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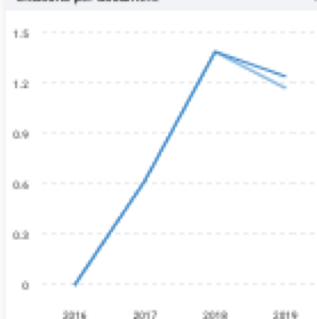
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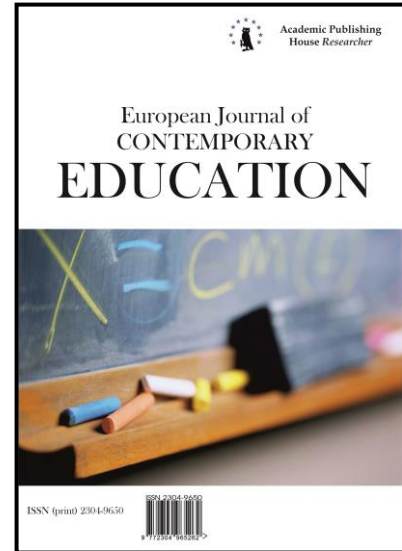
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Preparing Engineers of the Future: the Development of Environmental Thinking as a Universal Competency in Teaching Robotics E.V. Soboleva, N.L. Karavaev .....	160
Linguistic Rhetorical Ideal as a Development Factor of Multiethnic, Sociocultural and Educational Space in the Aspect of the Formation of a Professional Linguistic Personality A.A. Vorozhbitova, A.V. Yuryeva, A.V. Timofeyev, O.V. Ignatyeva .....	177
An Investigation into EFL Teachers' Assessment Literacy: Indonesian Teachers' Perceptions and Classroom Practice S. Zulaiha, H. Mulyono, L. Ambarsari .....	189
<b>The History of Education</b>	
The Public Education System in Voronezh Governorate in the Period 1703–1917. Part 1 A.A. Cherkasov, S.N. Bratanovskii, L.A. Koroleva .....	202
The Social Background of Functionaries in the Russian Empire's Public Education Sector in the First Half of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century: The Case of the Ukrainian Governorates S.I. Degtyarev, L.G. Polyakova, J. Gut .....	212
The System of Public Education in Kars Oblast in the Period 1878–1917. Part 1 T.A. Magsumov, A.A. Korolev, M.A. Ponomareva, T.E. Zulfugarzade .....	221
The System of Public Education in Tiflis Governorate in the Period 1802–1917. Part 1 A.M. Mamadaliev, D.V. Karpukhin, N.V. Svechnikova, A. Médico .....	235
The History of the Public Education System in Vilna Governorate (the Second Half of the 19 <sup>th</sup> and Early 20 <sup>th</sup> Centuries). Part 3 O.V. Natolochnaya, V.A. Svechnikov, L.A. Posokhova, R.M. Allalyev .....	248



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## **An Investigation into EFL Teachers' Assessment Literacy: Indonesian Teachers' Perceptions and Classroom Practice**

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### **Abstract**

The current study aimed to explore junior secondary school English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of classroom-based assessment and to understand the extent to which teachers' perceptions are reflected in their practice. To this end, a total of twenty two Indonesian EFL teachers from six public junior secondary schools participated in the study where they were surveyed and interviewed. Shim's (2009) survey instrument was adapted to collect data related teachers' perception. A semi-structured interview was conducted with five of twenty-two teachers where were selected randomly. A document study was also conducted to further verify data from the questionnaire and interview. The gathered data included curriculum, syllabus, lesson plans, example of assessment materials and students' work. Quantitative data analysis with t-test was employed to analyse the quantitative data while the qualitative data were analysed using a thematic data analysis. Findings of the current study had suggested that teachers had appropriate knowledge about assessment principles and applied such a knowledge into classroom practice. Although, the discrepancy between teachers' knowledge and its application in classroom practices was identified, particularly in implementation and monitoring stages. Some concerns that influenced teachers' practice of classroom assessment included the local or school policy, teachers' use of non-achievement factors (e.g. students' attendance and attitudes), and parents' involvement in their children education. The findings contribute to a better understanding of teachers' assessment literacy in their particular context, as they make meaning and interact with assessment materials and relevant stakeholders of assessment. Recommendations were offered in reference to the findings.

**Keywords:** classroom-based assessment, literacy assessment, primary educations.

### **1. Introduction**

It has been widely acknowledged that assessing student performance is an essential elements of a teacher's job. Indeed, assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process

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(Ashraf, Zolfaghari, 2018), hence teachers spend a significant amount of time engaging in assessment activities (DeLuca, Klinger, 2010). Assessment of language learning is considered not only as a means to monitor students' progress and improve achievement but also to promote learning (Earl, 2003). In other words, assessment serves a variety of purposes (Brown, 2004; Djoub, 2017) and is a crucial aspect of teachers' classroom practice and professional life (Abell, Siegel, 2011; Coombe et al., 2009). Hence, it is essential for teachers to have a sufficient level of assessment literacy to assess students' learning appropriately (DeLuca, Klinger, 2010; Koh et al., 2018; Koh, 2011).

Stiggins (1991) initially perceived assessment literacy as teachers' understanding of underlying principles as well as those skills required to assess student learning. Furthermore, those who are assessment literate know what to assess, how to assess, what the potential problems would be and what to do to alleviate the problems (Stiggins, 1995). 'Assessment literacy' has since become a commonly used term, with researchers and practitioners attempting to conceptualise the meaning of assessment literacy further. For example, Djoub (2017) asserts that assessment literacy means that teachers have the 'knowledge' and 'tools' to know what and how to assess based on particular objectives in addition to knowing what decisions to make in assessing students' achievement. Likewise, Koh et al. (2018) affirms that "a teacher's assessment literacy refers to her or his demonstrated understanding of the principles behind selecting and designing tasks, judging student work, and interpreting and using assessment data to support student learning".

Assessment literacy concepts discussed above reinforce the substantial influence of teachers' assessment practices to the quality of students learning (Coombs et al., 2018). It is argued that literate teachers can integrate assessment with teaching (McMillan, 2003), hence are able to accurately and efficiently draw inferences about students' achievement, as well as to communicate the results of the assessment to the relevant stakeholders (Brookhart, 1999). In short, assessment literate teachers know the appropriate methods to use in collecting reliable data about student performance, how to use assessment to support student learning and how to communicate assessment results effectively and accurately.

Due to the central role of teachers' assessment literacy, there have been an increasing number of studies attempting to measure teachers' assessment literacy, which involves gaining an insight into teachers' perceptions of assessment principles and their practices as what teachers perceive would influence how they approach teaching and conduct assessment.

Studies in different contexts showed a variety of significant findings regarding teachers' assessment literacy (e.g., DeLuca, Klinger, 2010b; Volante, Fazio, 2007). In the general education field, for example, Yamtim and Wongwanich (2014) explored the assessment literacy level of primary school teachers in Thailand using Metlers' (2003) Classroom Assessment Literacy Questionnaire, revealing that teachers had a low level of assessment literacy. In a more recent study, Rahman (2018) researched secondary science teachers' perceptions and practices of classroom assessment, suggesting that teachers perceive classroom assessment as assessment of learning and that what they claimed to practice was not practised in the classroom.

Specific to the English as a foreign language learning (EFL) context, Shim (2009) studied EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding classroom-based assessment in Korean primary education using a questionnaire and interview, revealing that although teachers were assessment literate, they did not necessarily implement all knowledge of assessment principles into practice. Similarly, Jannati (2015) found that Iranian ELT teachers were aware of the fundamental principles of assessment, but their practices did not reflect this. Djoub (2017) examined the effect of teachers' assessment literacy on teachers' practices. The data collected from teachers worldwide through an online survey showed that they lacked assessment literacy and this was reflected in their practices. Teachers in this context used assessment mostly for grading purposes, instead of for improving students' learning.

Despite the existence of extensive literature on assessment literacy with different context and focus, limited studies exist on assessment literacy of EFL teachers, especially in Indonesia. It is necessary to understand the different assessment literacy concepts and practice in different settings, as some aspects of assessment literacy are context specific (Edwards, 2017; Willis et al., 2013). Moreover, a teacher's approach to assessment comprising conceptual understanding as well as practical knowledge related to student assessment within the situated context of their classroom teaching (DeLuca et al., 2016). Hence, the current study responds to the call for increased research

in this area of assessment literacy (Edwards, 2017). This study explored how EFL teachers perceive and practice the basic principles of classroom-based assessment i.e., planning, implementation, monitoring, as well as recording and dissemination (Shim, 2009). In the context of the current study, Stiggins' (1991) definition of assessment literacy of focusing on what EFL teachers perceive and practice assessment in their particular context was adopted, thus providing insights into the field of assessment literacy from the perspective of Indonesian EFL junior high school teachers.

## **2. Methods**

This study was aimed to address two research questions: 1) What are EFL teachers' perceptions of assessment? and 2) To what extent are teachers' perceptions reflected in their practice? To this end, a total of twenty-two Indonesian EFL teachers from six public junior high schools who participated in this study were surveyed and interviewed. Most participants were female (N = 18,81 %) aged between 25 and 35 years old with two to more than ten years teaching experience. Consequently, the current study does not represent the view of all EFL teachers in the Indonesian context.

### *Instrumentation*

Data in the current study were collected through multiple methods. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to the teacher participants to help identify their perceptions and practices of assessment. The questionnaire was adapted from Shim (2009) and was composed of the following parts:

1. Personal Information: consisted of seven items that had to be completed by the participant i.e., gender, age, years of experience, and position (EFL teacher, homeroom teacher).
2. General perceptions of language assessment: two essays utilising open-ended questions.
3. Working principles of assessment: consisted of forty items to be addressed using a five-point scale: 5 = Strongly Believe, 4 = Believe, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disbelieve, 1 = Strongly Disbelieve. The items (40 items regarding perceptions and 40 items related to assessment practices) were divided into four sub-aspects based upon the procedural principles of classroom-based assessment, including teachers' practice of planning, implementation, monitoring, and recording and dissemination. This questionnaire was translated and then back translated for accuracy, before being piloted to six EFL teachers in other schools and revised accordingly. The final version was then piloted to another three teachers.

As Shim (2009) suggests, the questionnaire possesses high internal consistence with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.906 and 0.936.

To follow up findings from the questionnaire, a semi structure interview was conducted with five teachers to confirm their different perceptions and assessment practices. The interview was mainly based on general questions about assessment as well as their responses to the initial questionnaire. Each interview lasted for fifteen to thirty minutes and was audio recorded. In addition, a document study was also conducted to further verify data from the questionnaire and interview. The gathered data included curriculum, syllabus, lesson plans, example of assessment materials and students' work.

### *Data analysis*

As suggested by Shim (2009), quantitative data analysis was applied to analyse the data from the questionnaire using SPSS to calculate the frequency, mean (M), and the standard deviation (SD) of all the questionnaire items. Furthermore, a statistical t-test using SPSS was performed to examine the significance of the gap between EFL teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice. In addition to the quantitative data analysis, the qualitative data from the interviews were analysed using a procedure proposed by Rayford (2010). First, the interview was transcribed verbatim, then the interview transcript was coded and coloured according to the emerging themes. The two emerging themes and sub-themes are presented in [Table 1](#) below.

**Table 1.** Emerging themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Reasons for conducting assessment	Measuring students' achievement Getting feedback on instruction Helping students' learning Checking students' understanding of the lessons
Characteristics of good assessment	Clarity of direction Valid Positive washback Reliable Authentic Practical

### 3. Results

#### 1) Teachers' perception about assessment principles and their classroom practice

The questionnaire findings revealed that most teachers exercised language assessment in their classroom practices. Table 2 below presents the frequency of assessment tasks they completed in each semester.

**Table 2.** Frequency of assessment tasks performed by teachers each semester

Once	Twice	Three times	Four times	More than four times	Total
0	3	4	3	12	(N=22)
0.0	13.6	18.2	13.6	54.5	100 %

As shown in Table 2 above, more than 50 % of teachers performed the assessment tasks more than four times, indicating that these assessment practices were part of their normal routine. Teachers considered the importance of assessment in their language instruction in the classroom, for example, Clara said that she was always prepared for an assessment, while Santi planned periodical assessment. Findings from the questionnaire also suggested that more than half of the participant teachers also constructed their own assessments (68 %), as the tests in published work books were not always available with the related materials.

In addition, as mentioned earlier in the method section, quantitative data analysis was performed on the questionnaire data to investigate teachers' procedural principles of classroom-based assessment: planning, implementation, monitoring, and recording and dissemination. Table 3 and Table 4 below present teachers' planning assessment principle and the classroom practice respectively.

**Table 3.** Teachers' perception of Shim's (2009) planning assessment principle

Items	Proposition	Mean (M)	SD
Q1	Teachers should first identify the purpose of the assessment when they design the assessment.	4.55	.510
Q5	Teachers should use assessment specifications when they carry out the assessment.	4.55	.510
Q12	Teachers should give the students advance notice, so that the students will be able to prepare for the assessment.	4.45	.596
Q14	Teachers should make sure that all students are given the same learning opportunities in their classrooms.	4.45	.800
Q11	Assessment should focus on students' progress and achievement rather than on comparisons between the students in the classroom.	4.41	.590



Q2	Teachers should consider the attainment targets which the curriculum requests when they design the assessment.	4.36	.581
Q3	Teachers should consider what their students' needs are when they design the assessment.	4.36	.492
Q13	Teachers should respect the privacy of the students and guarantee confidentiality.	4.32	.780
Q7	Assessment (tasks) should be meaningful to the students.	4.18	1.140
Q4	Teachers should balance the attainment targets with their students' needs when they design the assessment.	4.18	.588
Q10	Assessment (tasks) should be designed in such a way as to obtain information about students' potential to use the language effectively.	4.09	1.411
Q6	Assessment (tasks) should be related to what students do in real class time.	4.00	1.069
Q9	Assessment (tasks) should be designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students can do at that particular time.	3.91	1.377
Q15	Teachers should make sure that assessment is not affected by students' personal characteristics such as gender, appearance, and economic and social background.	3.86	1.552
Q8	Assessment (tasks) should be designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students know at that particular time.	3.77	1.631

**Table 4.** Teachers' classroom practice of Shim's (2009) planning assessment principle

Items	Proposition	Mean	SD
Q14	I make sure that all students are given the same learning opportunities in their classroom.	4.64	.492
Q1	I first identify the purpose of the assessment when I design the assessment.	4.59	.503
Q2	I consider the standards or attainment targets which the curriculum requests when I design the assessment.	4.55	.510
Q12	I give the students advance notice, so that the students are able to prepare for the assessment.	4.41	.503
Q8	Assessment (tasks) are designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students know at that particular time.	4.36	.727
Q9	Assessment(tasks) are designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students can do at that particular time.	4.36	.658
Q7	Assessments (tasks) are meaningful to the students.	4.32	.894
Q10	Assessment(tasks) are designed in such a way as to obtain information about students' potential to use the language effectively.	4.32	.568
Q5	I use assessment specifications when I carry out the assessment.	4.27	.550
Q4	I balance the attainment targets with the students' needs when I design the assessment.	4.23	.685
Q13	I respect the privacy of the students and guarantee confidentiality.	4.23	.528

Q15	I make sure that assessment is not affected by students' personal characteristics such as gender, appearance, and economic and social background.	4.18	.907
Q6	Assessment (tasks) are related to what the students do in real class time.	4.14	.560
Q11	Assessment focuses on students' progress and achievement rather than on comparisons between the students in the classroom.	4.09	.610
Q3	I consider what the students' needs are when I design the assessment.	4.05	.653

From the Table 3 above, the propositions Q1, Q5, Q12, and Q14 obtained the highest score (M = 4.55), indicating that the teachers perceived that planning played a critical role in classroom assessment, while the other propositions (M > 3.50) suggested that teachers felt that they had applied such planning principles in their classroom practice. However, little concern was given to proposition Q8, showing that teachers felt that the assessment they had designed were able to give them information about what students should know at a particular time. In addition, as shown in Table 4, teachers' perception of the planning principles was applied in classroom practice. The proposition of Q14, Q1, and Q2 were shown to have higher scores, with M > 4.50, indicating that teachers practised the planning principles in classroom settings.

In addition to the planning principles, the current study found that teachers felt they had appropriate knowledge about what and how to apply classroom-based assessment. Table 5 and Table 6 below describe teachers' perceptions and the classroom practice of the assessment implementation principle.

**Table 5.** Teachers' perception of Shim's (2009) assessment implementation principle

Items	Proposition	Mean	SD
Q19	Students should be supported when they have a problem hindering their completing the assessment (tasks).	4.59	.503
Q20	Teachers should provide students with an opportunity to monitor their own work while they are performing the assessment (tasks).	4.55	.596
Q21	Teachers should give students immediate feedback after they complete each assessment (task).	4.50	.802
Q17	Teachers should explicitly instruct the students how to do the assessment (tasks).	4.32	1.171
Q22	Assessment (tasks) processes are completed within a manageable time considering the given context.	4.27	1.120
Q18	Students should understand the desired outcome of the assessment (tasks).	4.23	1.152
Q16	Teachers should inform the students of the reasons why they are being assessed.	3.45	1.969

**Table 6.** Teachers' classroom practice of Shim's (2009) assessment implementation principle

Items	Proposition	Mean	SD
Q21	I give students immediate feedback after they complete each assessment (task).	4.36	.492
Q20	I provide students with an opportunity to monitor their own work while they are performing the assessment (tasks).	4.32	.646
Q19	Teachers should explicitly instruct the students how to do the assessment (tasks).	4.18	.733
Q16	I inform the students of the reasons why they are being assessed.	4.09	.684

Q17	I explicitly instruct the students how to do the assessment (tasks).	4.05	1.046
Q22	Assessment (tasks) processes are completed within a manageable time considering the given context.	3.91	1.109
Q18	Students understand the desired outcome of the assessment (tasks).	3.86	.990

From Table 5 above, the propositions Q19 and Q20 obtained the highest mean score in the implementation stage ( $M = 4.59, SD = .503$ ;  $M = 4.55, SD = .596$ ), indicating that teachers strongly agree that students should be supported when they encounter problem in completing the assessment task. Teachers also believed that they needed to provide their students with an opportunity to monitor their own work and complete assessment tasks. This is interesting, as in Table 6, teachers were shown to apply what they have already comprehended about assessment implementation principles in the classroom settings ( $M > 3.50$ ).

Table 7 and Table 8 below present the survey findings regarding teachers' perceptions about monitoring assessment principles and the classroom practices.

**Table 7.** Teachers' perception of Shim's (2009) monitoring assessment principle

Items	Proposition	Mean	SD
Q27	Teachers should use the results of assessment for revising their teaching.	4.64	.492
Q29	Teachers should make assessment a part of teaching and learning.	4.64	.581
Q31	The overall feedback should enable students to know how to improve their work and take their learning forward.	4.50	.512
Q32	The whole process of assessment should be consistent in terms of procedure and administration.	4.50	.512
Q24	Marking criteria should be connected with the aims of the assessment and the learner's characteristics in a given context.	4.50	.740
Q26	Teachers should mark the students' performance consistently.	4.45	.596
Q33	The process of assessment should be supported by the involvement of the parents.	4.36	.658
Q23	Teachers should construct a marking system as a part of the whole assessment process.	4.32	.716
Q30	Teachers should share the findings of assessment with other teachers.	4.32	.716
Q28	Teachers should not use the results of assessment negatively.(punishment)	4.27	.883
Q25	Teachers should let students have detailed information about the marking criteria.	4.18	.853
Q34	Teachers should monitor the misuse of the overall consequences of the assessment as a tool of power.	4.09	.811

**Table 8.** Teachers' classroom practice of Shim's (2009) monitoring assessment principle

Items	Proposition	Mean	SD
Q29	I make assessment a part of teaching and learning.	4.36	.581
Q23	I construct a marking system as a part of the whole assessment process.	4.32	.568
Q27	I use the results of assessment for revising my teaching.	4.27	.550
Q24	Marking criteria are connected with the aims of the assessment and the learner's characteristics in a given context.	4.23	.612
Q28	I use the results of assessment positively not negatively.	4.23	.612

Q32	The whole process of assessment is consistent in terms of procedure and administration.	4.23	.429
Q26	I mark the students' performance consistently.	4.14	.560
Q31	The overall feedback enables students to know how to improve their work and take their learning forward.	4.09	.426
Q33	The process of assessment is supported by the involvement of the parents.	3.91	.868
Q34	I monitor the misuse of the overall consequences of the assessment as a tool of power.	3.91	.868
Q30	I share the findings of assessment with other teachers.	3.82	.664
Q25	I let students have detailed information about the marking criteria.	3.77	1.193

Table 7 above showed that the two prepositions (Q29 and Q23) achieved the highest scores, indicating that teachers monitored their assessment by using the results of the assessment to revise their teaching (M = 4.64, SD = .492) and incorporating assessment into classroom teaching and learning activities. The data in Table 8 supports the earlier findings showing that teachers applied what they comprehended about the monitoring assessment principles in classroom practice. However, teachers' responses to Q30 suggest that for certain reasons, teachers preferred not to share their findings of assessment with other colleagues. More importantly, the preposition of Q25 was reported to the lowest (M = 3.77, SD = 1.193), indicating that only a few teachers hold this belief. Permitting the student to know detailed information about the marking criteria was not common practice among the teachers in this study.

The findings from the quantitative data analysis related to teachers' perceptions about recording and dissemination principle and their classroom practices are presented in Table 9 and Table 10 below.

**Table 9.** Teachers' perception of Shim's (2009) recording and disseminating assessment principle

Items	Proposition	Mean	SD
Q36	Teachers should be aware of their responsibilities for the output of their professional work.	4.36	1.093
Q39	Teachers should be involved in the development of the report system at all levels.	4.27	1.202
Q35	Teachers should consider students' rights as assessment takers; they must never be harmed by the assessment.	4.23	1.110
Q38	Schools should develop their own report system of students' progress and achievement.	4.23	1.066
Q40	A formal review of a student's progress and achievement should be reported to the local education authority and the central government.	4.23	1.152
Q37	Local or nationwide report systems about the students' progress and achievement should be provided.	3.82	1.651

**Table 10.** Teachers' classroom practice of Shim's (2009) recording and disseminating assessment principle

Items	Proposition	Mean	SD
Q36	I am aware of my responsibilities for the output of my professional work.	4.45	.510
Q38	My schools develop their own report system of students' progress and achievement.	4.41	.590
Q35	I consider students' rights as assessment takers; they must never be harmed by the assessment.	4.27	.456
Q37	Local or nationwide report systems about the students' progress and achievement are provided.	4.14	.560

Q39	I am involved in the development of the report system at all levels.	4.00	.816
Q40	A formal review of a student's progress and achievement is reported to the local education authority and the central government.	3.95	1.133

Table 9 above shows that all teachers generally agreed to all prepositions presented. The preposition of Q36 had the highest score (M = 4.36, SD = 1.093), with the lowest for preposition of Q37 (M = 3.86, SD = 1.651), indicating that the teachers strongly believed that they should record the practices of assessment and disseminate the results to their colleagues, schools and local education authority. More importantly, teachers felt that recording and disseminating their assessment practices was important and would impact on their classroom practice. Table 10 showed teachers implemented the recording and disseminating in the classroom context. What is interesting is that the proposition of Q40 seemed to be a dilemmatic principle to some teachers as they did not frequently implement this principle.

In addition, the findings from the interviews were in line with the quantitative data analysis. In the interview, teachers mentioned that they conducted assessment to measure students' achievement, get feedback on instruction, and check students' understanding of the lessons as well as helping students with their learning. When developing an assessment plan, the teachers said that they first should relate the assessment to the objectives of the lessons and to what had been learned by the students. Furthermore, most teachers agreed that students should be advised in advance of what they will be assessed on so that they could prepare and perform to their best. In addition, as part of good planning, teachers should respect the privacy of the students and are required to assure confidentiality. Teachers in this study gave an example of such practice, with three teachers stating that in respect of students' privacy, they did not announce the assessment results publicly, returning the marked assessment to students individually for personal feedback and to avoid embarrassment. One teacher said:

"I never announced assessment results publicly in front of the class. I want to respect students' privacy. Some of them would get embarrassed if I do so. I handed students' marked assessment individually so that I can discuss students' progress in private". (Interview with Clara)

Nonetheless, two teachers claimed that although they recognised the importance of confidentiality, they still announced the results of assessment publicly to motivate students. As a teacher stated:

"I usually announced the results not only in one class but also in all classes I taught. I taught six parallel classes of the same grade. I did this in order to motivate students so that they were encouraged to achieve better next time". (Interview with Risa)

All teachers in this study agreed that assessment plays a pivotal role in teaching and learning. They provided reasons for conducting assessment and what constitutes a good assessment. These data highlighted the 'why and what' of assessment from the teachers' own perspectives.

**2) Discrepancy between teachers' perceptions about the assessment principles and their classroom practice**

As mentioned earlier in the method section, quantitative data analysis with a statistical t-test was performed to identify any discrepancy between teachers' perceptions about assessment principles and their classroom practices, a summary of which is shown in the following Table 11:

**Table 11.** T-test results

Assessment stage	Paired samples test	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Implementation stage	Pair 4 Q19A – Q19B	0.409	0.796	2.409	0.025
Monitoring stage	Pair 5 Q27A – Q27B	0.364	0.727	2.347	0.029
	Pair 8 Q30A – Q30B	0.500	0.913	2.569	0.018
	Pair 9 Q31A – Q31B	0.409	0.590	3.250	0.004
	Pair 11 Q33A – Q33B	0.455	0.912	2.339	0.029

Note: A=perception, B=practice



These results suggested that there was a significant difference between what teachers perceived about the assessment principles and their classroom practice, specifically on one aspect in the implementation stages and four in the monitoring stage ( $p$ -value  $> .05$ ). In the implementation stage, teachers were shown to have appropriate knowledge that they should support students to complete the assessment tasks ( $M = 4.59$ ,  $SD = 0.503$ ). For example, in the interview, teachers asserted that good assessment should be clear in direction and have positive washback to improve students' learning. Unfortunately, the  $t$ -test result indicated that teachers did not seem to apply such an assessment knowledge in real classroom practice, as they failed to provide clear instruction to the student about what and how students were expected to do with the assessment ( $t = 2.409$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In the interview, teachers asserted that:

"Assessment is a part of students' learning activities. The assessment contents are of the material the students have already learned. When we assign students with assessment tasks, we assume that they [students] already know about what they are instructed to do. [It is] because the contents in the assessment tasks strongly relate to the learning material. Thus, we do not think it is necessary to give further explanation." (Interview with Santi)

In the monitoring stage, the discrepancy between teachers' perceptions and their classroom practice was also evident as teachers did not seem to use the assessment results to improve their teaching ( $t = 2.347$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and were reluctant to share the findings from their assessment with other colleagues ( $t = 2.569$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, teachers did not employ overall feedback to improve students' work and learning ( $t = 3.250$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and the process of assessment was not supported by parents' involvement ( $t = 2.339$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These were cases that in the interview, teachers were observed to focus the assessment process on the students' final score rather than the overall learning process. For example, teachers expressed their utmost concern if students failed to meet the targeted minimum completion criteria (KKM), exploring every alternative in an attempt to support students to meet the KKM. One teacher, Maria asserted:

"If students' score was still below the KKM, I conducted remedial teaching, assigned students additional tasks they can take home, gave them opportunity to take another tests. It was my responsibility to make sure they meet the KKM".

In the interview, teachers expressed their worries regarding the parents' lack of motivation to get involved in their children's learning. They mentioned:

"... not all parents paid attention to their children's learning. They took teachers for granted and hold us responsible for their children learning. I contacted some parents to advise them of their children achievement. However, it seemed only those educated parents responded and paid attention and took action. Less educated parents seemed to ignore my message. I even sent personal WhatsApp message to some parents but nothing changed. Their children still did not do homework etc."

#### **4. Discussion**

This study investigated EFL teachers' assessment literacy through their perceptions and practices of assessments within the classroom context. The questionnaire results indicated that teachers had a good knowledge of assessment, as well as good assessment practice showing good planning, implementation, monitoring, recording and dissemination stages, although there were some discrepancies in the implementation and monitoring stages. This finding was different from several previous studies, in which teachers were found to be illiterate (DeLuca, Klinger, 2010; Jannati, 2015); or teachers were literate but did not put their knowledge into practice (Shim, 2009).

As a whole, the current study indicated that teachers seemed to practice assessment for learning (AfL), with most teachers conducting assessments to support student's learning and using assessment results as feedback on their instruction. Teachers also attempted to be transparent in their assessment practice by advising students on what they will be assessed on and some teachers maintained the students' privacy in relation to assessment results. However, findings from the interviews and document study revealed that although teachers claimed that they performed good practice, there was no evidence to confirm the quality of such practice. For example, teachers claimed to provide feedback as common assessment practice, giving immediate feedback, but there was no proof as to whether the feedback provided was of high quality to facilitate students' reflection on their learning. Immediate and quality feedback is indeed important to assist students'

learning and achievement (Hattie, Timperley, 2007). It was also found that feedback was not only conducted to improve students' learning but also to assist students in meeting the standard set by the institution. These results were consistent with Jannati's (2015) findings that some teachers focused on improving students' achievement and monitoring students' progress, while others were concerned about the students' final grade.

Furthermore, teachers' use of assessment materials was also problematic. The document study revealed that teachers utilised assessment materials from published textbooks, but the quality of the materials was questionable. Some assessment materials were mechanical, involving lower order thinking skills, and were less authentic. As Koh et al. (2018) argue "pre-designed and/or prescribe" materials were sometimes taken for granted by teachers, hence, affecting the quality and credibility of the results. The same issue was identified with teacher-made assessments, as most of them were in the form of multiple choice questions.

Hence, although teachers appeared to be committed to good assessment practices, the findings showed that grading still seemed to be their major concern. The fact that teachers' assessment practices aimed at students' meeting the KKM set by the school implies that teachers' practices were influenced by the local or school policy or regulations (Brown, 2004; Zoeckler, 2007). Moreover, teachers incorporating non-achievement factors, such as attendance and attitudes, when assigning grades was a representation of sociocultural factors in this particular context (Zulaiha, 2017). This findings indeed support Willis' et al. (2013) claim that assessment is cultural doings involving social factors that take place within particular contexts.

Perhaps one social factor in this particular context that also influenced the assessment process was parents' involvement. Teachers in this study felt supported when parents actively engaged in their children's learning, such as helping with homework. Parent involvement is, in fact, important in foreign language learning as it facilitates children's English development (Forey et al., 2016). Teachers claimed that parents' involvement was influenced by their educational level, but Chi and Rao (2003) assert that it may be due to time availability as well as parents' foreign language proficiency.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, in general, the teachers in this study were assessment literate and aware of the principles of classroom-based assessment, reporting that they put most principles into practice. However, a question remains as to whether their assessment practice was of high quality. This study had some limitations, indeed, only a small number of participants were involved due to time constraints and resources, hence limiting the generalisability of the findings. It is recommended that future research should involve a larger sample of teachers from different contexts as well as relevant stakeholders. Despite these limitations, the findings contribute to a better understanding of teachers' assessment literacy in their particular context, as they make meaning and interact with assessment materials and relevant stakeholders of assessment.

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