledge and skills in assessing student learning (Singh, Singh, Singh, Moneyam, Abdullah, & Zaini, 2022) and, thus, being assessment literate (Prasetyo, 2018) is inevitable for teachers.

More importantly, teachers' assessment literacy affects students' academic achievement and teaching-learning process (Nurdiana, 2020). A study by Mellati (2018) revealed that teachers' assessment literacy had some effects on students' writing abilities. The study also found that the classroom practices were influenced by the teachers' assessment literacy as well. The assessment-literate teachers were found to be able to organize their classroom practices more systematically by considering students' interests in setting goals, having creative assessments through classroom assignments, and providing feedback to students. Such finding on assessment literate teachers' ability to have better classroom practice is supported by Ashraf and Zolfaghari's (2018) study revealing that the higher teachers' assessment literacy level, the more reflective they are on their teaching. It is believed that reflective teachers involve themselves in enquiring and critically thinking about their technique of teaching and other related aspects of their teaching (Minott, 2021) which in turn will lead to student improvement.

Despite the many advantages that assessment literate teachers have, Popham (2009) claimed that many teachers have limited knowledge about educational assessment. Some previous research reported that teachers have low assessment literacy indicating their limited knowledge of assessment. Kanjee and Mtembu (2015) studied South African teachers' assessment literacy. The findings of their study showed that approximately half of the teachers in that study were at the basic level of assessment literacy and the other half fell below the basic level (Kanjee, 2015). Another study by Vogt and Tsagari (2014) also indicated that foreign language teachers had developed very low assessment literacy.

However, studies by Perry (2013), Luthfiyyah, Basyari, and Dwininiasih (2020), and Aria, Sukyadi, and Kurniawan (2021) reported that the secondary school teachers in those studies had a moderate level of assessment literacy. Responding to an inventory to measure assessment literacy, teachers in Perry's (2013) study exhibited fairly high assessment literacy. Further, that study exposed

that those teachers had the lowest mean score in the standard of assessment dealing with their ability to recognize unethical or illegal practices of assessment.

In light of several reviews of previous studies on teachers' assessment literacy, it is clear that the findings of those studies are inconclusive. Different educational contexts and other external and internal factors of the teachers may affect the level of teachers' assessment literacy. Moreover, despite the significant role of assessment literacy in teaching and assessment, Fulcher (2012) indicated that research on assessment literacy was still in its infancy. Therefore, further research needs to be conducted to see the EFL teachers' level of assessment literacy. Furthermore, by identifying the level of teachers' assessment literacy, it is also possible to see the quality of the English teaching-learning process in the classroom. Such findings of teachers' assessment literacy certainly make a significant contribution to the development of assessment theory. In addition, such findings are considered valuable as a reference for the government as the policy maker to decide whether teachers need more training on assessment or not and whether the curriculum targets, especially those related to students' assessment, have been achieved or not. Based on this argument, the present study was conducted to examine EFL teachers' assessment literacy in the Indonesian educational context.

Method

This study involved 30 EFL teachers to respond to an instrument in evaluating teachers' knowledge and skills in assessment known as the Assessment Literacy Inventory (ALI). The teachers were secondary school English teachers, consisting of 15 English teachers from 3 Junior High Schools and 15 English teachers from 4 Senior High Schools

The Assessment Literacy Inventory used in this study was the one developed by Mertler and Campbell (2005). However, this inventory had been translated into Indonesian language to avoid language barriers and misunderstanding of the concepts being asked. Besides, the inventory was also modified and specified for the EFL context in this study. Some items were dropped because they are considered irrelevant to the EFL context in Indonesia. So, the total number of items in this inventory was 23. The items in this inventory were preceded by 5 classroom-based scenarios. The scenario showed a brief classroom situation followed by several multiple-choice items. Scenarios 1 and 3 were followed by 6 items. Scenario 2 and 5 were followed by 4 items, while scenario 4 was followed by 3 items.

In addition to being equipped with five classroom-based scenarios, the items within a single scenario were also directly aligned with some standards used to measure teachers' competence in conducting assessments for students' learning (Mertler & Campbell, 2005). However, the number of items for each standard was not the same. Standard 1 evaluating teachers' skill in selecting appropriate assessment methods for instructional decisions was measured in items 1, 7, 11, 17, and 20. Standard 2 requiring teachers to be skilful in creating proper assessment methods for decision making was measured with items 2, 8, 12, and 21. Standard 3 measuring teachers' ability in administering, scoring, and interpreting the assessment results was comprised of items 3, 9, 13, 19, and 22. Standard 4 dealing with teachers' skill in using assessment results for deciding

students' grades, planning for teaching, developing curriculum, and school improvement was asked in items 4, 14, and 18. Next, items 5, 15, and 23 address the level of competence in standard 5 which requires teachers to be skilled in having valid procedures of grading for students' learning. Standard 6 addressing the ability of teachers to communicate the results of assessment to students, parents, and other parties was covered in item 6. Finally, standard 7 requiring teachers to be capable of identifying unethical and other inappropriate assessment methods and practices was measured in items 10 and 16.

After the teachers gave their responses to each item, their correct and incorrect responses were examined. A score of 1 was given for the correct response and 0 was given for incorrect answer. Next, the correct answers were divided by 23 and multiplied by 5. So, the highest score was 5 and the lowest score was 0. To see the teachers' assessment literacy level in general, the mean score was calculated from all teachers' total scores. The teachers' tendency to answer each item was also analyzed by identifying the percentage of teachers' correct answers in each item. In addition to knowing the general level of assessment literacy and each item tendency, the teachers' assessment literacy in each standard was also identified by dividing the score for a particular standard by the number of items for that standard and multiplying by 5. The resulting score indicated the degree of the teachers' assessment literacy for each standard. The closer the mean is to 5, the greater knowledge the teachers have for each particular standard. In addition, the highest and the lowest performance of teachers in the standards were also identified by examining the mean scores of the standard.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The presentation of findings in this study begins with the results of the analysis of the EFL teachers' level of literacy in general and continues with the analysis of teachers' responses for each item and each standard.

After calculating the teachers' correct answers, with a maximum score of 5, it was found that the highest score of teachers' assessment literacy was 3.04 while the lowest score was 0.87. The mean score was 1.88. On average, the EFL teachers only answered 9 items correctly out of 23 items in the inventory. See Table 1 for the results of the mean score, the highest score, the lowest score, and the average number of items answered correctly.

Table 1. The mean score, the highest score, the lowest score, and the average of items answered correctly

	Highest Score	**Lowest Score**	**Mean Score**	**Average Number of Items Answered Correctly by Teachers from 23 Items**
30 EFL Teachers	3.04	0.87	1.88	9

Regarding the EFL teachers' performance in answering each item of the inventory, out of 23 items in the inventory, only 8 items could be responded to correctly by more than 50% of the teachers. The remaining 15 items were answered correctly by less than 50% of the teachers. Item 20, which asks the teachers to label the kind of assessment that serves to identify the specific difficulties faced by students, was found to be answered correctly by the majority

(93%) of teachers in this study. On the other hand, item 4, which requires teachers to identify an inappropriate use of the standardized test results, could be answered correctly by only 3% of the teachers or one teacher.

The detailed percentage of items answered correctly by the teachers is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Number and percentage of teachers who answered each item correctly

Item	Number of Teachers Answered Correctly	Percentage of Teachers Answered Correctly
1	10	33 %
2	18	60 %
3	9	30 %
4	1	3 %
5	3	10 %
6	11	37 %
7	18	60 %
8	18	60 %
9	6	20 %
10	2	7 %
11	4	13 %
12	2	7 %
13	20	67 %
14	9	30 %
15	16	53 %
16	10	33 %
17	25	83 %
18	4	13 %
19	4	13 %
20	28	93 %
21	14	47 %
22	4	13 %
23	22	73 %

The last result of this study concerns the teachers' assessment literacy level by the seven standards of assessment. Among the seven standards used to measure the assessment literacy of EFL teachers, the highest performance of the teachers in assessment was found in standard 1 of selecting appropriate assessment methods (M=2.83; maximum possible score = 5). The lowest assessment performance shown by the EFL teachers was found in standard 4 of using the results of assessment for decision making (M=0.78; maximum possible score = 5). The detailed results of the teachers' assessment performance for those seven standards are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Mean scores of teachers' assessment literacy level by the seven standards of assessment

Standards	Mean Scores
Standard 1: Selecting appropriate methods of assessment	2.83
Standard 2: Developing proper methods of assessment	2.21
Standard 3: Administering, scoring, and interpreting assessment results	1.23
Standard 4: Making use of assessment results for decision-making	0.78

Standards	Mean Scores
Standard 5: Develop valid procedures for grading	2.33
Standard 6: Communicating the results of assessment	1.83
Standard 7: Identifying unethical or other assessment practices	1.08

Among the eight items that were answered correctly by more than 50 % of the teachers, three items belong to standard 1 about selecting appropriate assessment methods, two items belong to standard 2 about developing proper methods of assessment and standard 5 about developing valid procedures for grading and one item came from standard 3 about administering, scoring, and interpreting assessment results.

Among the three items that were answered correctly by less than 10 % of the teachers, one item was that of standard 4 about making use of assessment results for decision-making, one was of standard 5 about developing valid procedures for grading and the last one belonged to standard 7 about identifying unethical or illegal assessment practices.

As a summary of the findings of the present study, the EFL teachers' assessment literacy was considered low seen from the mean scores of teachers' performance in answering the Assessment Literacy Inventory, the percentage of the items that were correctly answered by the teachers, and the teachers' mean scores of assessment literacy level based on the seven standards of assessment.

Discussion

Reviewing the findings of the study, the assessment literacy of the EFL teachers in the present study is considered low. On average, they could correctly answer only 9 items out of 23 items in the inventory. This is lower than what high school teachers could do in Perry's (2013) study where they could answer correctly around 22 items out of 35 items of the Classroom Assessment Literacy Inventory (CALI). Even, this is still lower than what high school principals could perform in the same study in which they could answer 21 items of a total of 35 items. In addition, the average of the teachers' assessment literacy level was only 1.88 which is very low compared with the maximum score of 5. In Perry's (2013) study, the average was around 3.13.

This lack of EFL teachers' assessment literacy in the present study is also contradictory with the results of assessment literacy measurement conducted by Luthfiyyah et al. (2020) and Aria et al. (2021) who reported that in general the EFL secondary school teachers in those studies are considered as assessment literate. Such differences in the findings of these studies might be due to the different contexts of the study and the different instruments used to collect data on EFL teachers' assessment literacy. Despite such contradictory findings of these studies, EFL teachers still need to improve their assessment literacy and assessment practice in the EFL classrooms.

Although there are some conflicting results from the previous studies, the finding of the current study is in line with what Kanjee and Mtembu (2015) found about South African teachers' assessment literacy. By categorizing teachers' assessment literacy into some levels of basic, proficient, and advanced, approximately half of the teachers in that study were at the basic level of assessment literacy and the other half fell below the basic level (Kanjee, 2015).

Another similar finding was also shown by Vogt and Tsagari's (2014) study indicating their surprise seeing how little developed foreign language teachers' assessment literacy was. These findings indicate teachers' very limited understanding of assessment and thus, support Popham's (2009) claim of teachers' low assessment literacy level.

Concerning the findings on the items and assessment standard which were mostly answered correctly, the findings of this study show that most teachers could do items in standard 1 about selecting assessment methods appropriately. This suggests that the EFL teachers in the present study are familiar with the issue of identifying assessment methods. The lowest performance of the teachers was in standard 4 about making use of assessment results for decision-making. This is contrary to Perry's (2013) study revealing that the teachers' highest performance was in standard 4 and the lowest was in standard 7 about identifying unethical or illegal practices of assessment. The EFL teachers' good ability to choose appropriate assessment methods is supported by the study conducted by Luthfiyyah et al. (2020) who got the same finding.

The findings on aspects of assessment are considered important to determine the areas of assessment that need to be improved in teachers' professional development. Since the findings of the present study indicate that the lowest performance of the teachers was in standard 4 about making use of assessment results to make decisions, it can be underlined that the teachers of the present study seemed to be unfamiliar with the issue of grading decision-making. Their knowledge of methods of assessment may be relatively good. However, they are not accustomed to using the results of those assessment methods appropriately for deciding on their students' learning. Such an assumption got support from Isnawati and Saukah's (2017) study on grading decisions revealing that although the EFL teachers in that study had used various assessment methods ranging from formal and informal assessment in grading their students, they were not able to the recommended grading decision practices since there were many factors that they had to consider in grading decision making.

As a final point in this discussion section, because assessment makes up a very important aspect of students' learning, the low assessment literacy level of the EFL teachers revealed in this study has to be followed up by developing teachers' knowledge and skills in assessment through assessment training, short course or other professional development. This is supported by Koh's (2011) findings showing that during two years of the study, the teachers who joined ongoing and sustained professional development had a significant increase in their level of assessment literacy and their understanding of authentic assessment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion of the current study, it can be concluded that the EFL teachers' assessment literacy was generally low, indicating their limited knowledge and skills in assessment. This conclusion consequently brings implications for the importance of developing teachers' assessment literacy by the government by providing them with more training, short courses, workshops, or other ongoing and sustained teacher professional development, especially those related to assessment. It is believed that all efforts

in developing teachers' assessment literacy will in turn result in better effects on students' learning.

Finally, the present study involved a limited number of EFL teachers in the Indonesian context. More participants should be involved in future studies so that they will represent a broader range of teachers with more diverse backgrounds of the study, teaching experience, and professional development experience which were not considered in this study.

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