



Why early exposure to language assessment matters: perceptions of fourth-semester preservice English teachers

Daud Jiwandono^{✉1}, Riana Permatasari², Kushardiyanti Novinda¹, Khairiyah Eka Januaristi³

¹English Education Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

²English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages, Literature, and Culture, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung, Semarang, Indonesia

³English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

✉E-mail: jiwandono@mail.unnes.ac.id (corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

Although language assessment literacy (LAL) has received increasing attention globally, studies on pre-service teachers' initial awareness in the Indonesian context are still relatively limited. This study examines the perceptions of fourth-semester pre-service English teachers toward language assessment, focusing on three main aspects: their views on the initial introduction of assessment theory, their understanding of assessment practices, and the importance of assessment. Using a qualitative descriptive design, the data were collected from 58 participants through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with 15 participants. The results showed that the participants found the initial introduction to assessment theory to be very beneficial because it increased their self-confidence and provided a structured direction in planning their future teaching. Most participants initially viewed assessment as a tool to assess students. However, after gaining an understanding of assessment principles such as validity, reliability, practicality, and washback, their perceptions changed. They began to see assessment as an important part of the teaching process. These findings underscore the importance of incorporating language assessment literacy early in the teacher education curriculum to develop reflective and assessment-literate educators. The study recommends that language assessment instruction should not only be delivered comprehensively but also contextualized in practical teaching experiences.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: March 15, 2025

Revised: May 20, 2025

Accepted: May 22, 2025

Keywords:

Early exposure; English language teaching; Language assessment literacy; Preservice English teachers; Teacher education

To cite this article: Jiwandono, D., Permatasari, R., Novinda, K., & Januaristi, K. E. (2025). Why early exposure to language assessment matters: Perceptions of fourth-semester preservice English teachers. *Erudita: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 5(1), 31–45. <https://doi.org/10.28918/erudita.v5i1.10776>

To link to this article: <https://e-journal.uingusdur.ac.id/erudita/article/view/erudita513>



Copyright © 2025 Author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Introduction

Assessment is a key part of an effective learning process, serving not only to measure student achievement but also as a component that informs and improves the teaching and learning process. As highlighted by Winna and Sabarun (2023), language assessments provide important feedback that allows teachers to adapt instruction to meet learners' needs, thereby creating a more effective learning environment. This feedback is critical to identifying areas where students need improvement, as well as facilitating targeted interventions to encourage their language development (Vattøy & Gamlem, 2020). In addition, the results of the assessment can serve as a guide in adapting the curriculum, ensuring that the content remains relevant to students' evolving competencies and learning goals (Davies, 2023).

In addition, assessment is important for reasons not only in the classroom context, but also support more general educational procedures and regulations. Ningsih et al. (2024) point out that formative assessment is essential to curriculum development because it offers continuous insights into students' learning processes, which may then guide the creation and use of instructional techniques. By encouraging the development of curricula that are responsive to the requirements of learners, this continuous assessment process helps to enhance language instruction as a whole (Dewi & Mutammam, 2022). Additionally, by highlighting areas that require systemic change, such teacher preparation and resource allocation, evaluation procedures can influence educational policy (Laundon et al., 2023).

In discussing about assessment more specifically in English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts, it is essential since it helps students learn and become proficient in the language. Effective assessment procedures allow teachers to track students' progress, offer encouraging feedbacks, and modify their teaching strategies to maximize learning result (Tosuncuoglu, 2018). By ensuring that instruction is student-centered and focused on meeting learning goals, the teachers can foster an effective language-development environment. Furthermore, as noted by Pill and Harding (2013), who support thorough training in assessment concepts and practices to improve instructional effectiveness, assessment literacy – language assessment literacy – among teachers is essential for the use of accurate and reliable evaluation methodologies.

Thus, it is necessary for the teachers as well as pre-service teachers to have assessment literacy. Assessment literacy in English language learning includes important understandings that teachers must have in designing, implementing, and interpreting language assessments. Competence in assessment literacy is an inseparable part of efforts to create effective teaching methods and improve student learning outcomes (Berry et al., 2019; Jeong, 2013). Various studies have shown that assessment literacy not only provides benefits for teachers but also empowers students, by encouraging them to conduct self-evaluation and critical reflection on their learning process (Kianinezhad, 2023).

In addition, contextual factors that influence assessment literacy cannot be ignored. The availability of training and resources is highly dependent on the educational context in which language assessment is conducted (Jeong, 2013; Lam, 2015). Given the diversity of learners' backgrounds and language abilities, contextual assessment practices need to be developed so that every student has a fair opportunity to demonstrate their language competence (Lynch et al., 2021). Language assessment literacy (LAL) is an important framework for

teachers in developing professional competence, enabling them to design assessments that are valid and accurately reflect students' abilities (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014).

LAL has been developed into an important concept in language education, surrounding the knowledge, skills, and principles that teachers need to effectively assess language proficiency. Fulcher (2012) conceptualizes LAL as a hierarchical model consisting of three levels: assessment practices (knowledge and skills), assessment principles (processes and concepts), and the broader context (historical, social, political, and philosophical) in which assessment takes place. This framework highlights the complex nature of LAL and emphasizes the importance for teachers to not only master the technical skills of designing and implementing assessments, but also to understand the fundamental principles and contextual factors that influence assessment practices. In line with this, Taylor (2013) states that LAL is multidimensional, encompassing theoretical knowledge, technical skills, principles and concepts, language pedagogy, sociocultural values, local practices, personal beliefs, and decision-making processes. This model promotes a holistic approach to developing LAL among language teachers.

Recent research highlights the urgent need for educational institutions to invest in assessment literacy programs. Many teachers still lack adequate training in assessment techniques, which ultimately results in ineffective teaching practices (Berry et al., 2019; Amano et al., 2023). Continuing professional development in language assessment literacy will equip teachers with the skills needed to design and implement assessments that reflect not only academic achievement but also students' language competencies (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). This approach will not only strengthen the quality of language instruction but also improve the overall quality of education, especially in heterogeneous classrooms.

Building an environment that emphasizes the importance of assessment literacy will not only benefit teachers and students but will also increase the credibility and accountability of educational institutions (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). Well-designed assessment practices can explain the relationship between language assessment results and learning objectives, thereby supporting the alignment between curriculum and assessment (Xu & Brown, 2016). In an effort to achieve academic excellence and accountability, strengthening assessment literacy is one of the strategic steps that need to be taken by various educational institutions.

The significance of LAL is reflected in its impact on teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Mellati and Khademi (2018) found that teachers with higher levels of assessment literacy positively influenced students' writing achievement, suggesting that LAL contributes to more effective and motivational assessment design in the classroom. This finding emphasizes the importance of integrating LAL development into teacher education programs to improve teaching quality. Farmasari et al. (2023) studied EFL preservice teachers in Indonesia and found that satisfaction with a language assessment course was correlated with higher levels of assessment readiness, highlighting the need for comprehensive assessment training in teacher education curricula.

Despite the recognition of the importance of LAL, challenges remain in its implementation in teacher education. Tsagari (2021) notes that despite the growing recognition of the relevance of LAL, there is no strong consensus on its definition or best practices for integrating it into teacher training. This lack of clarity can lead to inconsistencies in the understanding and application of LAL across educational contexts. Furthermore, the

ever-evolving dynamics of language assessment—driven by technological advances and pedagogical innovation—demand ongoing professional development for teachers. Therefore, a standard framework and ongoing support are needed to ensure that teachers are equipped with adequate competencies to meet the demands of language assessment in education.

Although the importance of LAL in supporting teaching effectiveness has been recognized, there is still a significant gap in research on preservice teachers' awareness and understanding of assessment principles in the early stages of teacher education programs. Many studies have focused more on in-service teachers or those nearing completion of training, so data related to preservice teachers' initial understanding of assessment concepts is still limited (Kömür, 2018). In fact, this early stage is very crucial, considering that the beliefs and understandings formed in this phase can have a long-term impact on teaching practices and attitudes towards assessment.

In the Indonesian context, recent research has begun to shed light on this issue. Farmasari et al. (2023) reviewed EFL preservice teachers' satisfaction with language assessment courses and their readiness to undertake assessment tasks, showing that although these courses are an integral part of the curriculum, their effectiveness in instilling assessment competencies is mixed. Sulistio (2023) also highlighted the importance of academic and professional preparation in assessment literacy, emphasizing that mastery of assessment concepts and skills is an essential factor in achieving learning objectives.

Furthermore, Prastikawati et al. (2024) revealed that many preservice EFL teachers still view assessment more as a means of measuring grades than as a means to inform teaching and support learning. This narrow view indicates the need for assessment training that not only discusses technical aspects but also builds a deep understanding of the role of assessment in the overall educational process. Addressing this gap is important so that preservice teachers are able to implement effective assessment practices from the beginning of their professional careers.

Understanding preservice teachers' perceptions of the importance of language assessment is important, as these beliefs will greatly influence their future teaching and assessment practices. Research shows that teachers' attitudes toward assessment play a significant role in how they implement assessment strategies in the classroom. For example, Vogt and Tsagari (2014) found that teachers who have a deep understanding of the role of assessment in learning tend to use more diverse and effective assessment methods. Similarly, Lam (2015) emphasized that teachers' beliefs about assessment greatly influence their assessment literacy levels and ultimately impact the instructional decisions they make.

Investigating preservice teachers' perceptions of early exposure to language assessment theories is important to understand how this foundational knowledge influences their assessment literacy development. Giraldo (2018) argued that integrating assessment literacy early in teacher education programs can deepen their understanding and strengthen their application of assessment principles. This early exposure allows preservice teachers to gradually internalize assessment concepts, ultimately increasing their confidence and competence in future teaching roles. Yan and Fan (2021) also noted that early exposure to assessment theories positively contributes to preservice teachers' readiness and adaptability in dealing with various classroom contexts.

The main purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of preservice teachers regarding language assessment in the context of English language education. This study specifically aims to understand how pre-service teachers respond to initial exposure to language assessment theory during teacher education programs, how they view the practice and implementation of assessment in learning, and how they view the importance of language assessment. By understanding these perceptions, it is hoped that this study can provide valuable insights that can be used to improve the design and implementation of language assessment learning in English education study programs, so that future preservice teachers can more effectively integrate assessment into their teaching practices.

Based on the above background, this study focuses on three main questions on how do preservice teachers: (1) view on the initial introduction of assessment theory, (2) understand of assessment practice, and (3) perceive on the importance of assessment. Answering these three questions will provide a deeper understanding of preservice teachers' perceptions, which can later be used to develop a more effective teacher education curriculum that emphasizes the importance of language assessment and increase LAL owned by pre-service teachers. By aligning teacher training with the needs and perceptions of preservice teachers, it is expected that educational institutions can better prepare preservice teachers in implementing assessment strategies that can improve student learning outcomes.

Method

Research design

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the perceptions of preservice English teachers towards language assessment. The main focus of this study is to understand how they assess the need for early introduction of assessment theory in the curriculum they are experiencing, the extent to which they understand various assessment practices, and their views on the importance of assessment.

Research setting and participants

Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, they were fourth-semester preservice English teachers from two classes in the English Education Study Program at a public university in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. This semester, they had just taken a course that introduced the theory and basic principles of language assessment for the first time. This fresh academic experience made them the right subjects, because they were in the early stages of developing assessment literacy and were able to present initial, reflective views on the concepts they were learning.

Data collection

In data collection, this study utilized questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. These two methods were chosen because they have proven to be effective in qualitative research to capture general patterns as well as personal stories and reflections in greater depth (Dörnyei, 2007; Burns, 2010). The combination of these two instruments allowed the researchers to collect data from more respondents at an early stage, then deepen the findings through follow-up interviews.

A questionnaire was used as an initial data collection instrument to obtain an overview of students' perceptions of language assessment. The questionnaire included a combination of closed-ended questions, such as Likert scales, and open-ended questions that encouraged students to explain their opinions and share personal experiences. The questions were designed to explore key aspects, such as how they perceived the impact of the initial introduction on their readiness to perform assessment in their future teaching, the types of assessment they had experienced as students previously and during their preservice teachers' education program, and their views on the importance of assessment in learning. There were 58 (fifty-eight) participants who fulfilled the questionnaire.

Following completion of the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted to 15 participants. The 15 participants were chosen to explore issues raised in the questionnaire in more depth. In the context of this study, the interviews allowed participants to reflect on the impact of the initial introduction on the development of their teaching philosophies, assess the relevance and applicability of assessment principles, and express their experiences of language assessment.

Data analysis

Once the data were collected, analysis was conducted inductively. Inductive analysis, as described by Burns (2010) and Hatch (2002), is an approach that moves from specific data to more general findings. The researchers started by examining the raw data and allowing patterns, themes, and categories to emerge. The analysis process begins with repeated readings of the data to understand its overall meaning, identify key concepts, group similar ideas, and interpret its meaning in the context of preservice teacher education development. This approach is very important, considering that assessment literacy does not only include technical knowledge, but also reflects the ability to think critically, reflect, and adapt to real situations in the classroom.

Findings and discussion

This section presents the research findings based on data collected through questionnaires from 58 (fifty-eight) and interviews with 15 (fifteen) fourth-semester preservice teachers. The results are categorized into three main themes: preservice teachers' views on the initial introduction of language assessment theory in their study program, their understanding of assessment practices, and their perceptions of the importance of language assessment.

Preservice English teachers' views on the early introduction to language assessment theory

There are several things drawn from the questionnaires related to the early introduction to language assessment theory which are, improving the participants readiness for future teaching, giving ample time to internalize the language assessment concept, enabling them to evaluate their language assessment in their prior study, gaining insight that there are connections between assessment and other teaching practices, and building a sense of responsibility in developing a good quality assessment.

One of the courses the participants took in their fourth semester is Theories and Principles in Language Assessment. It consists mainly about the theories of language

assessment and its application examples in the teaching and learning process. In this study, the introduction to assessment theory in the fourth semester was generally considered beneficial. Approximately 67.1%/39 participants stated that early exposure to assessment concepts improved their readiness for future teaching. They felt that by taking this course from the beginning, they had sufficient time to internalize important concepts and see their connections to other aspects of teaching. It also gave them more time to process, question, and integrate assessment concepts with their own teaching identities. Knowing that in the next semester they will have another course on language assessment also made them more eager to strengthen their prior knowledge in language assessment administration.

They believed that if assessment was not taught until right before the teaching practices in school, the learning would feel rushed and less impactful (65.5%/38 participants). It was because there were many interconnected theories in the assessment administration so the participants need more time to grasp them all. This supports the findings of Vogt and Tzagari (2014) who recommend that assessment theory be introduced early in teacher education programs for continued understanding. This gradual process is preferable to the participants rather than wrap it all with limited time before they have their teaching practice in schools. By having solid foundation on language assessment administration both in comprehension of the theory and its implementation in the teaching learning process, the preservice English teachers would not likely to suffer confusion in their teaching practice so that they can deliver successful and efficient teaching. This reinforces the importance of embedding assessment literacy early in teacher education, as also emphasized by Giraldo (2018) and Yan and Fan (2021), who advocate early and ongoing engagement with assessment theory and practice. The research result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Preservice Teachers Perceptions on Early Introduction of Assessment Theory

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Early exposure improves teaching preparedness	27.5% (16)	39.6% (23)	32.9% (19)	0%	0%
Early learning helps integrate assessment with other teaching practices	22% (13)	57% (33)	21% (12)	0%	0%
Late introduction would feel rushed and less meaningful	15.5% (9)	50% (29)	34.5% (20)	0%	0%

Moreover, several participants stated that the initial exposure helped them evaluate the assessments they had experienced as students. For example, many students stated that understanding assessment at this stage helped them reflect critically on the teaching practices they experienced during their previous school. One participant said, *“Now I can identify whether my teacher is using assessment well or not. Before, I just followed along.”* This shows the reflective potential that is formed by early theoretical foundations, as emphasized by DeLuca and Klinger (2010) that assessment literacy develops gradually. Moreover, they began to question the reasoning behind the test items, evaluation criteria, and grading systems used in other classes. The participants also develop perspectives that there is sense of connections between language assessment and other teaching practices which make

them work altogether to foster effective teaching and learning process (79%/46 participants). This critical perspective, developed early in the training, became an important foundation for forming more effective teaching practices in the future.

Furthermore, early introduction to assessment theory seems to build a sense of responsibility to the participants. Around 71.5% of participants stated that they now feel responsible for the quality of assessments they will implement in the classroom. Being aware of the benefits of assessment to the teaching and learning process made the participants put it in as important as the teaching process. If the teaching process is accompanied by less quality assessment, they would not produce desirable results. Thus, the participants felt more responsible not only to deliver effective teaching activities but also to put similar emphasis on the assessment part. The awareness that assessment has such huge implications in the teaching process emerged as an important insight. Lam (2015) emphasized that this awareness must be instilled early on so that preservice teachers can develop into responsible assessment practitioners.

These reflections suggest that early exposure not only enhances technical knowledge, but also fosters metacognitive growth, as participants begin to view assessment as a strategic element in teaching. These findings suggest that early-acquired assessment knowledge can develop along with other professional competencies. As students show progress to higher level studies, they bring with them a stronger assessment foundation and a more holistic view of learning. Early assessment education enables students to connect theory to practice and develop reflective attitudes that will be vital during their teaching careers.

These findings suggest that early introduction of language assessment theory in teacher education significantly impacts students' understanding and appreciation of assessment. The course successfully shifts their perceptions from a limited, summative view to a more comprehensive, formative, and pedagogical approach. Participants begin to understand the complex role of assessment in teaching, recognize the complexities in its design, and demonstrate a readiness to apply this knowledge in real teaching contexts.

Preservice English teachers' understanding of language assessment practices

In this understanding of language assessment practices part, several points emerged such as the improvement of understanding on the assessment methods, the recognition of different kinds of assessment tailored to the different language skills, the confidence in designing the assessment, the notion of assessment as an inseparable part of teaching and learning process, the view on assessment as tools to identify students' weaknesses, and regarded assessment should be fair to the students.

When asked about the types of assessments they had experienced, 79.3% of participants mentioned traditional forms such as quizzes, midterm exams, and final exams. Less than 30% were aware that teacher questions or simple confirmation activities were also part of assessment techniques. However, after taking the assessment course, students began to improve their understanding of assessment methods. In interviews, many participants stated they were surprised that there are so many things to consider in making effective assessments, especially related to the principles of validity, reliability, practicality, and washback. One participant stated, *"I didn't expect that creating a test would involve so many things to do. It's not just about giving questions, but also making sure that it is actually in line*

with what we're teaching." This increased awareness is in line with Giraldo's (2018) findings, which show that introducing assessment concepts to preservice teachers can build their practical and theoretical competencies. This development in understanding suggests that teacher education programs need to continue to emphasize both the theoretical and practical aspects of language assessment so that prospective teachers are able to assess language skills well (Jeong, 2013; Xu & Brown, 2016).

Participants also began to recognize that there are different types of assessments personalized to the skills being assessed. Through their involvement in assessment courses, they came to understand that speaking, listening, reading, and writing assessments each require different tools and are made to the specific characteristics of those skills. For example, a speaking assessment can use a rubric that assesses fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation; while reading comprehension can be measured using questions designed to assess comprehension. Similarly, listening assessments typically involve audio-based tasks that require response to show the students' comprehension, while writing skills are often assessed using analytical rubrics. This realization shows a significant shift from their previous understanding, where many had thought that one type of test could be applied to all language skills. Their deepening understanding of these tools allowed them to more carefully consider the most appropriate form of assessment to evaluate students across the four language skills.

Table 2

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions on the Language Assessment Practices

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel more confident in designing language assessments after learning about assessment principles.	10% (6)	57.2% (33)	17.2% (10)	15.6% (9)	0%
I believe it is important to ensure fairness during assessment.	53.4% (31)	39.7% (23)	6.9% (4)	0%	0%
I think assessments should reflect students' actual language development, not just assign scores.	46.6% (27)	39.7% (23)	13.8% (8)	0%	0%

Table 2 reveals that 57.2% of students reported feeling more confident to design or evaluate various assessment instruments after taking the course. Participants also developed a deeper understanding of the relationship between learning objectives and assessment tools. Similar to other course they took which deals with designing teaching material, they have to make sure that their teaching material is aligned with teaching objectives, designing the assessment part also need to make sure that it is aligned as well. In another word, the assessment is a tool identify whether the students are already reached the desired competence/comprehension in the teaching learning process. Moreover, they also began to comprehend that effective assessment requires a high degree of compatibility between what is taught and what is assessed.

Participants also view that rather than regarding assessment as a separate activity with the teaching process, it as an essential part of the teaching learning process. For example, when developing a lesson plan about argumentative writing, participants recognized that they have to use a rubric that specifically assessed structure, argument coherence, and language use. This understanding emphasized the importance of coherence among objectives, instructional methods, and assessment tasks so that evaluations can provide meaningful and accurate information about student learning. In this regard, some participants (86.3%/50 participants) also regarded more detailed feedback from the assessment as important thing to make. Not only giving the students numbers on their assessment results, giving formative feedback also important as well.

Identifying specific areas where students need to improve is important, rather than simply giving numerical grades to their test results. Numerical grades alone often fail to provide a clear picture of how far students have progressed or what difficulties they are facing. Formative feedback, on the other hand, is a very effective tool in supporting the learning process by highlighting individual strengths and weaknesses. This type of feedback allows students to understand specific aspects of their performance that still need improvement, so that they can focus more on making improvements. When students know where they are weak, they are more motivated to do targeted practice, which improves their learning outcomes. The students who have a better understanding of their own development will feel more motivated in the learning process. This awareness encourages them to take greater responsibility for their learning.

The implementation of formative assessments also provides great benefits for teachers, as it helps provide a clearer picture of students' learning progress. Teachers can use the results of this assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching approach used, and make several adjustments that suits students' needs. Thus, assessment is no longer just a tool for assessment, but becomes an important part of the teaching and learning process.

In addition to technical and pedagogical considerations, participants demonstrated an increased awareness of the ethical dimensions of language assessment. As assessment literacy increased, they emphasized that assessments should not only be accurate, but also fair and consider students' emotional well-being (93.1%/54 participants). Several participants stated concerns about the impact of stressful testing environments, noting that factors such as unclear instructions, time pressure, or overly rigid grading systems could be disadvantageous to learners. They recognized the importance of designing assessments that minimize unnecessary anxiety and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their abilities. These reflections align with Lam's (2015) emphasis on educators' ethical responsibility to create fair and inclusive assessment environments. For these preservice teachers, fairness in assessment incorporates not only assessment practices but also the entire student experience during the assessment process.

Preservice English teachers' perceptions on the importance of language assessment

In this part, there are several points emerged which are the participants awareness of the importance of language assessment in ensuring the achievement of learning objectives, the understanding the role of assessment greatly influenced the way they planned and

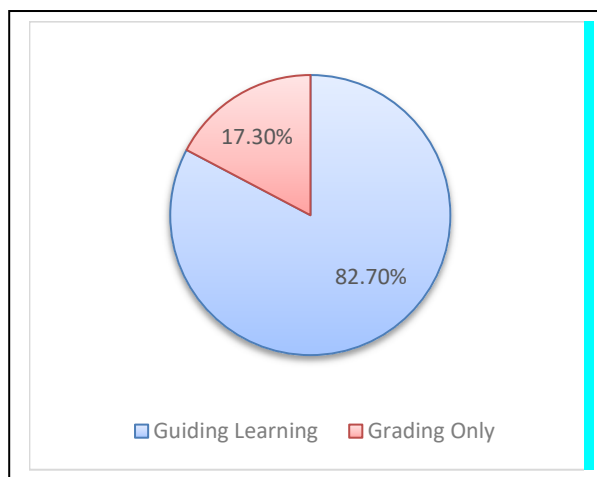
implemented future learning, assessment should be integrated throughout the learning process, not just at the end.

The data from the questionnaires show that 82.7% (48 participants) of preservice teachers are aware of the important role of language assessment in ensuring that the learning objectives that have been designed are achieved. Exposure to theoretical concepts in assessment courses introduces them to the understanding that assessment does not only function as a final assessment tool, but also as a means to direct and improve the learning process. Most interviewees admitted that they previously considered assessment only as the final stage of teaching—usually in the form of quizzes, midterm exams, and final exams. One student stated, *“I used to think that assessment was just a test. I didn’t know that it could be part of a learning strategy.”*

However, some other participants (17.30% or 10 participants) still maintain the view that language assessments only serve to give grades to students, which is to determine whether they pass the course or not, without having any significant relevance in providing information to teachers about the ongoing learning process. This view is mostly influenced by their previous experience, where they did not feel any significant changes in the teaching and learning process before or after the assessment was administered such as quizzes or midterm exam. In addition, regarding the final assessment, they also have no information whether teachers really use the results as feedback to improve their teaching methods. The result is demonstrated in Figure 1 as follows.

Figure 1

Preservice Teachers’ Recognition of Assessment Functions



This view is in line with the findings of Yan and Fan (2021) who stated that preservice teachers often underestimate the pedagogical function of formative assessment until they are introduced to its benefits. Through this course, students begin to understand that assessment provides feedback and supports student learning development. This awareness shows a shift from a mindset that only emphasizes summative assessment to a more formative and integrated view.

In addition, 75.8% of participants (44 participants) stated that understanding the role of assessment greatly influenced the way they planned and implemented future learning. Not

only they This supports Fulcher's (2012) statement that assessment literacy is the foundation of effective language teaching. Volante and Fazio (2007) also emphasized that teacher perceptions have a strong influence on how assessment is integrated into classroom routines.

A new awareness also emerged that assessment should be integrated throughout the learning process, not just at the end. Many participants previously separated teaching and assessing into different section with little or no connection to one another. However, after taking this course, they started to see assessment as an active collaboration between teacher and student. This view is supported by Stiggins (2014) who emphasized the importance of integrating assessment into the teaching process as a tool to improve the students' learning.

Building on this new perspective, evaluation as a means to personalize learning and support student motivation is also to be seen. The well-designed assessments could help teachers identify and address individual student needs more effectively. Informal assessments, in particular, were recognized as important tools for spotting learning difficulties early and preventing them from becoming more serious over time.

Conclusion

This study aims to identify preservice teachers' perceptions of language assessment through three main aspects: the participants' views on the initial introduction of assessment theory in teacher education programs, their understanding of its practices and applications, and the importance of assessment in English language learning. Through qualitative data collected from questionnaires and interviews with 58 (fifty-eight) fourth-semester English Education Study Programs students, this study reveals important insights into how language assessment is understood and valued by preservice teachers. First, this study highlights the positive impact of early introduction of language assessment theory in teacher education. Participants stated that learning about language assessment early in their studies helped them develop a foundational knowledge of the role of assessment. They reported that this early understanding led them to see assessment as an ongoing process to support learning, rather than simply an end-of-course evaluation activity.

Second, participants' reflections on assessment practices demonstrated a growing understanding of the complexities of designing and implementing effective assessments. Most participants at the beginning of the course had limited understanding, where assessment was only associated with formal tests such as quizzes, midterms, or final exams. However, in the learning process, they began to identify various assessment strategies, including informal assessments. They also began to understand basic concepts such as validity, reliability, practicality, and washback. Third, the research findings indicate that participants are increasingly recognizing that language assessment is not just a tool for assigning grades to students, but an essential component of the learning process. Their responses indicate that exposure to assessment theory allowed them to see the potential of assessment as a guide to instruction and a means to help students achieve learning goals. This reflects a shift from a narrow, score-oriented view to a formative approach that can then be pedagogically integrated.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that early introduction of language assessment in preservice teacher education programs can change the way they understand and practice assessment and provide a more comprehensive picture of their future professional teaching

practices. The findings also demonstrate the transformative potential of structured assessment courses in developing reflective, knowledgeable, and competent English language teachers. This study contributes to efforts to strengthen teacher education curricula by emphasizing the importance of language assessment and assessment literacy early in education.

While this study provides significant insights in terms of the initial perception of pre-service teachers, this study is limited to the range of semester of the pre-service teachers. Thus, there are also opportunities for further research to explore how perceptions of language assessment evolve over time, or how they are actually implemented in teaching practice programs. Moreover, future researchers may conduct cross-institutional comparisons to deepen understanding of how preservice teachers' beliefs about assessment are shaped by curriculum, institutions, or policies.

Acknowledgements

This research was conducted independently and did not receive any specific grant or financial support from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. We would like to acknowledge the research participants and colleagues who have been involved in this research.

References

- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. Routledge.
- Davies, J. A. (2023). In search of learning-focused feedback practices: A linguistic analysis of higher education feedback policy. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 48(8), 1208–1222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2023.2180617>
- DeLuca, C., & Klinger, D. A. (2010). Assessment literacy development: Identifying gaps in teacher candidates' learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 17(4), 419–438. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2010.516643>
- Dewi, Y. L., & Mutammam, M. (2022). Formative assessment in distance learning: Narratives of Indonesian senior secondary school EFL teachers. *Erudita: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 2(1), 26–37. <https://doi.org/10.28918/erudita.v2i1.5329>
- Farmasari, S., Wardana, L. A., Baharudin, D., Herayana, D., & Suryaningsih, H. (2023). Pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy satisfaction and assessment preparedness. *International Journal of Language Education*, 7(4), 15–25. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v7i4.47445>
- Fulcher, G. (2012). Assessment literacy for the language classroom. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 9(2), 113–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2011.642041>
- Giraldo, F. (2018). Language assessment literacy: Implications for language teachers. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 20(1), 179–195. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v20n1.62089>
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. State University of New York Press.

- Jeong, H. (2013). Defining assessment literacy: Is it different for language testers and non-language testers? *Language Testing*, 30(3), 345–362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480336>
- Kianinezhad, N. (2023). Language assessment literacy: The role of self-reflection. *Journal of English Language and Culture*, 14(1), 40–55. <https://doi.org/10.30813/jelc.v14i1.4662>
- Kömür, Ş. (2018). Preservice English teachers' assessment awareness: Level of readiness for classroom practice. *Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, 8(1), 1–15. <https://jltl.com.tr/index.php/jltl/article/view/60>
- Lam, R. (2015). Language assessment training in Hong Kong: Implications for language assessment literacy. *Language Testing*, 32(2), 169–197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532214554321>
- Laundon, M., Cunningham, S., & Cathcart, A. (2023). Institutional approaches to evaluation of learning and teaching: A sector scan of Australasian universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 45(5), 511–528. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2023.2196646>
- Mellati, M., & Khademi, M. (2018). Exploring teachers' assessment literacy: Impact on learners' writing achievements and implications for teacher development. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(6), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v43n6.1>
- Pill, J., & Harding, L. (2013). Defining the construct of language proficiency in the context of health professions. *Language Testing*, 30(3), 271–290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532212469045>
- Prastikawati, E. F., Mujiyanto, J., Saleh, M., & Fitriati, S. W. (2024). Surveying pre-service EFL teachers' conceptions of assessment: Implication for teacher education. *Proceedings of UNNES-TEFLIN National Conference*, 6, (pp. 1–10). <https://proceeding.unnes.ac.id/utnc/article/view/4054>
- Stiggins, R. (2014). *Defensible teacher evaluation: Student growth through classroom assessment*. Corwin Press.
- Sulistio, P. H. (2023). Language assessment literacy: Cases of pre-service English teachers. *International Journal of Language Education and Cultural Review*, 9(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.21009/ijlecr.v9i1.33032>
- Taylor, L. (2013). Language assessment literacy for language teachers. *Language Testing*, 30(3), 319–336. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480127>
- Tosuncuoglu, I. (2018). Importance of assessment in ELT. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 6(9), 163–167. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1188961>
- Tsagari, D. (2021). Language assessment literacy: Concepts, challenges, and prospects. In D. Tsagari & J. Banerjee (Eds.), *Language assessment literacy: Issues and challenges* (pp. 13–30). Routledge.
- Vattøy, K. D., & Gamlem, S. M. (2020). Teacher–student interactions and feedback in English as a foreign language classrooms. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 50(3), 371–389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2019.1707512>
- Vogt, K., & Tsagari, D. (2014). Assessment literacy of foreign language teachers: Findings of a European study. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 11(4), 374–402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2014.960046>
- Volante, L., & Fazio, X. (2007). Exploring teacher candidates' assessment literacy: Implications for teacher education reform and professional development. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 30(3), 749–770.

- Winna, W., & Sabarun, S. (2023). The language assessment in teaching-learning English. *DIAJAR: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 14(5), 413–419. <https://doi.org/10.54259/diajar.v2i4.1894>
- Xu, Y., & Brown, G. T. L. (2016). Teacher assessment literacy in practice: A reconceptualization. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 58, 149–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.05.010>
- Yan, X., & Fan, J. J. (2021). "Am I qualified to teach assessment?": Pre-service English language teachers' assessment literacy development. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 18(1), 31–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2020.1844543>