

Original Article**Exploring Language Assessment Literacy and Assessment Self-Efficacy of Iraqi EFL Teachers: Perceptions and Interrelationship***Athraa Abd Ali Lateef AL-Aayedi¹, Ehsan Rezvani^{1*}, Faris Kadhim Teema², Fatemeh Karimi¹*¹English Department, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran²College of Education for Humanities, Wasit University, Iraq

Submission date: 10-08-2024

Acceptance date: 17-11-2024

Abstract

The present study sought to find Iraqi EFL teachers' perceptions of their language assessment literacy, their assessment self-efficacy, and the relationship between these two variables. For this purpose, a survey design was adopted, and 140 Iraqi EFL teachers were selected using convenience sampling. The data were collected using the Language Assessment Literacy Scale and Assessment Self-Efficacy Scale and analyzed using Pearson correlation, one-sample t-test, and descriptive analysis. The data collection process took four months, and informed consent was obtained from the participants. The findings indicated that the items of the language assessment literacy scale, included in the five sub-scales of teachers' knowledge of assessment objectives, scopes and types, assessment use consequences, fairness, assessment policies, and national policy and ideology, were highly appraised by Iraqi EFL teachers. Regarding assessment self-efficacy, the teachers evaluated themselves as efficacious in assessing students measured by self-efficacy for summative and formative assessment, overall self-efficacy in assessment, and assessment avoidance. Additionally, teachers' knowledge of assessment objectives, scopes, and types was positively correlated with self-efficacy for summative assessment, self-efficacy for formative assessment, and overall self-efficacy in assessment. Fairness was positively related to self-efficacy for summative and formative assessment, and the consequences of the assessment use were positively correlated with self-efficacy for summative assessment

* Corresponding Author's E-mail: e.rezvani@khuif.ac.ir; Rezvani_ehsan_1982@yahoo.com

and overall self-efficacy in assessment. In general, Iraqi EFL teachers possess a robust understanding of the various aspects of language assessment and expressed a high level of self-efficacy in their assessment capabilities, especially concerning both summative and formative assessments. The positive correlation between language assessment literacy and self-efficacy further emphasizes the importance of equipping teachers with comprehensive assessment skills, as it not only elevates their confidence but also enhances their ability to implement effective assessments.

Keywords: Iraqi EFL Teachers, Language Assessment, Literacy, Perception, Self-Efficacy

1. Introduction

Classroom assessment, as defined by Brookhart and McMillan (2020), is a systematic process aimed at gathering evidence on students' learning to pinpoint learning discrepancies, modify teaching strategies, and enhance the efficacy of teaching and learning. According to Kane and Wools (2019), the significance of classroom assessment lies in its ability to evaluate students' performance in learning activities and overall class achievement, providing constructive feedback for educational purposes and guiding students toward their academic objectives. Teachers in classrooms are tasked with making a variety of decisions and implementing diverse strategies to assess students' comprehension and cognitive progress (Russell, 2019), underscoring the critical importance of selecting and employing appropriate assessment techniques.

The assessment, positioned as a foundational element within the educational framework, is given paramount importance in the entirety of the teaching and learning process. It functions as a mechanism for overseeing the instructional procedures carried out by educators, tracking the advancement of students' learning, and measuring the effectiveness of instruction either during or at the culmination of the educational procedure (Brown & Bailey, 2008; Hidri, 2016; Gan & Lam, 2022). Educators can also assess the significance of course materials, pace of instruction, and teaching methodologies through the utilization of assessments (Fulmer et al., 2015; Nurdiana, 2022; Weng & Shen, 2022). A well-designed assessment throughout the educational program provides valuable insights into students' learning progression.

In the realm of academic literature, there exists a term known as assessment self-efficacy, which can be defined as teachers' conviction or belief in their ability to influence how well students learn or perform (Brown, 2002). In this study, teachers' self-efficacy pertains to their perceived competence in executing specific tasks effectively, resulting in precise desired outcomes. Specifically, for this study, teachers' assessment efficacy encompasses how educators perceive their capability and assurance in proficiently carrying out the objectives they envision for assessment within their educational settings.

Within the domain of English language instruction, teachers are anticipated to possess a high level of proficiency in assessing students' linguistic competencies. Attaining proficiency in selecting and constructing suitable assessments from a plethora of alternatives while also establishing a correlation between methodologies in English

language pedagogy and evaluation techniques necessitates a considerable degree of language assessment literacy among teachers (Brown & Gao, 2015; Fitriyah et al., 2022). By enhancing their language assessment literacy, English teachers can more effectively evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of diverse assessment strategies for language acquisition. Furthermore, this literacy empowers EFL instructors to explore the implications of globally recognized English language proficiency examinations such as IELTS and TOEFL (Jan-nesar et al., 2020). Consequently, English teachers are compelled to enhance their language assessment literacy competencies to better cater to the academic needs of their students. The research problem emphasized in this study was the limited exploration of the associations between teachers' self-efficacy and their conceptions of assessment, particularly within the Iraqi context.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Language Assessment Literacy (LAL)

Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) derives from assessment literacy and originated within the realm of language assessment researchers approximately twenty years after Stiggins' (1991) introduction of the concept of assessment literacy. Following Taylor's (2009) argument on assessment literacy, specialists within the language testing field have endeavored to elucidate the concept of LAL. Fulcher (2012, p. 125) delineates LAL across three dimensions: practice, principles, and context:

The knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to design, develop, maintain, or evaluate large-scale standardized testing and classroom assessments; the familiarity with the testing process; the awareness of the principles and concepts underlying instructional practices, including ethical and professional guidelines; and the ability to contextualize knowledge, skills, processes, principles, and concepts within a broad historical, social, political, and philosophical framework to understand the reasons behind practice, to assess the role and impact of testing on society, institutions, and individuals.

LAL not only entails proficiency with tools and methodologies for evaluating students' language skills but also encompasses additional elements, notably the provision of constructive feedback to steer learners toward establishing and attaining educational goals effectively. Moreover, individuals possessing assessment literacy must grasp the

theoretical complexities entwined in the assessment procedure, along with recognizing the potential repercussions of decision-making stemming from students' assessment (Inbar-Lourie, 2013). Pill and Harding (2013, p. 382) characterize LAL as "a repertoire of competencies that enable an individual to understand, evaluate and, in some cases, create language tests and analyze test data." LAL is construed as stakeholders' comprehension of language assessment principles and the sociocultural, political, and ethical implications thereof, the stakeholders' capacity to craft and execute theoretically robust language assessments, and their proficiency in interpreting or disseminating assessment outcomes to other stakeholders (Lee, 2019).

Watmani et al. (2020) investigated the literacy assessment of Iranian EFL teachers to enhance teacher training. Utilizing a quantitative approach, they explored the teachers' understanding of assessment literacy concerning the seven criteria for language teacher competence when evaluating students' academic achievements. The results revealed a lack of grasp on the principles and procedures of assessment literacy among the participants. It was observed that EFL teachers with prior TEFL experience exhibited superior performance in literacy assessments compared to those without such experience.

Sulaiman et al. (2021) endeavored to delineate the assessment knowledge among English language educators in Syria. The study involved the participation of 303 Syrian English language teachers. The outcomes highlighted that language assessment literacy within the Syrian setting predominantly encompasses four elements: the societal implications of assessments, the preparation and execution of tests, the formulation, enhancement, and understanding of tests, and the evaluation of language assessments.

Suherman (2022) scrutinized the perceptions of language assessment literacy held by EFL instructors of Indonesian higher education. EFL university lecturers completed an online survey and semi-structured interviews. The findings demonstrated that teachers implemented six categories of LAL in their pedagogical approaches, with formative assessment strategies and the assessment of test reliability and validity being the most commonly utilized (exceeding 80%) by the educators. Subsequently, around 75% and 80% of the participants employed two additional forms of LAL, namely linguistic proficiency and test outcomes. The final two categories of LAL, digital literacy, and grading standards, were utilized by fewer than 70% of the participants. Furthermore, insights from the

qualitative data disclosed that a majority of the participants (over 70%) rated their LAL knowledge and competencies as insufficient.

2.2. Assessment Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy is defined as the personal belief of educators in their capacity to effectively plan, coordinate, and execute tasks necessary to achieve specific educational objectives (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). This construct is proposed to have a reciprocal relationship with teaching methodologies and the quality of instruction (Holzberger et al., 2013). As a result, the efficacy of teachers influences their instructional approaches and is molded by the practical experiences acquired in educational settings. While scholarly attention has been drawn to the broader concept of teacher self-efficacy (Poulou et al., 2019), the specific aspect concerning self-efficacy in assessment activities has not received significant scrutiny. Nonetheless, studies indicate that teachers' confidence in assessment tasks is linked to their assessment techniques (Zhang & BurryStock, 2003) and assessment attitudes (Alkharusi, 2009), despite the existence of conflicting findings (Ogan-Bekiroglu, 2009). Hence, teachers' self-efficacy in assessment-related practices may differ from that in other pedagogical domains.

Teacher self-efficacy is important in decision-making processes related to classroom management, course structuring, instructional delivery, student motivation, and effective communication with students (Geijsel et al., 2009; Guo et al., 2010). Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy are confident in their ability to influence student academic performance positively. As stated by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007), there exists a positive correlation between satisfaction with classroom performance and the belief in one's teaching self-efficacy.

A limited number of research endeavors have delved into the assessment of the self-efficacy of teachers. Farangi and Rashidi (2022) explored the interconnection between the assessment perceptions of Iranian EFL instructors and their self-efficacy levels. Findings revealed that instructors view assessment as a means to gauge the extent of student comprehension, utilize assessment outcomes to refine instructional methods, and highlight potential inaccuracies in assessment processes. Furthermore, they contended that assessment serves as a barometer for school performance and underscored the importance of handling assessment outcomes with care. The study also showcased that Iranian EFL

teachers exhibit a strong sense of self-efficacy, excel in posing pertinent questions and addressing challenging student inquiries, possess the ability to evaluate student progress, and adeptly furnish alternative explanations and examples in instances of learner perplexity. The outcomes of multiple regression analyses indicated that school accountability and perceived irrelevance were predictive of student engagement, student responsibility influenced classroom management, and the pursuit of improvement influenced instructional strategies.

Levy-Vered and Alhija (2015) provided a comprehensive analysis of assessment literacy among novice educators, along with investigating a structural framework that interconnects assessment literacy with assessment training, self-efficacy, and assessment conceptions. Their findings revealed that both training in assessment and conceptions of assessment have a direct positive impact on assessment literacy, explaining a considerable proportion (68%) of the variability in this factor. Furthermore, the study highlighted that training in assessment and assessment literacy have both direct and indirect effects on assessment self-efficacy.

In research involving 246 teachers in Oman, Alkharusi et al. (2014) scrutinized the factors predicting the utilization of assessment among in-service teachers, such as gender, self-efficacy, teaching workload, and teaching experience. They concluded that teachers' perceived self-efficacy in assessment significantly influenced the application of assessment within their educational settings.

Levy-Vered and Alhija (2015) constructed a model illustrating the relationship between teachers' assessment literacy, their assessment conceptions, and self-efficacy. Their study unveiled both direct and indirect connections between assessment literacy and self-efficacy. Additionally, Noben et al. (2021) established a correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and their teaching conceptions, suggesting that modifications in teachers' conceptions could align with enhanced self-efficacy. Therefore, the exploration of teachers' language assessment literacy in relation to their self-efficacy holds significance for two main reasons. Firstly, assessments are crucial for evaluating educational institutions and teachers' competency, as well as certifying students' academic achievements. Secondly, assessments serve as a tool for providing feedback to educators, school administrators, policymakers, parents, and students regarding the areas of learning that have been mastered and those that require further attention. These aspects can directly

or indirectly impact teachers' self-efficacy, subsequently influencing their instructional practices. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that no similar study has yet been conducted on Iraqi teachers in general and Iraqi EFL teachers in particular. Accordingly, the present study sought to answer the following questions.

1. How do Iraqi EFL teachers perceive their language assessment literacy?
2. How do Iraqi EFL teachers perceive their assessment self-efficacy?
3. Is there any relationship between Iraqi EFL teachers' language assessment literacy and their assessment self-efficacy?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and Context of the Study

A survey design was adopted for the present study. Such design type quantitatively and numerically describes trends, attitudes, or ideas of a population by inquiring about a sample of that population. Afterward, the researcher makes generalizations and inferences from the sample to the population (Creswell, 2014). It is noteworthy that the study was conducted in Baghdad and Kadhimiya, Iraq.

3.2. Participants

The research participants consisted of 140 English teachers in Baghdad and Kadhimiya, Iraq. These teachers, selected by convenience sampling method, were aged between 27 and 50 years ($M = 36$, $SD = 1.9$) and shared Arabic as their first language. All the participants signed the consent form included in the instrument package, and the study aims were explained to them in written form. Demographic information of the participants is presented below.

Table 1.

Demographic Information of Participants

Demographics		N	Percentage
Age	27-34	49	35
	35-41	55	39.28
	42-50	36	57.71
Gender	Male	87	62.14
	Female	53	37.85

Level of education	Bachelor's	120	85.71
	Master's	18	12.85
	PhD	2	1.42

3.3. Instruments

The following instruments were used for data collection.

3.3.1. Language Assessment Literacy Scale

It is a 38-item scale designed to assess the language assessment literacy of EFL teachers. It comprises five sub-scales: (a) teachers' knowledge of assessment objectives, scopes, and types (15 items), (b) assessment use consequences (14 items), (c) fairness (four items), (d) assessment policies (three items), and (e) national policy and ideology (two items). The responses are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to disagree strongly. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was .9 (Tajeddin et al., 2022), and its reliability coefficient was .76 in the present study.

3.3.2. Assessment Self-Efficacy Scale

It is a 16-item scale designed to assess the assessment self-efficacy of teachers. It comprises four sub-scales: (a) self-efficacy for summative assessment (three items), (b) self-efficacy for formative assessment (four items), (c) overall self-efficacy in assessment (six items), and (d) assessment avoidance (three items). The responses are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to disagree strongly. The reliability of the sub-scales ranged between .74 and .9 (Kyttälä et al., 2023), and the reliability coefficient of the scale was .81 in the present study.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The data collection took four months in 2024 (March to June), and the questionnaires were manually distributed among 140 Iraqi EFL teachers simultaneously. They were asked to complete them at their earliest convenience. Additionally, the researcher's phone number and email were given to the participants so that they could contact the researcher if they had any queries concerning these instruments. The questionnaires were administered in English, and the collected data were numerical, making it possible to collect descriptive

and inferential statistics. It is noteworthy that the authors selected the Language Assessment Literacy Scale and Assessment Self-Efficacy Scale for data collection since these two instruments were valid and reliable, as reported in the literature. Besides, the first instrument is specifically designed for EFL teachers, and the second one is widely used to assess teachers' self-efficacy.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percent, and SD), a one-sample t-test, and Pearson correlation using SPSS21.

4. Results

The first research question aimed to find how Iraqi EFL teachers perceived their language assessment literacy. In so doing, the Language Assessment Literacy Scale was administered, and the results were presented below.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Language Assessment Literacy Scale

	Please choose the one that best describes your idea.	Strongly Agree f (%)	Agree f (%)	Neither agree nor disagree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Strongly disagree f (%)	M	SD
Teachers' knowledge of assessment objectives, scopes, and types								
1	Language teachers should analyze which and whose policies tests serve.	53 (37.85)	44 (31.42)	20 (14.28)	18 (12.85)	5 (3.57)	3.53	0.71
2	The nature of knowledge that tests measure should be analyzed.	70 (50)	32 (22.85)	14 (10)	24 (17.14)	10 (7.14)	3.15	0.93
3	Test developers need to take the view of different stakeholders such as teachers, students, and parents into consideration.	73 (52.14)	39 (27.85)	14 (10)	10 (7.14)	4 (2.85)	3.23	0.85
4	Language teachers should challenge the widely used traditions in language assessment,	59 (39.33)	38 (27.14)	35 (25)	7 (5)	-	3.18	1.19

	like multiple-choice tests.								
5	Traditional tests, such as multiple-choice items, do not pay much attention to test-takers' attitudes toward some test methods.	70 (50)	42 (30)	22 (15.71)	7 (5)	-	3.3	0.89	
6	Tests should lead to language teachers' knowledge about assessment and their professional development.	94 (67.14)	35 (25)	7 (5)	4 (2.85)	-	3.38	1.2	
7	Tests should improve language learners' proficiency in all language skills and sub-skills.	45 (70 (50)	(32.14)	17 (12.14)	4 (2.85)	4 (2.85)	3.2	0.82	
8	Alternative assessments (such as portfolios, self-assessment, and peer assessment) should be used to provide a clearer picture of language learners' performance and ability.	63 (45)	42 (30)	32 (22.85)	4 (2.85)	4 (2.85)	3.05	0.74	
9	Alternative assessments (such as portfolios, self-assessment, and peer assessment) can reduce test-takers' stress and anxiety.	94 (67.14)	28 (20)	11 (7.85)	7 (5)	-	3.05	1.04	
10	Test-takers' preferences for test format and item types should be considered in test construction.	52 (42 (30)	(37.14)	17 (12.14)	14 (10)	14 (10)	3.03	1.14	
11	A handful of test methods can provide better evidence for important decisions about test-takers than a single test method	66 (47.14)	25 (17.85)	32 (22.85)	7 (5)	10 (7.14)	3.15	1.16	
12	In language testing, the role of students and teachers as two important test parties should be taken into consideration.	52 (37.14)	35 (25)	28 (20)	24 (17.14)	-	3.63	1.05	
13	In many cases, test content rather than course syllabus determines what to teach and how to teach.	59 (39.33)	66 (47.14)	14 (10)	1 (.71)	-	3.73	0.98	

14	A test-taker should be assessed using many classroom test tasks rather than only the final exam.	94 (67.14)	17 (12.14)	10 (7.14)	7 (5)	-	3.9	0.86
15	Language assessment not only belongs to test developers but rather to other stakeholders such as teachers, students, and parents.	59 (39.33)	56 (40)	17 (12.14)	7 (5)	-	3.53	0.92
Assessment use consequences								
16	Test developers need to understand the negative and positive consequences of tests.	52 (37.14)	52 (37.14)	22 (15.71)	14 (10)	-	3.86	0.9
17	Test developers are responsible for the consequences of tests.	63 (45)	42 (30)	24 (17.14)	7 (5)	4 (2.85)	3.79	1.03
18	Inappropriate language tests lead to psychological consequences such as test-takers' stress and anxiety.	70 (50)	52 (37.14)	35 (25)	-	-	3.83	0.75
19	Inappropriate language tests lead to social consequences for test-takers, such as deprivation of qualified students from their own rights.	63 (45)	49 (35)	17 (12.14)	7 (5)	4 (2.85)	3.87	0.86
20	Inappropriate language assessment leads to injustice and a lack of fairness.	55 (39.28)	50 (35.71)	35 (25)	-	-	3.88	0.84
21	The positive and negative consequences of tests for test-takers should be examined carefully.	108 (77.14)	17 (12.14)	7 (5)	7 (5)	-	3.94	1.02
22	Measures should be taken to protect test-takers from the misuse of tests by authorities.	63 (45)	35 (25)	35 (25)	7 (5)	-	3.6	0.78
23	Tests have an important function because their results have significant implications for test-takers and language education.	70 (50)	70 (50)	-	-	-	3.55	0.94

24	Tests should have a positive impact on the learning outcomes of language learners.	52 (37.14)	45 (32.14)	32 (22.85)	7 (5)	4 (2.85)	3.2	0.87
25	Teaching practices are largely determined by language test demands and test results.	49 (35)	42 (30)	35 (25)	7 (5)	7 (5)	3.45	0.85
26	Teaching and testing are closely connected to each other.	52 (37.14)	52 (37.14)	17 (12.14)	17 (12.14)	-	3.25	0.86
27	Continuous examination of the quality of tests helps reduce the negative effects of their uses and interpretations.	105 (75)	35 (25)	-	-	-	3.85	1
28	Gaining a better understanding of how tests are used is essential to controlling and reducing the negative effects of test uses and interpretations.	88 (62.85)	45 (32.14)	7 (5)	-	-	3.42	1.05
29	All participants affected by the test results should be informed about the harmful effects and consequences of tests.	77 (55)	35 (25)	14 (10)	7 (5)	-	3.45	0.85
Fairness								
30	Some rating scales might unfairly favor specific test-takers with particular language proficiency.	42 (30)	4 (2.85)	70 (50)	17 (12.14)	7 (5)	3.35	0.95
31	Some test tasks might unfairly favor male or female test-takers.	17 (12.14)	35 (25)	70 (50)	14 (10)	4 (2.85)	3.30	1
32	Content of international tests, such as TOEFL and IELTS, should be analyzed to understand the likely cultural and ideological biases in them.	24 (17.14)	66 (47.14)	66 (47.14)	17 (12.14)	-	3.1	1
33	Language test content should be based on the representation of the multiple religious, ethnic, and gender groups of society.	70 (50)	70 (50)	-	-	-	3.6	0.90
Assessment policies								
34	Because of the use of tests in							

	contexts such as immigration, asylum, citizenship, or scholarship, test-takers sometimes serve the political interests of governments.	22 (15.71)	38 (27.14)	73 (52.14)	7 (5)	-	3.30	0.95
35	Tests are tools used within a context of social and ideological contexts.	14 (10)	35 (25)	88 (62.85)	-	17 (12.14)	3.4	0.9
36	Language teachers should be aware of which and whose interests and policies tests serve.	22 (15.71)	59 (39.33)	59 (39.33)	-	-	3.22	0.81
National policy and ideology								
37	The government's political and ideological policies affect the administration and interpretation of language tests used for selection, placement, and achievement purposes.	14 (10)	38 (27.14)	52 (37.14)	35 (25)	-	3.11	0.79
38	The government's educational policies affect language test administration and interpretation.	66 (47.14)	45 (32.14)	10 (7.14)	10 (7.14)	-	3.27	0.84

The first 15 items in Table 2 assessed Iraqi EFL teachers' perception of knowledge of assessment objectives, scopes, and types. The responses indicated that the teachers nearly opted for 'strongly agree' for all the items of this sub-scale; however, they more highly favored using tests to increase assessment knowledge and professional development and the application of alternative assessment to reduce test-takers' stress and anxiety. The next 14 items focused on assessment use consequences, whose results revealed that teachers strongly agreed with the items related to the consequences of assessment use. Among these items, the careful examination of positive and negative consequences of tests for test-takers and the continuous examination of the quality of tests to reduce the negative effects of their uses and interpretations were the most frequent ones.

Fairness was the next sub-scale assessed by four items. In general, the teachers agreed with fairness considerations in language assessment, yet they highly favored that the content of language tests should be based on the representation of the multiple religious, ethnic, and gender groups of society. In the realm of assessment policies,

educators commonly concurred that examinations pertaining to topics such as immigration, asylum, citizenship, or scholarship may, at times, align with the political agendas of governing bodies. Moreover, teachers' discernment of the underlying interests and agendas that these tests cater to was noted. The last two items delved into national policy and ideology, and the teachers strongly believed that the educational policies of the government influence the administration and interpretation of language tests. Additionally, one sample t-test showed that teachers' perceptions of language assessment literacy were significantly above the expected mean (3; $M = 3.25$, $t = 5.42$, $p = .00$).

The second research question aimed to uncover how Iraqi EFL teachers perceive their assessment self-efficacy. For this purpose, the Assessment Self-Efficacy Scale was administered, whose findings were discussed below.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Assessment Self-Efficacy Scale

	Please choose the one that best describes your idea.	Strongly Agree f (%)	Agree f (%)	Neither agree nor disagree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Strongly disagree f (%)	M	SD
Self-efficacy for summative assessment								
1	I can identify students' learning needs.	105 (75)	30 (21.42)	5 (3.57)	-	-	3.94	1
2	I can assess student performance.	83 (59.28)	57 (40.71)	-	-	-	3.9	0.95
3	I can assess how well students have achieved learning goals.	59 (39.33)	63 (45)	18 (12.85)	-	-	3.50	0.95
Self-efficacy for formative assessment								
4	I can use assessment to develop my teaching.	47 (33.57)	48 (34.28)	29 (20.71)	13 (9.28)	3 (2.14)	3.25	1
5	I can use assessment to help students identify skills that still require practice.	40 (28.57)	65 (46.42)	21 (15)	14 (10)	-	3.25	1
6	I can use assessment to support students' learning.	78 (55.71)	52 (37.14)	10 (7.14)	-	-	3.35	0.90
7	I can use assessment to support my own work.	53 (37.85)	70 (50)	11 (7.85)	-	-	3.60	0.85

Overall self-efficacy in assessment								
8	I can assess fairly and equitably.	53 (37.85)	30 (21.42)	51 (36.42)	6(4.28)	-	3.25	1
9	I can encourage students through assessment.	39 (27.85)	38 (27.14)	49 (35)	14 (10)	-	3.3	0.95
10	I can design assessment practices according to age and potential.	52 (37.14)	55 (39.28)	26 (18.57)	7 (5)	-	3.4	0.85
11	I can assess using varied assessment methods.	50 (35.71)	46 (32.85)	35 (25)	9 (6.42)	-	3.4	0.85
12	I trust my own assessment skills.	50 (35.71)	51 (36.42)	39 (27.85)	-	-	3.4	0.85
13	I trust my opportunities to develop as an assessor.	26 (18.57)	73 (52.14)	28 (20)	13 (9.28)	-	3.55	0.8
Assessment avoidance								
14	I tend to avoid assessment responsibilities.	-	-	25 (17.85)	32 (22.85)	83 (59.28)	3.3	0.95
15	Assessment situations cause me anxiety or stress.	-	-	12 (8.57)	72 (51.42)	55 (39.28)	3.36	0.96
16	I do not like tasks related to assessment.	-	-	3 (2.14)	32 (22.85)	108 (77.14)	3.36	0.96

Table 3 showed that Iraqi EFL teachers were quite efficacious in summatively assessing their students, especially in identifying students' learning needs (assessed by the first three items of the questionnaire). It was also the case for formative assessment, especially using assessment to support students' learning and being aware of the skills that need further development.

The teachers' perception of their overall self-efficacy in assessment revealed their self-efficacy, with the highest frequency of self-efficacy in fair and equitable assessment followed by designing assessment practices according to students' age and potential. Finally, Iraqi EFL teachers believed that assessment neither causes anxiety nor stress nor that they dislike assessment tasks. Additionally, one sample t-test showed that Iraqi EFL teachers' assessment self-efficacy was significantly above the expected mean (3; $M= 3.5$, $t= 6.4$, $p=.00$).

The third research question sought to reveal whether there was any relationship between Iraqi teachers' language assessment literacy and their assessment self-efficacy.

For this purpose, a Pearson correlation analysis was run between the sub-scales of the Language Assessment Literacy Scale and Assessment Self-Efficacy Scale. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were run prior to the analysis to ensure the normality of data (Table 4).

Table 4

Test of Normality of Sub-Scales of Two Instruments

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnoff			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Teachers' knowledge of assessment objectives, scopes, and types	0.09	140	0.1	0.96	140	0.53
Assessment use consequences	0.1	140	0.06	0.95	140	0.5
Fairness	0.07	140	0.2	0.97	140	0.81
Assessment policies	0.08	140	0.06	0.96	140	0.62
National policy and ideology	0.13	140	0.2	0.95	140	0.23
Self-efficacy for summative assessment	0.1	140	0.08	0.98	140	0.59
Self-efficacy for formative assessment	0.12	140	0.24	0.92	140	0.19
Overall self-efficacy in assessment	0.15	140	0.17	0.9	140	0.07
Assessment avoidance	0.13	140	0.19	0.93	140	0.28

The Kolmogorov-Smirnoff and Shapiro-Wilk tests' statistics for the six sub-scales indicated the normal distribution of the data ($p > .05$); therefore, the normality assumption was met, and Pearson correlation could be run on sub-scales scores.

Table 5

Pearson Correlation Comparing Sub-Scales of Two Questionnaires

Sub-scales	Self-efficacy for summative assessment	Self-efficacy for formative assessment	Overall self-efficacy in assessment
Teachers' knowledge of assessment objectives, scopes, and types	0.36*	0.49*	0.58**
Assessment use consequences	0.51**		0.62*
Fairness	0.57*	0.49*	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between the sub-scales of the two instruments. Teachers' knowledge of assessment objectives, scopes, and types was positively correlated with self-efficacy for summative assessment ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.05$), self-efficacy for formative assessment ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.05$), and overall self-efficacy in assessment ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$). The assessment use consequences were positively correlated with self-efficacy for summative assessment ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.01$) and overall self-efficacy in assessment ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$). Finally, fairness was positively related to self-efficacy for summative assessment ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.05$) and self-efficacy for formative assessment ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.05$).

5. Discussion

The present study sought to find Iraqi EFL teachers' perceptions of their language assessment literacy, their assessment self-efficacy, and the relationship between these two variables. The findings indicated that the items of the language assessment literacy scale, included in the five sub-scales of teachers' knowledge of assessment objectives, scopes and types, assessment use consequences, fairness, assessment policies, and national policy and ideology, were highly appraised by participants. Regarding assessment self-efficacy, the participants evaluated themselves as efficacious in assessing students, which was measured by self-efficacy for summative and formative assessment, overall self-efficacy in assessment, and assessment avoidance.

Additionally, teachers' knowledge of assessment objectives, scopes, and types was positively correlated with self-efficacy for summative assessment, self-efficacy for formative assessment, and overall self-efficacy in assessment. Fairness was positively related to self-efficacy for summative and formative assessment, and the consequences of assessment use were positively correlated with self-efficacy for summative assessment and overall self-efficacy in assessment.

The findings of language assessment literacy align with the research by Jannati (2015) and Öz and Atay (2017), who observed that EFL educators demonstrated familiarity with fundamental assessment concepts and terminology, understanding the rationale and purpose of assessment to a certain degree. McNamara and Roever (2006) proposed that a competent assessor must consider and acknowledge the repercussions of an

assessment along with its suitable applicability. Additionally, assessors must possess the capacity to utilize analytics in a way that effectively captures the genuine learning that has occurred within the learners' minds, which might justify why Iraqi EFL teachers highly value this issue. Thus, Xu and Brown (2016) associated LAL with teacher training and educational assessment, stressing the incorporation of assessment literacy topics into teacher preparation programs.

Regarding the findings of the study about fairness, Tierney (2016) contends that in order to adhere to the ethical standards of educational assessment, fairness must be ensured, as fairness and ethical conduct contribute to the broader issue of social justice. The finding concerning fairness is in line with the findings of Deygers (2019), who determined that language assessment should consider fairness and social justice, providing all students of diverse ages, backgrounds, and ethnicities with an equitable opportunity for success in their educational endeavors and future careers. Similar to Iraqi teachers who participated in this study, Hussain Jaber (2023) articulated that Iraqi educators exhibited a strong grasp of assessment principles and methodologies, prioritizing meeting the requirements of the national education system despite an overreliance on summative assessment.

In terms of self-efficacy, Dixon and Haigh (2009) noted that higher self-efficacy in teachers equated with a greater inclination towards implementing novel initiatives in their assessment procedures. It seems that educators prioritize their own competencies when it comes to assessment practices, specifically assessing whether they possess the requisite skills. Teachers are more inclined to engage in assessment activities when they feel assured and competent in employing a particular assessment methodology. Consistent with the findings of the present study, Jawad's (2020) findings underscored the self-efficacy levels of Iraqi EFL teachers in formative assessment, highlighting their confidence in possessing the necessary skills and resources for executing formative assessments.

In a similar vein, Eufemia (2012) explored the correlation between the utilization of formative assessment techniques and teachers' self-efficacy. The results revealed that educators with a strong sense of self-efficacy frequently employed formative assessments to inform their instructional strategies, indicating a high level of comfort with their assessment proficiency.

Considering the relationship between language assessment literacy and self-efficacy, EFL teachers with higher language assessment literacy might possess relevant knowledge and skills that empower them to design, implement, and evaluate assessments effectively (Coombe et al., 2020). This competence fosters confidence in their assessment practices, enhancing their self-efficacy, i.e., believing in their assessment-related capabilities. Furthermore, a strong foundation in LAL allows teachers to make informed decisions regarding assessment methods and tools (Mohammadkhah et al., 2022). This confidence in their choices reinforces their belief in their assessment capabilities, thus boosting their self-efficacy.

This positive relationship can also be justified by the issue that teachers who are proficient in assessment literacy are likely to produce more reliable and valid assessment results (Lian et al., 2014). Seeing positive outcomes from their assessments can enhance self-efficacy, as teachers feel their skills are impactful. Also, teachers with strong LAL can interpret assessment results effectively and provide constructive feedback (Gratiana, 2024). Positive experiences in giving and receiving feedback can reinforce their self-efficacy as they see the results of their efforts. In summary, the relationship between language assessment literacy and EFL teachers' assessment self-efficacy is positive because a higher level of LAL leads to increased competence, informed decision-making, better student outcomes, and collaborative learning, all of which foster greater confidence in their assessment abilities. This interplay creates a reinforcing cycle that benefits both teachers and students.

6. Conclusion

This study reveals the perceptions of Iraqi EFL teachers regarding their language assessment literacy and assessment self-efficacy, revealing significant insights into an area that plays a crucial role in the quality of foreign language education. The findings demonstrate that the teachers possess a robust understanding of the various aspects of language assessment, denoting that they are well-acquainted with assessment objectives, scopes, types, use consequences, fairness, and relevant policies, implying a strong foundation for effective assessment practices in their classrooms.

Additionally, the teachers expressed a high level of self-efficacy in their assessment capabilities, especially concerning both summative and formative assessments. This self-

assurance is pivotal, as it likely influences their instructional strategies and ultimately affects student learning outcomes. The positive correlation between language assessment literacy and self-efficacy further emphasizes the importance of equipping teachers with comprehensive assessment skills, as it not only elevates their confidence but also enhances their ability to implement effective assessments.

Given these findings, it is recommended that educational authorities and institutions in Iraq prioritize professional development opportunities for EFL teachers, focusing on advanced training in language assessment practices. Such initiatives should aim to bolster both their assessment literacy and self-efficacy, thereby contributing to a more favorable learning environment for students. Future research could explore the impact of targeted professional development on teachers' assessment practices and student achievement, further illuminating the connection between assessment quality and educational excellence in the EFL context.

Educational institutions and policymakers should develop targeted professional development programs that enhance EFL teachers' assessment literacy and self-efficacy. Workshops and training sessions can focus on the latest assessment methodologies, tools, and strategies, ensuring teachers are well-equipped to evaluate student performance effectively. The findings suggest that assessment literacy is critical for effective teaching. Therefore, integrating language assessment content into EFL teacher training curricula can prepare future educators with the necessary skills and knowledge from the outset. This integration can include theoretical and practical components of assessment best practices.

Continued research on the assessment literacy and self-efficacy of teachers can contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing educational outcomes. Future studies could explore the long-term impacts of enhanced assessment skills on student achievement, guiding further improvements and innovations in teaching practice.

This research is not without its limitations. The findings are limited to the participants. For the generalizability of the results, further studies can be conducted on other groups of teachers. Moreover, the study was only concerned with self-perceptions measured by self-reported instruments. Hence, further studies need to use a mixed-methods design to observe teachers performing assessments as a part of their instruction.

References

- Alkharusi, H. A. (2009). Correlates of teacher education students' academic performance in an educational measurement course. *International Journal of Learning*, 16(2), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9494/CGP/v16i02/46111>
- Alkharusi, H. A., Aldhafri, S. S., Alnabhani, H. Z., & Alkalbani, M. (2014). Factors related to teachers' analysis of classroom assessments. *International Scholarly and Scientific Research & Innovation*, 8(2), 538-541.
- Brookhart, S. M., & McMillan, J. H. (2020). *Classroom assessment and educational measurement*. Taylor & Francis.
- Brown, G. T. L. (2002). *Teachers' conceptions of assessment* [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Auckland].
- Brown, G. T., & Gao, L. (2015). Chinese teachers' conceptions of assessment for and of learning: Six competing and complementary purposes. *Cogent Education*, 2(1), 993836. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2014.993836>
- Brown, J. D., & Bailey, K. M. (2008). Language testing courses: What are they in 2007? *Language Testing*, 25(3), 349-383. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0265532208090157>
- Coombe, C., Vafadar, H., & Mohebbi, H. (2020). Language assessment literacy: What do we need to learn, unlearn, and relearn? *Language Testing in Asia*, 10(1), 3. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-020-00101-6>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Deygers, B. (2019). Fairness and social justice in English language assessment. In X. Gao (Ed.), *Second handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 1–29). Springer.
- Dixon, H., & Haigh, M. (2009). Changing mathematics teachers' conceptions of assessment and feedback. *Teacher Development*, 13, 173-186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530903044002>
- Eufemia, F. (2012). *The relationship between formative assessment and teachers' self-efficacy*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida].
- Farangi, M., & Rashidi, N. (2022). The relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' conceptions of assessment and their self-efficacy. *International Journal of Language Testing*, 12(2), 59-75. <https://doi.org/10.22034/ijlt.2022.157125>
- Fitriyah, I., Masitoh, F., & Widiati, U. (2022). Classroom-based language assessment literacy and professional development need between novice and experienced EFL teachers. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 12(1), 124-134. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v12i1.46539>
- Fulcher, G. (2012). Assessment literacy for the language classroom. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 9(2), 113-132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2011.642041>
- Fulmer, G. W., Lee, I. C., & Tan, K. H. (2015). Multi-level model of contextual factors and teachers' assessment practices: An integrative review of research. *Assessment in Education: Principles. Policy & Practice*, 22(4), 475-494. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2015.1017445>
- Gan, L., & Lam, R. (2022). A review on language assessment literacy: Trends, foci and contributions. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 19(5), 503-525. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2022.2128802>

- Geijssel, F. P., Slegers, P. J. C., Stoel, R. D., & Krüger, M. L. (2009). The effect of teacher psychological and school organizational and leadership factors on teachers' professional learning in Dutch Schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 109, 406–427.
- Gratiana, Y. (2024). *Assessing secondary school EFL teachers' language assessment literacy: The LAL test development*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Leicester].
- Guo, Y., Piasta, S. B., Justice, L. M., & Kaderavek, J. N. (2010). Relations among preschool teachers' self-efficacy, classroom quality, and children's language and literacy gains. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, 1094–1103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.11.005>
- Hidri, S. (2016). Conceptions of assessment: Investigating what assessment means to secondary and university teachers. *Arab Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 19-43.
- Holzberger, D., Philipp, A., & Kunter, M. (2013). How teachers' self-efficacy is related to instructional quality: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(3), 774-786. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0032198>
- Hussain Jaber, A. (2023). Analyze the language assessment test literacy: A case study of the pre-service English language teachers of Iraq. *Diyala Journal*, 3, 689-700.
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2013). Language assessment literacy. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 2923-2931). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Jannati, S. (2015). ELT teachers' language assessment literacy: Perceptions and practices. *The International Journal of Research in Teacher Education*, 6(2), 26-37.
- Jan-nesar, M. Q., Khodabakhshzadeh, H., & Motallebzadeh, K. (2020). Assessment literacy of Iranian EFL teachers: A review of recent studies. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 17(2), 689-698.
- Jawad, A. H. (2020). Examination of Iraqi EFL teachers' attitudes, intentions, and practices regarding formative assessment. *International Journal of Language Testing*, 10(2), 145-166.
- Kane, M. T., & Wools, S. (2019). Perspectives on the validity of classroom assessments. In S. M. Brookhart & J. H. McMillan (Eds.), *Classroom assessment and educational measurement* (pp. 11–26). Routledge.
- Kyttälä, M., Maria Björn, P., Rantamäki, M., Närhi, V., & Aro, M. (2023). Exploring pre-service special needs teachers' assessment conceptions and assessment self-efficacy. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 38(1), 63-78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2021.2021871>
- Lee, J. (2019). A training project to develop teachers' assessment literacy. In E. White, & T. Delaney (Eds.), *Handbook of research on assessment literacy and teacher-made testing in the language classroom* (pp. 58-80). Hershey.
- Levy-Vered, A., & Alhija, F.N. A. (2015). Modelling beginning teachers' assessment literacy: The contribution of training, self-efficacy, and conceptions of assessment. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 21, 378–406. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2015.1117980>
- Lian, L. H., Yew, W. T., & Meng, C. C. (2014). Enhancing Malaysian teachers' assessment literacy. *International Education Studies*, 7(10), 74-81.
- McNamara, T., & Roever, C. (2006). *Language testing: The social dimension*. Blackwell.

- Mohammadkhah, E., Kiany, G. R., Tajeddin, Z., & ShayesteFar, P. (2022). Teachers' conceptions of language assessment: Affective and theoretical knowledge dimensions of language assessment literacy model. *International Journal of Language Testing*, 12(1), 82-102.
- Noben, I., Folkert Deinum, J., Douwes-van Ark, I. M. E., & Adriaan Hofman, W. H. (2021). How is a professional development program related to the development of university teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and teaching conceptions? *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 68, 100966. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2020.100966>
- Nurdiana, N. N. (2022). Language teacher assessment literacy: A current review. *Journal of English Language and Culture*, 11(1), 66-74. <https://doi.org/10.30813/jelc.v11i1.2291>
- Ogan-Bekiroglu, F. (2009). Assessing assessment: Examination of pre-service physics teachers' attitudes towards assessment and factors affecting their attitudes. *International Journal of Science Education*, 31, 1-39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500690701630448>
- Öz, S., & Atay, D. (2017). Turkish EFL instructors' in-class language assessment literacy: Perceptions and practices. *ELT Research Journal*, 6(1), 25-44.
- Pill, J., & Harding, L. (2013). Defining the language assessment literacy gap: Evidence from a parliamentary inquiry. *Language Testing*, 30(3), 381-402. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480337>
- Poulou, M. S., Reddy, L. A., & Dudek, C. M. (2019). Relation of teacher self-efficacy and classroom practices: A preliminary investigation. *School Psychology International*, 40(1), 25-48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034318798045>
- Russell, M. (2019). Digital technologies supporting and advancing assessment practices in the classroom. In S. M. Brookhart & J. H. McMillan (Eds.), *Classroom assessment and educational measurement* (pp. 224-242). Routledge.
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2010). Teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout: A study of relations. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, 1059-1069. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.11.001>
- Stiggins, R. J. (1991). Assessment literacy. *Phi Delta Kappa*, 72(7), 534-39.
- Suherman, A. (2022). Exploring language assessment literacy of EFL teachers in the context of Indonesian higher education. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 10(3), 783-792.
- Sulaiman, D., Marandi, S. S., & Tajik, L. (2021). The status quo of language assessment literacy among Syrian EFL teachers. *Applied Research on English Language*, 10(2), 33-60. <https://doi.org/10.22108/are.2021.126136.1657>
- Tajeddin, Z., Khatib, M., & Mahdavi, M. (2022). Critical language assessment literacy of EFL teachers: Scale construction and validation. *Language Testing*, 39(4), 649-678. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02655322211057040>
- Taylor, L. (2009). Developing assessment literacy. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 29, 21-36. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190509090035>
- Tierney, R. D. (2016). Fairness in educational assessment. In M. A. Peters (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of educational philosophy and theory* (pp. 793-798). Springer.

- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2007). The differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs of novice and experienced teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 944–956. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.05.003>
- Watmani, R., Asadollahfam, H., & Behin, B. (2020). Demystifying language assessment literacy among high school teachers of English as a foreign language in Iran: Implications for teacher education reforms. *International Journal of Language Testing*, 10(2), 129–144.
- Weng, F., & Shen, B. (2022). Language assessment literacy of teachers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 864582. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.864582>
- Xu, Y., & Brown, G. T. L. (2016). Teacher assessment literacy in practice: A reconceptualization. *Teacher and Teacher Education*, 58, 149–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.05.010>.
- Zhang, Z., & Burry-Stock, J. A. (2003). Classroom assessment practices and teachers' self-perceived assessment skills. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 16, 323–342. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15324818AME1604_4