



Exploring Language Assessment Literacy in EFL Classroom: A Case Study of EFL Teachers at a State Junior High School in Pekanbaru

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the Language Assessment Literacy of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in English language learning at SMP Negeri 9 Pekanbaru. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The research subjects consisted of three English teachers. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with students. The results showed that EFL teachers' Language Assessment Literacy was integrated into their daily teaching practices. Assessment was carried out simultaneously with the teaching process through informal strategies such as oral questions, observations, direct feedback, and learning tasks. Teachers' assessment practices are formative, with the aim of monitoring student understanding, helping teachers make learning decisions, and supporting the student learning process. Although teachers rarely use the term assessment theoretically, their practices demonstrate an implicit understanding of assessment principles, such as appropriateness of objectives, fairness, and relevance to learning. In addition, this study found that teachers' LAL is influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include teaching experience and teachers' beliefs about the role of assessment in learning. External factors include limitations in language assessment training, administrative burdens, curriculum demands, and diversity in student characteristics.

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, English has become the lingua franca for communication, education, technology, and intercultural exchange. Consequently, the ability to teach and assess English effectively is a critical professional competency for teachers worldwide. Within English Language Teaching (ELT), assessment plays a central role not only in measuring students' language

proficiency but also in guiding instruction and supporting learning (Brown & Lee, 2025). For this reason, the notion of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) has emerged as a crucial element of teachers' professional expertise. The global standing of English influences educational policies, resulting in its incorporation into curricula to improve communication skills and professional development (Baker & Riches, 2018).

Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) originates from Assessment Literacy, introduced by (Stiggins, 1991) as the ability to understand and apply quality assessment. (Fulcher, 2012) adapted this concept to language education, defining LAL as the knowledge and skills needed to design, interpret, and evaluate language assessments ethically. Later scholars view LAL as a multidimensional construct encompassing technical assessment knowledge, pedagogical understanding, and contextual–ethical awareness (Brown & Lee, 2025; Inbar-Lourie, 2013; Taylor, 2009). High levels of language assessment literacy (LAL) enable teachers to design valid and fair assessments, align them with learning outcomes, and provide feedback that supports learner autonomy, while low LAL often results in test-oriented practices that emphasize memorization over communicative competence (Davidson & Coombe, 2019; Fulcher, 2012). Limited LAL also leads to superficial score interpretation and minimal formative feedback (Iwan et al., 2026; Mutmainnah et al., 2025; Yan & Fan, 2021).

The link between LAL and classroom practice can be explained through Learning-Oriented Assessment, which positions assessment as an integral part of learning and promotes positive washback. However, despite its importance, the specific knowledge underlying teachers' LAL and how language learning constructs inform assessment practices remain insufficiently understood (Fard & Tabatabaei, 2018; Sanjaya et al., 2019). Over the past two decades, research has shown that teachers' LAL significantly influences classroom practices and learning outcomes (Davis & Karim, 2021). The Teacher Assessment Literacy in Practice (TALiP) model proposed by (Xu & Brown, 2017) emphasizes conceptual, practical, and socio-emotional dimensions of assessment. Recent studies further argue that LAL should incorporate digital assessment literacy in response to the growing use of online and AI-based assessment tools (Fulcher, 2012; Yumna & Maksun, 2025).

Empirical studies across contexts reveal gaps between teachers' perceived and actual assessment competence. In several countries, including Indonesia, EFL teachers' LAL is generally at a fair to moderate level, with difficulties in implementing authentic and formative assessments due to limited training, workload pressures, and reliance on summative testing (Aria et al., 2021; Jannati, 2015; Zulaiha & Mulyono, 2020). These findings highlight the need for context-specific professional development to strengthen teachers' assessment literacy. Previous studies on language assessment literacy (LAL) have mainly examined its effects on student achievement and learning outcomes, as well as its relationship with other assessment components (Davidson & Coombe, 2019). Research consistently shows that LAL enhances motivation and learning quality, yet its effective classroom implementation remains challenging, highlighting the need for

sustained professional development for teachers (Nurhidayah et al., 2026; Yan & Fan, 2021).

International research on LAL has explored various dimensions, including its conceptual foundations, classroom practices, and teachers' perceptions, largely at the university and secondary school levels using quantitative or mixed methods. However, in-depth qualitative studies employing interviews or case study designs to examine LAL in EFL classrooms remain limited. In Indonesia, existing studies have mainly focused on teachers' perceptions and practices of LAL, with relatively few investigations addressing how LAL is enacted in EFL classrooms. These gaps indicate a need for qualitative, context-sensitive research to better understand teachers' assessment literacy and classroom practices. Although language assessment literacy (LAL) has been widely studied, most research relies on quantitative methods and focuses on junior high school EFL teachers, leaving a gap for in-depth qualitative exploration. In Indonesia, studies examining the nuanced dimensions of EFL teachers' LAL and the influence of sociocultural factors such as school type and institutional context remain limited.

Under the Kurikulum Merdeka, assessment is positioned as a learning-oriented process that continuously monitors students' progress. Teachers are encouraged to design holistic, authentic, and formative assessments, including projects, performance tasks, and portfolios, in line with international competency-based assessment principles (Davidson & Coombe, 2019). Teacher agency is emphasized, allowing educators to adapt assessments to local contexts while adhering to national standards, reflecting the need for contextual and ethical awareness in LAL (T. Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2020).

Limited LAL may lead to invalid assessments, superficial learning, and ineffective feedback, whereas strong LAL enables teachers to design integrated tasks, apply clear rubrics, provide formative feedback, and use assessment data to inform instruction (Giraldo, 2021). Despite existing research, studies on EFL teachers' LAL in Indonesia remain scarce. Given the context-dependent nature of assessment practices (Kane, 2010), this study examines how EFL teachers in public junior high schools interpret and implement LAL within the Kurikulum Merdeka framework, which emphasizes practical communication skills and flexible, student-centered assessment.

Assessment is a continuous process emphasized in the Kurikulum Merdeka through authentic and formative approaches (Brown & Lee, 2025), yet limited training often constrains effective implementation. For EFL teachers in public junior high schools, language assessment literacy (LAL) is crucial for accurate evaluation, meaningful feedback, and communicative competence development. A preliminary interview at SMPN 9 Pekanbaru underscores the need for well-designed assessments to evaluate both student learning and instructional effectiveness.

Although a growing body of international research highlights the significance of LAL, empirical studies at the Indonesian junior high school level remain scarce. Most previous research has used quantitative surveys, overlooking the deeper

qualitative dimensions of teachers' beliefs and classroom practices (Winarto et al., 2022). There is limited exploration of how sociocultural contexts such as school type, institutional support, or curriculum change affect teachers' assessment literacy. Based on the discussion above, it is necessary to conduct research to explore the concepts of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) in the EFL Classroom.

2. Methodology

Based on the research questions, this study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to explore a problem and develop an in-depth understanding of a central phenomenon. Qualitative research enables researchers to explore and understand the meanings individuals or groups assign to social or human problems (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), with the central phenomenon referring to a key concept or process examined in the study (Creswell, 2015). A case study focuses on real-life contexts, such as classroom experiences or school activities, and provides a detailed exploration of a bounded system within specific time and place limitations. This design is effective for generating rich, contextual data and insights into particular practices or challenges. In line with (J. W. Creswell & Creswell, 2017), qualitative research addresses "how" and "what" questions in natural settings, relying on the researcher as the main instrument and producing descriptive data in the form of words (Sugiyono, 2008). This study focuses on SMPN 9 Pekanbaru to examine English teachers' language assessment literacy, and although context-specific, the findings are expected to offer meaningful insights into EFL assessment practices in similar junior high school settings in Indonesia.

This research was conducted from November 11 to December 8, 2025, at SMPN 9 Pekanbaru, located on Imam Munandar Street No. 398, East Tangkerang, Tenayan Raya District, Pekanbaru City. The school was selected because it has implemented language assessment literacy practices in English teaching during the instructional process. Participants play a crucial role in case study research by providing essential information relevant to the research topic. The participants in this study were English teachers at SMPN 9 Pekanbaru, which has five EFL teachers teaching across grades seven to nine under the Kurikulum Merdeka. All teachers graduated from English education programs and have more than ten years of teaching experience. Using purposive sampling, three English teachers representing grades seven, eight, and nine were selected because they were able to provide rich and relevant data to address the research objectives, as research participants are key sources of information required to achieve the research purpose (Robert, 2018).

As a case study, this research employed multiple data collection techniques observation, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGD) to enhance validity and depth of understanding (Gall et al., 2007). Unstructured, non-participant observations were conducted to capture authentic classroom practices related to teachers' language assessment literacy, with each of the three selected teachers observed at least twice for three lesson hours (3×40 minutes). In addition, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews using open-ended questions were carried out to

obtain deeper insights into teachers' experiences, understanding, and attitudes toward language assessment literacy. Furthermore, three FGDs were conducted with students from grades seven, eight, and nine, each consisting of six to eight participants selected purposively, to explore students' perceptions of English language assessment practices. All interviews and discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, with ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality strictly observed.

Data analysis in this study was conducted continuously throughout the research process. Following (Pastore & Andrade, 2019), data analysis involved organizing, familiarizing, coding, reducing, interpreting, and presenting the data. The researcher applied thematic analysis using the framework proposed by (Huberman & Miles, 2002), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction involved selecting and focusing on relevant information from observations, interviews, and FGDs, while discarding unnecessary data. Data display was carried out by organizing the reduced data into narrative texts, tables, or matrices to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns, themes, and relationships within the data, followed by verification to ensure consistency and validity. This systematic process enabled the researcher to develop credible and meaningful interpretations related to teachers' language assessment literacy.

To ensure trustworthiness, this study addressed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Triangulation was employed as a key strategy to enhance data validity by comparing data from multiple sources and methods (Miles et al., 2014). According to Wiersma in (Chai & Wang, 2022), triangulation serves as qualitative cross-validation, while Denzin in (Chen, 2021) identifies four types of triangulation: data, investigator, theoretical, and methodological triangulation. In this research, methodological triangulation was applied through the use of observations, interviews, and FGDs. By integrating these techniques, the researcher ensured that the findings were credible, consistent, and well-supported, thereby strengthening the overall trustworthiness of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

Language Assessment Literacy of EFL teachers in teaching English (RQ 1)

a. Language Assessment Literacy as an Embedded Classroom Practice

One of the most salient findings of this study is that EFL teachers' Language Assessment Literacy is embedded in everyday classroom practices. Rather than treating assessment as a discrete activity conducted at the end of instruction, teachers integrate assessment into the teaching process through continuous interaction with students. This integration is evident in the frequent use of questioning, observation, and immediate feedback during lessons. Interview data reveal that teachers rely heavily on students' verbal and non-verbal responses as indicators of learning. For example, one teacher stated, "*Usually I can see from*

their answers and reactions. When they look confused, I know I need to explain again. That is already an assessment for me” (T1). This statement illustrates how assessment is understood as an ongoing diagnostic process rather than a formal evaluative procedure. Teachers interpret students’ responses in real time and use this information to guide instructional decisions.

From a theoretical standpoint, this finding supports (Fulcher, 2012) assertion that Language Assessment Literacy encompasses not only technical knowledge of assessment principles but also teachers’ ability to exercise professional judgment in context. Fulcher emphasizes that assessment-literate teachers are those who can interpret assessment evidence meaningfully and responsibly within specific educational settings. In this study, teachers demonstrated such judgment by adapting instruction based on classroom evidence, even in the absence of explicit reference to formal assessment concepts.

Classroom observations further substantiate the embedded nature of assessment practices. Teachers frequently paused instruction to ask comprehension-check questions, invited students to demonstrate understanding by writing answers on the board, and provided corrective feedback when misconceptions were identified. These practices indicate that assessment was used as a tool to inform teaching rather than merely to measure outcomes. Such findings align with (Xu & Brown, 2017) conceptualization of LAL as situated and experiential, where assessment literacy is constructed through teachers’ engagement with classroom realities.

Moreover, the findings reveal that EFL teachers’ Language Assessment Literacy in this study is predominantly experiential, implicit, and embedded in daily classroom practice. Teachers integrate assessment seamlessly into instruction through questioning, observation, and immediate feedback, indicating that assessment is understood as an ongoing pedagogical process rather than a discrete evaluative event. While this embedded approach demonstrates pedagogical sensitivity, it also raises critical questions about the depth and scope of teachers’ conceptual understanding of assessment principles.

(Fulcher, 2012) argues that Language Assessment Literacy comprises not only practical assessment skills but also an understanding of underlying principles such as validity, reliability, fairness, and ethics. In this study, teachers demonstrated functional awareness of these principles, particularly validity and fairness, as evidenced by their efforts to align assessment tasks with instructional content and adjust task difficulty to accommodate students’ abilities. However, this awareness remained largely implicit and intuitive, suggesting a form of practical LAL without explicit theoretical grounding.

This finding supports (Xu & Brown, 2017) conceptualization of LAL as a situated and socially constructed practice, shaped by teachers’ experiences and classroom contexts. Teachers in this study developed assessment practices through repeated interaction with students and reflection on instructional outcomes. However, while such experiential LAL is effective in supporting learning in the short term, its

reliance on intuition rather than explicit principles may limit teachers' ability to systematically evaluate and improve their assessment practices over time.

Critically, the dominance of embedded and informal assessment practices also reveals a potential tension between pedagogical responsiveness and assessment rigor. Teachers' heavy reliance on oral feedback and observational judgment may enhance immediacy and student engagement, but it may also reduce transparency and consistency in assessment decision-making. Without systematic documentation or explicit criteria, assessment outcomes risk becoming subjective, even when teachers' intentions are pedagogically sound. Furthermore, the findings suggest that teachers tend to prioritize assessment for learning over assessment of learning, with formative practices dominating classroom assessment. While this emphasis aligns with contemporary pedagogical ideals, it also highlights a potential imbalance in teachers' LAL, particularly in relation to summative assessment literacy. Teachers' limited articulation of summative assessment principles suggests that LAL development remains partial and uneven across assessment purposes.

b. Formative Orientation and the Centrality of Assessment for Learning

The findings also reveal a strong formative orientation in teachers' assessment practices. Teachers consistently emphasized that the primary purpose of assessment was to support student learning. One teacher explicitly stated, "*Assessment is not only about scores. I want to know whether they understand or not, so I can help them improve*" (T2). This belief underscores a pedagogical understanding of assessment as a means to enhance learning rather than as an end in itself. This formative orientation was evident in classroom practices where teachers provided immediate feedback, encouraged students to correct their mistakes, and revisited material when students demonstrated difficulty. Such practices are characteristic of assessment for learning, which emphasizes the use of assessment information to guide instruction and promote student progress. According to (Fulcher, 2012), the ability to align assessment purposes with instructional goals is a key dimension of pedagogical LAL.

Students' perspectives from the FGD further reinforce this interpretation. One student commented, "*When we make mistakes, the teacher explains again. We are not afraid because it's for learning*" (S1, FGD). This perception suggests that assessment practices contribute to a positive learning environment and reduce students' anxiety toward evaluation. The supportive nature of assessment observed in this study highlights the relational aspect of LAL, where teachers' assessment decisions directly influence students' learning experiences. Theoretically, these findings challenge narrow definitions of LAL that focus exclusively on technical assessment skills. Instead, they support broader perspectives that recognize pedagogical intention and formative use as central to assessment literacy. As (Xu & Brown, 2017) argue, teachers' LAL is shaped by their instructional priorities and classroom contexts, leading to the development of assessment practices that are practical, adaptive, and learner-centered.

However, a more critical analysis reveals that while teachers exhibit strong formative intentions, the systematic use of formative assessment principles remains limited. Feedback, for instance, was predominantly oral and immediate, with minimal documentation or follow-up. While this immediacy enhances student engagement, the absence of recorded feedback may restrict opportunities for long-term tracking of student progress and reflective assessment planning. This suggests that teachers' formative orientation, although pedagogically sound, is largely intuitive rather than strategically designed.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that teachers' formative practices are heavily dependent on individual judgment and classroom interaction. This reliance raises questions about the consistency and transparency of assessment decisions. Without explicit criteria or rubrics, formative assessment may become vulnerable to subjectivity, even when teachers' intentions are learner-centered. As (Fulcher, 2012) cautions, effective formative assessment requires not only responsiveness but also clarity of purpose and criteria to ensure fairness and reliability.

In relation to (Xu & Brown, 2017) conceptualization of LAL as situated practice, the formative orientation observed in this study can be understood as a product of teachers' classroom experiences and contextual constraints. Teachers developed formative assessment strategies that were manageable within their teaching contexts, particularly given time limitations and administrative demands. While this context-sensitive adaptation demonstrates practical assessment literacy, it also underscores the need for professional development that supports teachers in moving from intuitive formative practices toward more systematic and theoretically informed assessment for learning.

Thus, the strong formative orientation evident in teachers' assessment practices represents a significant strength of their Language Assessment Literacy. It reflects a commitment to supporting student learning and aligns with contemporary pedagogical ideals. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that this orientation would benefit from greater conceptual clarity, systematic planning, and documentation to enhance the effectiveness, consistency, and sustainability of formative assessment practices.

c. Ethical and Fair Assessment Practices

Another important dimension of the findings relates to the ethical aspects of Language Assessment Literacy, particularly fairness and sensitivity to learners' needs. Teachers demonstrated awareness of students' diverse proficiency levels and adjusted assessment tasks accordingly. One teacher explained, "*The students' abilities are different, so I cannot give the same difficulty all the time. I try to adjust so they can still participate*" (T3). This practice reflects an ethical approach to assessment, which is a core component of LAL as emphasized by (Fulcher, 2012). Ethical assessment involves ensuring that assessment practices do not disadvantage particular groups of learners and that they provide equitable opportunities for all students to demonstrate learning. In this study, teachers' adjustments to task

difficulty and their provision of remedial support illustrate a commitment to fairness and inclusivity.

However, a more critical examination reveals a tension between fairness and consistency in teachers' assessment practices. While adjusting task difficulty enhances inclusivity and participation, it may also challenge the principle of comparability if assessment criteria are not made explicit. Without clearly articulated benchmarks or rubrics, differentiated assessment practices risk being perceived as subjective, even when driven by ethical intentions. This raises important questions about how fairness is conceptualized and operationalized in classroom assessment.

Moreover, the findings suggest that ethical assessment practices were largely enacted through teacher discretion rather than systematic frameworks. Teachers relied on their professional intuition to determine what constituted a "fair" assessment for individual students. While such discretion allows for responsiveness and empathy, it also places significant responsibility on teachers to balance compassion with academic standards. As (Fulcher, 2012) cautions, ethical assessment requires not only good intentions but also transparent and justifiable decision-making processes.

The provision of remedial support further illustrates this ethical orientation. Teachers offered students additional opportunities to improve their performance, reflecting a belief that assessment should support learning rather than penalize failure. Nevertheless, the study found that remedial practices were not always guided by clearly defined criteria or documented processes. This lack of systematization may limit the sustainability and accountability of ethical assessment practices, particularly within institutional contexts that demand evidence-based assessment decisions.

In relation to (Xu & Brown, 2017) view of LAL as a situated practice, the ethical and fair assessment practices observed in this study can be understood as contextually driven responses to classroom diversity and institutional constraints. Teachers developed ethical assessment strategies that were feasible within their teaching contexts, often prioritizing students' emotional well-being and participation. While this context-sensitive approach reflects practical assessment literacy, it also highlights the need for professional development that equips teachers with tools to integrate ethical principles into more systematic assessment designs.

Therefore, the findings suggest that ethical and fair assessment practices constitute a significant strength of teachers' Language Assessment Literacy. Teachers demonstrated a strong moral commitment to inclusivity and learner support. However, the ethical dimension of LAL in this context remains largely implicit and practice-based, relying heavily on individual judgment. To strengthen ethical assessment practices, there is a need to move beyond intuitive fairness toward explicit, transparent, and theoretically informed frameworks that balance equity, consistency, and accountability in classroom assessment.

Observation data further support this interpretation, showing that teachers offered additional guidance to lower-achieving students and avoided punitive responses to mistakes. Instead of using assessment to label or rank students, teachers used it as a means to encourage participation and improvement. These findings suggest that ethical considerations are embedded in teachers' everyday assessment practices, even in the absence of formal training on assessment ethics. The ethical and fair assessment practices identified in this study can be further strengthened by situating them within the Assessment for Learning (AfL) framework proposed by (Lan & Fan, 2019). Black and Wiliam argue that effective formative assessment is inherently ethical because it is designed to *improve learning for all students*, particularly those who are most vulnerable to underachievement. From this perspective, fairness in assessment is not achieved through uniformity, but through responsiveness to learners' diverse needs.

The teachers' efforts to adjust assessment tasks based on students' proficiency levels align closely with (Barnes, 2017) principle that assessment should generate evidence of learning that teachers and learners can use to inform next steps in instruction. As one teacher explained, "*The students' abilities are different, so I cannot give the same difficulty all the time. I try to adjust so they can still participate*" (T3). This practice reflects an AfL-oriented understanding of fairness, where participation and learning progression are prioritized over rigid standardization. Moreover, the provision of remedial opportunities observed in this study resonates with Black and Wiliam's emphasis on feedback that moves learners forward. By allowing students to revisit tasks and improve their performance, teachers positioned assessment as a learning opportunity rather than a terminal judgment. Such practices reduce the punitive nature of assessment and contribute to a more equitable classroom environment, where mistakes are treated as part of the learning process.

However, a critical analysis reveals that while teachers' practices are consistent with the *spirit* of Assessment for Learning, they are not always supported by the *systematic use* of AfL strategies. (Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2020) stress the importance of clearly defined success criteria and shared learning goals to ensure that formative assessment is both fair and effective. In this study, the absence of explicit criteria and documented feedback may limit students' understanding of assessment expectations, potentially undermining transparency and consistency. This gap highlights an important tension between ethical intentions and methodological rigor. While teachers demonstrated strong moral commitments to fairness and inclusivity, their assessment practices relied heavily on professional intuition rather than structured AfL frameworks. From an LAL perspective, this suggests that teachers possess a developing form of ethical assessment literacy that is grounded in experience but not yet fully articulated in theoretical or procedural terms.

Integrating (Levi, 2001) AfL framework with (Fulcher, 2012) conception of ethical Language Assessment Literacy provides a more comprehensive understanding of the findings. Ethical assessment in this context emerges not merely as a matter of fairness in task difficulty, but as an ongoing process of using assessment evidence

to support learning, promote student agency, and reduce inequities in classroom achievement. So, the findings indicate that teachers' ethical and fair assessment practices are aligned with the core principles of Assessment for Learning, particularly in their responsiveness to learner diversity and their emphasis on improvement rather than judgment. Nevertheless, to fully realize the ethical potential of AfL, teachers require greater support in developing explicit criteria, systematic feedback practices, and reflective assessment planning. Such development would strengthen both the ethical and pedagogical dimensions of their Language Assessment Literacy.

Factors Affecting EFL Teachers' Language Assessment Literacy (RQ 2)

Internal Factors

Teaching Experience and Beliefs

Teaching experience emerged as a central internal factor influencing teachers' LAL. Teachers reported that their understanding of assessment developed gradually through years of classroom practice. One teacher noted, "*I learned more about assessment from teaching experience. From year to year, I understand better how to see students' abilities*" (T1). This statement reflects the experiential nature of LAL development, where teachers refine their assessment practices through trial, reflection, and interaction with students. This finding is consistent with (Xu & Brown, 2017) argument that LAL is socially and experientially constructed. Teachers' assessment literacy evolves as they respond to classroom challenges and reflect on the effectiveness of their practices. In this study, experience enabled teachers to interpret students' responses more accurately and to make informed assessment decisions.

Teachers' beliefs about the role of assessment also significantly influenced their practices. Teachers who viewed assessment as a learning tool were more likely to implement formative strategies and provide constructive feedback. These beliefs shaped not only how teachers assessed students but also how they communicated assessment outcomes. As (Fulcher, 2012) suggests, teachers' beliefs act as mediators between assessment knowledge and practice, influencing how assessment principles are enacted in real classrooms. The findings further reveal that teachers' beliefs about assessment are deeply intertwined with their teaching experience. Teachers tended to conceptualize assessment as a practical tool for monitoring understanding rather than as a systematic process grounded in explicit criteria or standardized frameworks. While such beliefs promote responsiveness and flexibility, they may also contribute to assessment practices that are intuitive rather than strategically planned. This belief-driven approach underscores the influence of personal teaching philosophy on assessment literacy.

Moreover, the data suggest that teaching experience can reinforce entrenched beliefs that remain unchallenged in the absence of structured professional development. Teachers who rely heavily on past experiences may continue to apply familiar assessment practices without critically evaluating their effectiveness or

alignment with contemporary assessment theories. This finding echoes (Fulcher, 2012) warning that assessment practices based solely on tradition or personal experience risk becoming routine rather than reflective. In the context of Assessment for Learning, teaching experience appears to facilitate the adoption of formative practices such as observation-based judgment and immediate feedback. However, without explicit engagement with AfL principles, these practices may lack coherence and consistency. Teachers may “do formative assessment” without fully understanding why certain strategies are effective or how they contribute to learning progression. This partial alignment highlights a gap between practice and theoretical awareness.

In sum, teaching experience plays a dual role in shaping teachers’ Language Assessment Literacy. On the one hand, it enables teachers to develop practical sensitivity to student learning and to refine assessment practices over time. On the other hand, when experience is not supported by formal assessment training, it may result in fragmented or implicit LAL, characterized by strong pedagogical intuition but limited conceptual grounding. Therefore, strengthening teachers’ LAL requires professional development models that value experiential knowledge while systematically integrating theoretical frameworks and reflective assessment practices.

External Factors

Administrative and curriculum-related constraint, Limited access to formal assessment training and Classroom Context

The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers’ Language Assessment Literacy is not solely shaped by individual knowledge or beliefs, but is profoundly influenced by a range of external factors. These include administrative and curriculum-related constraints, limited access to formal assessment training, and the specific characteristics of the classroom context. Collectively, these factors form a structural environment that both enables and constrains how teachers conceptualize and enact assessment in daily classroom practice. Administrative and curriculum-related requirements emerged as one of the most influential external factors shaping teachers’ assessment practices. Teachers reported that assessment was often driven by institutional demands such as the need to produce numerical scores, complete standardized assessment documentation, and align grading practices with school reporting systems. These demands frequently prioritized summative outcomes over formative processes.

From a critical perspective, this finding reflects a broader accountability-driven assessment culture, where assessment is positioned as a tool for monitoring and reporting rather than for supporting learning. Although national curriculum guidelines promote formative and authentic assessment, administrative systems often emphasize measurable outputs, creating a misalignment between policy rhetoric and classroom realities. As (Fulcher, 2012) argues, such misalignment can restrict teachers’ agency and limit their ability to apply assessment principles in pedagogically meaningful ways.

Furthermore, curriculum-related constraints may inadvertently encourage teachers to adopt assessment practices that are technically efficient but pedagogically shallow. Teachers may rely on traditional written tests or objective items not because these formats best capture students' language abilities, but because they are easier to administer, score, and justify administratively. This situation illustrates how institutional structures can shape teachers' LAL by defining what is considered legitimate assessment practice. Critically, these constraints also affect teachers' perceptions of assessment. When assessment is predominantly framed as an administrative obligation, teachers may internalize a compliance-oriented view of assessment. This perspective can reduce opportunities for reflective assessment design and reinforce a narrow understanding of assessment as score production rather than as a learning-oriented process.

Another major external factor affecting teachers' Language Assessment Literacy is limited access to formal assessment training. The findings indicate that teachers rarely participated in professional development programs specifically focused on language assessment. As a result, teachers' understanding of assessment principles was largely shaped by experience, peer discussions, and informal learning rather than by structured theoretical engagement. Limited access to professional development related to language assessment was identified as a major constraint. One teacher stated, *"There are not many trainings specifically about language assessment. Mostly we learn by ourselves"* (T2). This lack of formal training contributed to teachers' reliance on implicit and practice-based assessment literacy.

According to (Xu & Brown, 2017), the development of LAL requires sustained and systematic professional learning opportunities that integrate assessment theory with classroom practice. In the absence of such training, teachers may develop fragmented assessment knowledge that lacks conceptual coherence. While experiential learning supports adaptability, it does not necessarily equip teachers with the analytical tools needed to evaluate the validity, reliability, and fairness of assessment instruments. A critical implication of limited training is the normalization of intuitive assessment practices. Teachers may rely on "what works" based on personal experience without critically examining the theoretical foundations of their assessment decisions. This reliance can perpetuate assessment practices that are familiar but not necessarily effective or equitable. As (Fulcher, 2012) cautions, assessment literacy grounded solely in experience risks becoming routine and unexamined.

Moreover, limited training reduces teachers' confidence and professional autonomy. Without formal assessment knowledge, teachers may feel uncertain about designing innovative assessment tasks or questioning existing practices. This uncertainty reinforces conservative assessment behaviors and sustains a cycle in which assessment practices remain largely unchanged despite evolving pedagogical expectations. Classroom context emerged as a powerful external factor influencing teachers' assessment practices. Teachers described working in classrooms characterized by large student numbers, mixed proficiency levels, limited instructional time, and diverse learner backgrounds. These contextual realities

significantly shaped assessment decisions, often necessitating pragmatic compromises.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding supports (Xu & Brown, 2017) view of LAL as a situated and socially embedded practice. Teachers' assessment literacy is enacted within specific contexts that shape what is possible and practical. In this sense, teachers' adaptations to classroom constraints demonstrate contextual competence rather than a lack of assessment knowledge. However, a more critical analysis reveals that contextual pressures may also limit the depth and quality of assessment practices. Large class sizes, for example, make individualized feedback and performance-based assessment difficult to implement. Time constraints may lead teachers to prioritize assessments that are quick to administer and score, reducing opportunities for richer formative assessment practices such as peer assessment, self-assessment, or extended performance tasks.

Additionally, classroom diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for ethical assessment. While teachers attempted to adjust tasks to accommodate different proficiency levels, such differentiation was not always supported by clear criteria or systematic planning. This situation highlights the tension between responsiveness and consistency in assessment practices, raising important questions about fairness and transparency. Findings from the FGD support the observation data, as students reported that assessment activities were perceived as part of learning rather than as stressful testing events. Students acknowledged that teachers provided feedback during lessons and used assessment results to help them improve. This suggests that teachers' assessment practices contributed to a supportive and ethical assessment environment, where mistakes were treated as learning opportunities. Such ethical considerations are emphasized in framework, which (Fulcher, 2012) highlights fairness and responsibility as essential dimensions of Language Assessment Literacy.

Generally, the findings suggest that teachers' LAL in this context is characterized by embedded classroom practice, formative orientation, and pedagogical sensitivity. While teachers may not explicitly articulate assessment principles in theoretical terms, their classroom practices demonstrate an experiential form of LAL that prioritizes students' learning needs. This supports the argument that LAL should be understood not solely as formal assessment knowledge but as a dynamic practice shaped by classroom realities.

4. Conclusion

In this section, the conclusion presented based on the findings discussed in the previous chapter. To provide a clearer overview, the following is a summary of the key findings in this study. In response to the first research question, the findings reveal that EFL teachers' Language Assessment Literacy is primarily embedded in daily classroom practices. Teachers conduct assessment as an integral part of teaching through informal strategies such as questioning, observation, immediate feedback, and task-based activities. Assessment is predominantly formative in

nature and is used to monitor students' understanding, guide instructional decisions, and support learning. Although teachers rarely articulate assessment concepts using formal terminology, their practices demonstrate an implicit understanding of key assessment principles, including purposefulness, fairness, and alignment with instructional goals.

Furthermore, teachers' assessment practices reflect a pedagogical and ethical orientation in which assessment is viewed as a supportive rather than punitive process. Students experience assessment as an integral part of learning, contributing to a positive classroom assessment climate. This indicates that Language Assessment Literacy in this context is experiential and context-sensitive, aligning with contemporary perspectives that conceptualize LAL as a dynamic, practice-based construct grounded in everyday classroom interactions.

In response to the second research question, this study concludes that EFL teachers' Language Assessment Literacy is shaped by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include teaching experience and teachers' beliefs about the role of assessment in learning, which influence how teachers interpret students' responses and implement assessment strategies. External factors consist of limited access to professional development in language assessment, administrative workload, curriculum demands, and diverse student characteristics. Collectively, these factors mediate how assessment literacy is developed and enacted in classroom contexts. Therefore, Language Assessment Literacy should be understood not merely as formal knowledge of assessment theory, but as a situated and experiential practice that emerges through daily teaching experiences, interaction with students, and contextual adaptation rather than through formal training alone.

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