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INDONESIAN EFL TEACHERS' LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT LITERACY: CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

Agustinus Hardi Prasetyo[1], Veronika Triprihatmini[2], and Caecilia Tutyandari[3*]
[1,2,3] Sanata Dharma University, Indonesia
prasetyohardi@usd.ac.id[1], v.triprihatmini@usd.ac.id[2], and tutyandari@usd.ac.id[3]
*correspondence: tutyandari@usd.ac.id
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Abstract
Although a few studies have profiled the LAL levels of Indonesian EFL teachers, they mostly focus on establishing baseline performance. However, simply identifying these competency levels does little to drive actual educational reform. Therefore, given the critical role of assessment literacy, the present research aims to investigate teachers' specific LAL training needs including identification of the challenges they face in developing their LAL profile. This study involved 50 primary and secondary school Indonesian EFL teachers. To address the research questions, a mixed-method design was employed with an online questionnaire and an interview as the research tools. The questionnaire consists of 18 items evaluating 'Training Received' alongside 'Training Needed' of language assessment. After the survey, interview sessions with five teachers were conducted to collect further information. The research findings show that most of the respondents' assessment literacy had received sufficient conceptual knowledge of assessment from previous education and training, but less classroom practical experiences. Furthermore, they faced some challenges in their schools, which include personal and external factors, including the presence of AI and its influence toward assessment. Therefore, they need more training on assessment to cope with the challenges.

Keywords: classroom-based language assessment, EFL, language assessment literacy

Introduction

Assessment plays a key role in the learning cycle across disciplines, including education. Furthermore, assessment is an integral component of teaching (Levy-Feldman, 2025; Shavelson et al., 2008), even it is regarded as "a defining feature of effective instruction" (Wiliam, 2010, p. 18) and the engine that drives students' learning (Race, 2010). Shavelson et al. (2008) claim that assessment cannot be separated from teaching. It is a compulsory element in every process of teaching and learning. Therefore, there should be alignment between assessment and other components of teaching, including learning objectives, learning activities, and teaching materials. Levy-Feldman (2025) further argues that assessment shapes

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decisions that affect stakeholders beyond classrooms. Prior research also shows that teachers spend 30% to 50% of their teaching time on assessment (e.g., Coombe et al., 2012; Schafer, 1993; Stiggins, 2002). More importantly, it provides evaluative feedback for the learning cycle whether it is successful or requires improvement as well as gives input for the next learning cycle.

Knowledge of assessment and assessment literacy (AL) have gained widespread attention among language teachers and assessment professionals, and AL research has become an important research inquiry in educational field, including pre-service and in-service teacher training, teacher educators assessment literacy, and the development of new AL measurement tools (e.g., Al-Akbari et al., 2026; Anani Sarab & Rahmani, 2023; Banitalebi et al., 2025; Gratiana, 2024; Prasetyo, 2023). Al-Akbari et al. (2026) claim that teachers need to pay attention to their individual factors, such as gender, qualifications and experience as well as contextual factors, such as school location and types, in order to be assessment literate. Banitalebi et al. (2025) also suggest that new tools, specifically the ones that are based on authentic scenarios (e.g., Anani Sarab & Rahman, 2023; Gratiana, 2024; Prasetyo, 2023), are needed to measure teachers' assessment literacy in this digital era since previous AL measurement tools have not considered digital assessment contexts. They were mostly in the form of self-report questionnaire, and refer to the previous teachers' competence standards (American Federation of Teachers et al., 1990). This indicates that there is a development in assessment literacy research where knowledge of the language and how to assess it are significant and intertwined (Inbar-Lourie, 2008).

Language assessment literacy

Language Assessment Literacy (henceforth LAL) is defined as required knowledge, skills, and socio-ethical principles for educators to design, administer, score, and interpret assessment tasks. This definition implies that in order to be effective, educators or teachers should be familiar and prepared to apply the knowledge, skills, and socio-ethical principles. LAL represents teachers' comprehensive understanding of assessment principles, practices, and their ability to implement meaningful and valid language evaluations (Fulcher, 2012; Stiggins, 1991; Xu & Brown, 2016). Scarino (2013) argues that it is essential to approach LAL from two sides, namely developing teachers' assessment literacy and raising teachers' awareness of own practices. LAL is an essential factor not only for teachers, but also for students and institutions. Teachers' LAL has a great effect on the quality of assessments as well as teachers' self-efficacy and preparedness (Gotch & McLean, 2019; Khadijeh & Amir, 2015). Knowledge of assessment principles and practical skills, including understanding the local contexts and policies, should be well acquired by teachers since LAL is currently understood as a dynamic, contextual, and social process (DeLuca et al., 2019; Meijer et al., 2023) where teachers' assessment knowledge, skills, and practices are influenced by contextual factors. Moreover, in higher education, LAL can be part of self-regulation and engagement since assessment literate teachers are the ones who assess their own knowledge of assessment (assessment as learning, see Hull & Vígh, 2025) for the sake of professional development.

In the field of foreign language education, language assessment has become increasingly critical (see Coombe et al., 2012; Herrera & Macías, 2015) since

teacher assessment literacy has gradually been considered as a key determinant of effective pedagogical practice (Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Scarino, 2013). Coombe et al. (2012) further caution that, though LAL has become increasingly critical, there are some challenges in promoting teachers' LAL, including large class sizes, teachers' workloads (see also Crusan et al., 2016; Vogt et al., 2020; Yan et al., 2018), and insufficient resources. Herrera and Macías (2015) emphasize the importance of conducting on-going (not one-off) LAL training tailored to teachers' needs to address the challenges teachers face in promoting their LAL. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning, language assessment literacy goes beyond mere test administration, encompassing teachers' knowledge of how L1 influences L2 learning, how teachers operate in a more summative-oriented language learning environment where exposure to English is almost zero, and understanding of how to integrate more authentic assessments into the learning processes (see Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Kremmel & Harding, 2020).

Despite its significance, there remains a substantial gap in understanding LAL among EFL teachers in diverse international contexts (e.g., Tsagari & Vogt, 2017) particularly Indonesia. Previous research has highlighted variations in assessment literacy across educational settings, suggesting that local contexts and teachers' personal factors, such as teachers' confidence and perceptions of assessment (see Park, 2024), significantly influence teachers' assessment understanding and practices since the way they see language, how to assess it, and how confidence they are doing it, will determine the way they navigate their day to day classroom assessment practices (see DeLuca et al., 2021; Deneen & Brown 2016; Wiese & Nortvedt, 2023; Zhang et al., 2025).

Several studies in Indonesian EFL context show that Indonesian EFL teachers (pre-service and in-service) have varying level of LAL profile, spanning from low (e.g., Isnawati, 2023; Umam & Indah, 2020), moderate (e.g., Anam & Putri, 2021; Cirocki et al., 2025; Luthfiyyah et al., 2020; Suherman et al., 2025) to fair (e.g., Mirizon, 2021; Puspawati, 2022; Puspawati et al., 2024; Putra et al., 2024) level of LAL profile. For example, Isnawati's (2023) study reported that secondary EFL teachers' LAL is relatively low, answering an average of 9 out of 23 items of Assessment Literacy Inventory (ALI) correctly. Anam and Putri's study (2021) demonstrated that, regardless of whether the teachers are pre-service or in-services, teachers claim through self-reported questionnaire that they have a moderate level of LAL. Using Teacher Assessment Literacy Questionnaire (Plake et al., 1993), Luthfiyyah et al. (2020) also reported that the teachers had moderate level of AL. Employing different LAL questionnaire, Mirizon's (2021) study involving senior high school teachers and Putra et al.'s (2024) study including participants from elementary to high school teachers reported that the participants in their study fell into the fairly LAL category on average. Even though through self-reported questionnaire teachers claim that they have a low to fair level of LAL profile, there is a significance difference between their theoretical knowledge of assessment and their actual classroom assessment strategies (Zulaiha et al., 2020). Their classroom assessment practices do not reflect their knowledge of assessment. They believe in the value of formative assessment, but their classroom assessment practices tend to be more summative in nature, which were usually in the form of multiple-choice questions (Cirocki et al., 2025; Hoinbala et al., 2025). They also felt low confidence in technical assessment tasks, such as conducting statistical item analyses,

establishing test validity and reliability, and designing effective rubrics for productive skills like speaking and writing (see also Putri et al., 2024).

Prior research also reports that teachers often lack the skills to integrate digital tools and AI effectively into their classroom assessment practices (Putra et al., 2024). This significant but underdeveloped online assessment literacy is becoming more important now with the shift to online learning, and teachers state that they need training in this area (Ayuningtryas & Emaliana, 2025; Hakim & Dewi, 2025). Regarding assessment-related training or professional development, current training programs are often critiqued for being too theoretical and failing to provide the practical, hands-on experience needed to design and evaluate assessment (Bahtiar & Purnawarman, 2020; Sulistio, 2023). In relation to professional development, studies show that teachers' experiences in assessment-related area do not necessarily help them improve their LAL (see Shahzadi & Ducasse, 2022). Some studies suggest experienced teachers have more nuanced practices (Anisa et al., 2023; Prastikawati et al., 2026), while others find that novice teachers sometimes possess more recent theoretical knowledge from their university coursework (Farmasari et al., 2023). Hafizah and Maisarah (2026) in their study on teachers' assessment readiness and self-efficacy also suggest that it is crucial to provide specific training on LAL, which can be identified by an instrument specifically designed to identify their training needs (e.g., Vogt & Tsagari's (2014) questionnaire).

Due to the essential roles of assessment, understanding the concepts and practices of assessment is, therefore, equally crucial for teachers since they make important decisions based on their assessment to improve their students' and their own learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Brookhart, 2024; Stiggins, 2005). Levy-Feldman and Fresko (2025) even further argue that decisions based on assessment impact students, teachers, and administrators as well as policy makers.

The present study

Prior experiences working with EFL teachers in different areas of Indonesia have given the researchers a portrait about the diversity of training needs and challenges teachers have, in terms of assessment. This situation may cause some problems in real practices where teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of important elements to prepare for proper testing or assessment. Some teachers in schools where access to information and professional development is limited need more assistance to update and upgrade their assessment knowledge and skills. For example, with the emergence of generative AI, some teachers may have high self-anxiety and readiness in assessment (Ayuningtryas & Emaliana, 2025). Another common issue faced by EFL teachers is the gap between conceptual understanding and implementation. Teachers may learn some concepts of validity and reliability, for example, but they have insufficient skills to proceed the concepts into real procedures. Furthermore, Putri et al. (2026) emphasized teachers' insufficient understanding of the core elements of LAL.

Considering the need to improve the quality of education in Indonesia and having awareness of the importance of assessment literacy for EFL teachers, the present study intends to shift the focus from LAL profiling to identifying actionable training priorities which can help address Indonesian EFL teachers' need and

challenges on LAL. This study therefore is guided by the following research questions:

1. What previous trainings on language assessment have Indonesian EFL teachers received?
2. What trainings on language assessment do Indonesian EFL teachers need?
3. What challenges on language assessment do Indonesian EFL teachers encounter?

Method

Mixed methods with an explanatory sequential design is considered suitable to obtain necessary information, both quantitative and qualitative data, for the present study. This research design contains two interactive phases (Creswell & Clark (2018). It starts with collecting and analyzing the results of quantitative data, then followed up with qualitative data collection and analysis. In this study, the data was gathered firstly with a questionnaire designed specifically as a training needs assessment tool for foreign language teachers, developed by Vogt and Tsagari (2014). Subsequently, an interview was conducted to elicit further information to enrich the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire.

Research participants

An invitation letter informing the purpose of the survey and asking for a consent to the potential respondents were sent online. The total number of respondents included in the survey were 50 teachers from public (64%) and private schools (36%); 68% of them were senior high school teachers and the others were primary and junior high school teachers. They originated from various provinces, including Special Region of Yogyakarta, Central Java, West Java, East Java, and Nusa Tenggara Timur. The majority of the participants earned the bachelor degree from the English language education department (70%), 24% from the Master Program of the English language education, and the rest from non-education departments, including the Bachelor program of English letters, the master program of Educational Management. Additionally, the data indicate that some of the respondents (14%) are not only English language teachers, but they also are assigned to be in other managerial positions, including a school principal or a school supervisor. Therefore, it implies that some of the participants had higher workload than the rest of them.

There were initially 21 questionnaire respondents who gave informed consent for an online interview and they were offered some options for interview schedules. However, only five teachers who finally participated in the interview due to various reasons.

Table 1. Respondents' academic qualifications

Aspects	Classification	Number	Percentage
Academic Qualification	Bachelor of English Education/Letters	37	74%
	Master of English Education/Management	13	26%
Schools	Public	32	64%
	Private	18	36%

Ethical considerations

Participation in this study was voluntary and consent was obtained from all participants before data collections. The participants were also informed that their identities would remain confidential and that pseudonyms would be used in the analysis and publication. Furthermore, all data were stored securely and accessed only by the research team.

Research instruments

Research instruments employed to collect data were an online questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire designed by Vogt and Tsagari (2014) was considered suitable as this questionnaire was used to assess EFL teachers' levels of language assessment literacy in a context of English as a Foreign Language. The reasons why this research adapted and employed Vogt and Tsagari's (2014) questions were first, this questionnaire was designed specifically as a training needs assessment tool for foreign language teachers and used in European context (Tsagari & Vogt, 2017), where in some countries in Europe, English is also considered as a foreign language. Second, the results of Vogt and Tsagari's (2014) questionnaire were used to develop a professional development program called Teachers' Assessment Literacy Enhancement (TALE) Project (https://taleproject.eu/index.php?), an open-access online course available for everyone. Providing an open-access online course is a long-term objective of the researchers in this study, where this online course is available, especially for those teachers who have limited access to professional development on language assessment.

The current research adapted Vogt and Tsagari's (2014) questionnaire with some modification by excluding items related to the certificate award, placing students into courses, and the European language portfolio items. By adding detailed criteria of basic and advanced training. The modified questionnaire consisted of 18 items which were categorized into three parts, namely (1) classroom-focused language teaching and assessment, (2) purposes of testing, and (3) content and concepts of language teaching and assessment.

Table 2. Questionnaire blueprint

Parts	Aspects	Items	Sub items
1	Classroom-focused Language Testing and Assessment	Prior & future trainings	Classroom-based tests Ready-made tests from textbook packages or from other sources Feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment Self-/peer assessment Informal, continuous, non-test type of assessment
2	Purposes of Testing	Prior & future trainings	Giving grades What needs to be taught/learned based on the results of assessment

Parts	Aspects	Items	Sub items
3	Content and Concepts of Language Testing and Assessment	Prior & future trainings	Testing/Assessing on • Receptive skills • Productive skills • Micro linguistic aspects • Integrated language skills • Aspects of culture Establishing reliability Establishing validity Using statistics

After the data from the questionnaire were collected, the second phase of this research was an interview to obtain further explanation from some participants. Some of the questions for the interviews, which were also adapted from Vogt and Tsagari (2014), are as follows.

- Have you ever learned about language testing and assessment?
- Do you think, as teachers, you feel prepared for testing and assessment?
- What have you done to feel more prepared?
- Did you learn any recent methods of testing assessment?

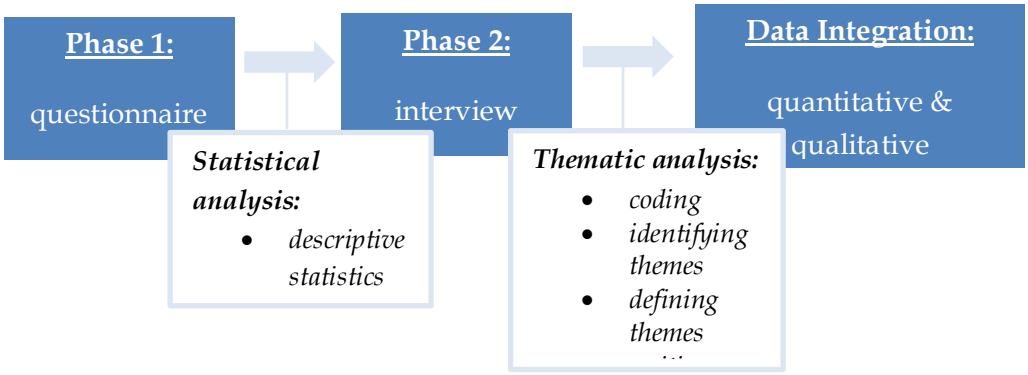


Figure 1. Research procedures

Data analysis

There were two categories of data, quantitative and qualitative forms, collected in this study. The quantitative data were analyzed statistically to gain a portrait of the respondents' profile as well as their needs in the scope of assessment. Meanwhile, to analyze the qualitative data, this present study employed a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which included data recognition, identifying initial codes, determining and reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, then writing up the results as shown in Figure 1. All information collected from the interview was transcribed verbatim and read several times to identify some key words from the transcripts. Afterwards, it was followed up with determining the themes and analyzing the results. In the initial phase, all keywords from the transcripts were highlighted and labeled as, for example, AI, confidence, overload. Then, they were grouped into larger categories, namely individual and external factors. The analysis results of both quantitative and qualitative data were, then, integrated to see their convergence and divergence.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Survey results

The result of the online survey consists of three aspects, namely (1) classroom-focused language testing and assessment, (2) purposes of testing, and (3) content and concepts of language testing and assessment (see Table 2).

Prior education/training: Classroom-focused language testing and assessment

The survey results indicated that most respondents were equipped with their prior education and/or training with some knowledge skills necessary for testing and assessment, ranging from basic to advanced level. Table 3 shows that a significant number of the respondents (80%) have some basic knowledge on how to prepare for classroom tests and 6% have more advanced knowledge; 66% know about some basic concepts of ready-made tests and 22% more advanced understanding; 68% and 24% understand about basic and more advanced knowledge of giving feedback to students; 66% and 18% have learned about basic and more advanced concepts of self/peer assessment, 64% and 14% have basic and more advanced understanding of using informal, continuous, non-test assessment; 60% and 22% know the fundamental and advanced knowledge of giving grades; and 58% and 28% of the respondents have basic and advanced knowledge of what to be taught/learned based on the results of assessment.

Additionally, the results of the questionnaire show that some respondents never had any training on preparing for classroom tests (14%), using ready-made tests (14%), giving feedback to students (8%), using self/peer assessment (16%), using informal, continuous, non-test assessments (22%), giving grades (18%), as well as making use of the assessment results for their class improvement (14%). Furthermore, in the open-ended section, specifically, the participants mentioned topics they had learned, including different types of assessments, criteria of good tests, and curriculum. Interestingly, the survey results indicate that some teachers had never learned about principles of assessment before; for example,14% of them never learned how to prepare classroom tests, how to use ready-made tests, and how to make use of the assessment results for class improvement.

Table 3. Prior training on classroom-focused language testing and assessment

No	Aspects	Responses (%)		
		Not at all	Basic training	More advanced
1	Preparing for classroom tests	14	80	6
2	Using ready-made tests	14	64	22
3	Giving feedback to students	8	68	24
4	Using self/peer assessment	16	66	18
5	Using informal, continuous, non-test assessments	22	64	14
6	Giving grades	18	60	22
7	Finding out what needs to be taught/learned based on the results of assessment	14	58	28

Similarly, the survey results show that most of the respondents have learned fundamental concepts of assessment, including the principles of assessing receptive and productive skills, micro linguistic aspects, integrated language skills, and aspects of culture; how to establish validity and reliability, as well as using statistics. Table 4 presents that a significant number of the respondents, ranging from 62% to 78%, claim that they have learned about basic aspects of assessment, and some others, between 8% and 26% even claim that they are at the advanced level.

Table 4. Prior training on content & concepts of language assessment

No	Aspects	Responses (%)		
		Not at all	Basic training	More advanced
1	Assessing receptive skills	12	68	22
2	Assessing productive skills	6	68	26
3	Assessing micro linguistic aspects	14	76	10
4	Assessing integrated language skills	12	74	14
5	Assessing aspects of culture	24	62	14
6	Establishing reliability	10	76	14
7	Establishing validity	8	78	14
8	Using statistics	26	66	8

Training needs

The survey, furthermore, reveals that the respondents' awareness and need to have more advanced training to refresh as well as to update their knowledge and ability on testing and assessment are obvious. Interestingly, there is a tendency that a significant number of respondents, over 90%, expresses their need to be trained at basic and advanced levels. Table 5 shows that they intend to upgrade themselves conceptually and practically in terms of preparing classroom-based tests, using ready-made tests, giving feedback to students, using self/peer assessment, using variety of assessments, giving grades, and assessment result implications.

Table 5. Training needs on language assessment classroom practices

No	Aspects	Responses (%)		
		Not at all	Basic training	More advanced
1	Preparing classroom-based tests	4	40	56
2	Using ready-made tests	6	30	64
3	Giving feedback to students	6	36	58
4	Using self/peer assessment	14	34	52
5	Using informal, continuous, non-test assessments	10	46	44
6	Giving grades	6	34	60
7	Finding out what needs to be taught/learned based on the results of assessment	4	30	66

Additionally, in line with the previous results, most of the respondents also revealed their needs to improve their knowledge and skills, such as how to assess language skills, micro linguistic aspects, and aspects of culture, as well as establishing reliability, validity, and using statistics. Table 6 shows how a significant number of respondents express their needs to have more advanced training, especially in relation to how to assess language skills and micro linguistics.

Table 6. Training needs on conceptual knowledge of language assessment

No	Aspects	Responses (%)		
		Not at all	Basic training	More advanced
1	Assessing receptive skills	4	38	58
2	Assessing productive skills	4	34	62
3	Assessing micro linguistic aspects	6	38	56
4	Assessing integrated language skills	4	36	60
5	Assessing aspects of culture	8	44	48
6	Establishing reliability	6	40	54
7	Establishing validity	4	44	52
8	Using statistics	4	54	42

Interview results

Challenges faced by teachers in assessment

The results of the interview revealed several major themes of the challenges as teachers, specifically in relation to assessment, namely individual factors and external factors. The individual factors include teaching workload, teachers' motivation, and teachers' preparedness for assessment, while external factors include curriculum alignment, resources, and students' aspects.

Regarding individual factors, teaching workload seems to be one reason faced by teachers to prepare proper assessment. The interviewees mentioned that they often found difficulties managing their time for preparing the assessment instruments due to the significant number of teaching hours and other administrative tasks. One interviewee (Fl) who worked in a vocational high school mentioned that she was assigned to teach in three different departments, which means that she should prepare three sets of English language lessons, including the assessment tools.

The next quote shows one interviewee's feeling of guilt towards her students as she was unable to provide a better-quality assessment, or even more relevant learning materials due to other tasks. She said:

> *Honestly, I did not have enough time to manage everything properly. As teachers, we had different kinds of tasks, including managerial and family duties. Therefore, teaching was sometimes unprioritized even though it was the main task.* (St)

Teachers' motivation is another reason. It is interesting to find out that there were teachers, especially senior teachers, who were reluctant to attend training or workshops on assessment offered by the school or local government. One said:

> *Actually, when there were training or workshops offered to teachers, some senior teachers appeared to avoid them since those programs made them dizzy. Let the younger teachers learn more.* (Nr)

Other interesting results relate to teachers' preparedness to cope with various aspects of assessment. These seem to be significant findings in this study, which might affect their teaching efficacy as identified in the following quote. One said:

> *In fact, I think the implementation (of assessment) has not been done well. Sometimes, as a teacher, I didn't have enough time for preparation or I still lacked understanding of assessment, how to assess accurately. I think I need to learn again about it, so I am able to determine the appropriate assessment tools.* (Cr)

Another case is related to teachers' preparedness to be adaptive to the expected situation, including how to make good assessment tools as said by the following interviewee.

> *In reality, our school has prepared guidelines of how to make a reliable test which suits our students. However, not all teachers followed and applied the guideline.* (Nr)

Readiness in using technology, particularly the existence of generative AI like ChatGPT, can be a challenge for some teachers when they should integrate the use of technology in their teaching and learning processes, including assessment. The challenge concerns not only competence but also trust issue, which leads to the low confidence in their ability, as seen in the following quote.

> *I lacked knowledge and skills in technology, so I did not use it to find various sources. I only relied on books as learning materials.* (St)

Furthermore, the respondent was concerned with her students' attitude in using technology. She developed her mistrust toward technology as her students increasingly used generative AI unethically, "… students were clever at tricking

their teacher" (St). Therefore, according to her, it is urgent to have skills to develop authentic assessments which are free from AI.

The interviewees also revealed some external challenges, including assessment policy, students' motivation, students' competence, and limited resources. A mismatch assessment policy is the next challenge faced by teachers, especially those who teach in vocational high schools. One of the interviewees, St, shared the complexity of the need to teach English for Specific Purposes for her students as they are in culinary and fashion departments and the urgency to prepare her students for the summative tests, which are normally based on English for General Purposes. This situation often creates dilemmas for the English teachers as they should decide the priority for their students, teaching the vocational relevance or preparing the standardized tests for national benchmarks. St said:

> *The learning outcome of vocational high schools are currently the same as that of general high schools. We think they should be different. The former curriculum (KTSP) distinguishes between the learning goals of vocational education and those of general education.* (St)

Another factor which needs to be considered is the diversity of students' motivation and competence. From the interview, it is found out that there is a gap between the students in general high school and vocational high school. The students in general schools tend not only to have higher motivation in learning English language than those in vocational schools as mentioned by the following teacher.

> *I found it hard to encourage my students to be more active in class. I should think of different ways to make them engaged with the lesson. This condition is different from students in SMA (general high school) who are excited to participate and respond to the tasks/questions.* (Fl)

Besides, the students in vocational schools appear to assume that English is not their priority subject so some of them seem to ignore the benefits of learning English language for their future profession. This even adds a bigger challenge for the teacher to manage the class.

The number of English language teachers in one school can be another challenge faced by a school. The limited number of human resources may affect the effectiveness of the process of teaching and learning in school as said by one teacher. Ag said that his teaching hours were up to thirty-three hours per week because there were only three English teachers in his school.

Future professional development training

The questionnaire results (see Table 6) reveal that most of the respondents indicate the need to have more advanced training in several aspects of language assessment, especially the more productive and practical ways of assessment. They want to promote their understanding about testing receptive skills (reading and listening), productive skills (speaking and writing), micro linguistic aspects (such as grammar and vocabulary), integrated language skills, and assessing the cultural aspects. Besides, learning more about other aspects of assessment, including how

to establish validity and reliability of tests, and how to use statistics for test quality improvement are essential for them. One interviewee indicated:

> *In my opinion, we need to be trained to decide what assessment is appropriate in our classroom context, which is now applying learning with differentiation model. In this case, sometimes I am still confused with how to manage it.* (Ct)

Some schools have limited budget for professional development training for teachers. What they can do to upgrade their teachers is by offering general training for all teachers, including assessment literacy. Therefore, subject-based teacher community can facilitate the teachers with some training to upgrade teachers' professional capacity. This concern is reflected in the following comment:

> *Our school allocated budget for assessment training but for all teachers. There is no training for English course only yet, and MGMP has not held any training yet.* (St)

Discussion

Language assessment trainings

As revealed both in the survey and interview, the teachers learned some conceptual knowledge of assessment from their prior teacher education and/or training. Furthermore, the survey also shows that over half of the participants claim themselves to experience basic training on classroom-focused language testing and assessment, including preparing for classroom tests, giving feedback to students, and using self/peer assessment, during their prior education. Meanwhile, from the interview, the participants occasionally experience complexities in applying their knowledge of assessment, which are context-related (DeLuca et al., 2019; Meijer et al., 2023), due to various reasons, including different characteristics of students, the existence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), adjusting to regulations on school assessments. Therefore, in terms of conceptual knowledge, the teachers can be categorized as sufficient or in moderate level which was also demonstrated by a prior study (Watmani et al., 2021). However, it seems they were not exposed with different situations of assessment during their prior education.

Challenges

A gap between theories and practice

The survey results show that most of the respondents graduated from teacher training institutes (see Table 1). They learned some conceptual knowledge, such as assessing language skills, validity, and reliability, during their prior education and attended basic training of assessment. However, in terms of practice, mostly they argue that the trainings on assessment they attended were basic. It implies that they may have some understanding of assessment concepts but lack practices. Teacher training institutions appear to often prioritize teaching methodology than assessment (Puspawati et al., 2024). Consequently, preservice teachers are likely to be more confident in teaching than giving assessment. Some issues on assessment were revealed during the interview, such as coping with curriculum alignment and workload, low-motivated students, limited facilities, and the use of Artificial

Intelligence (AI). Another concern is teachers' high workload. Prior research also highlighted the burdening effects of large classes, teaching workloads, and other responsibilities toward teachers' assessment practices (e.g., Crusan et al., 2016; Vogt et al., 2020; Yan et al., 2018). These situations are likely to be encountered in schools but may not be learned in their teacher education training.

Teachers' perceived preparedness for assessment

The current study also unveils EFL teachers' sense of preparedness for assessment. The information from the questionnaire shows that it is likely that some EFL teachers may feel unprepared for coping with some concerns they face in classrooms. Even though they had learned fundamental concepts of assessment, the training they attended was mostly in the basic level. From the interview, some teachers also mentioned their unreadiness to cope with AI in assessment, for example, as well as to facilitate differentiated assessment for their students. This is in line with research conducted among preservice EFL teachers in Korea (Park, 2024) and within European contexts (Vogt et al., 2020), which indicated the diverse confidence levels among the respondents in terms of assessment literacy and varied perceptions of assessment among teachers and learners. These two factors, confidence and perception, may influence their classroom practices, including the unreadiness of teachers to use technology and AI in their assessment practices (Putri et al., 2024).

Curriculum alignment

A unique case faced by EFL teachers in vocational senior high schools is how to facilitate students with English for Specific Purposes and English for General Purposes simultaneously identified in the interview. It turns out that there is misalignment in the assessment practices as found in previous research (Zulaiha et al., 2020). In the regular meetings, teachers should introduce and expose students with job-related expressions, but teachers should also prepare their students for the summative exams, which mainly include English for general purposes.

Training needs

The data revealed from the present study show that all respondents indicated their intentions to attend trainings on assessment, both in classroom practices, such as using ready-made tests and following up the results of assessment, as well as conceptual knowledge, including assessing discreet and integrated language skills.

A previous study by Shahzadi and Ducasse (2022) indicated that even though teachers had a lot of experience in assessment, they still indicated the need to have further training in language assessment practices. Furthermore, they also revealed that it was common that some teachers were unaware of the latest strategies in assessment. Similarly, Hafizah and Maisarah (2026) reported that training on assessment was rarely offered to teachers. Table 5 and Table 6 appear to present similar directions in terms of the number of teachers who need to upgrade their professional skills on assessment. Table 5, for example, shows that a significant number of respondents (over 60%) indicated their needs to attend classroom-practice training on language assessment, which include using ready-made tests, giving grades, and finding out what needs to be taught/learned. This implies that teachers were aware of their needs to enhance their existing knowledge and skills

on language assessment. Similar findings were strengthened by the interview results that emphasize the needs to cope with the changing needs in school practices, including the presence of AI and skills of online assessment literacy (Ayuningtryas & Emaliana, 2025).

Conclusion

The current research highlights that EFL teachers often find challenges in the implementation of assessment, such as curriculum policy alignment, students' diversity, workload, and technology, that may not optimize the implementation of assessment or testing, which include individual factors and external factors. However, they have awareness to continuously update and upgrade themselves with current knowledge and skills, in this case, assessment and testing as shown in the results of this present study. These challenges lead to the needs to update and upgrade their knowledge and skills, including challenges in the advancement of technology and AI.

Moreover, these findings suggest the importance of continuous support for teachers' professional development, including training on language assessment, even since teacher education. Training that focuses more on the classroom assessment practices is needed to develop teachers' abilities to fill in the gap between conceptual understanding and actual practice of LAL.

Despite the meaningful findings from this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, this study included a small number of participants, which may not sufficiently represent EFL teachers in Indonesia. Secondly, the collected data to address the research questions relied mainly on the information from the questionnaire and interview which may not describe the actual experiences. Thirdly, teachers were the only source of information in this study. Therefore, the data may not be able to represent other stakeholders' perspectives, including students and policy makers' points of view. Inviting various stakeholders into future research on this field may be worth doing as it may add more information and points of view to the body of knowledge.

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