

Algerian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Assessment in Higher Education

Siham BOUZAR FODIL-CHERIF

University of Algiers 2, Algeria

E-mail: sissifch@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study explores Algerian EFL teachers' perceptions of assessment in higher education and examines how these perceptions impact their teaching strategies. Using a mixed research design, data were collected from a diverse sample of EFL teachers across various Algerian universities through a semi-structured survey. The findings reveal a range of perspectives on assessment, highlighting a tension between traditional and alternative assessment methods. The study also identifies several challenges that EFL teachers face in implementing effective assessment practices. These include large class sizes, time and resource constraints besides assessment overload and technology-related challenges.

Keywords: Assessment, EFL teachers' perceptions, Strategies, Higher Education

1. Introduction

Assessment plays a very important role in taking decisions about teaching quality and learners' achievements. In fact, The perceptions of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers regarding assessment in higher education are crucial in shaping the effectiveness of language instruction and student learning outcomes. These perceptions are essential for the development of assessment strategies that align with best practices in language education, thereby enhancing both teaching quality and student achievement. Thus, in this piece of work, the study is focused on Algerian higher education context and how EFL teachers perceive assessment. Accordingly, an overview about this topic is addressed in the literature review while the empiricale study is tackled in another section.

2. Literature Review

Bearing in mind that assessment hold a crucial role in education as it affects the decions taken as far as the strategies and techniques to implement in the language classroom to enhance learning achievements, plenty of researchers (Hughes, 2003; Brown, 2004; Bachman & Palmer, 1996) attributed it a great share in their studies. The latter are presented in the subsections forthcoming.

2.1 Theories of Language Assessment

Theories of language assessment have evolved significantly, reflecting the complexities of measuring language proficiency and performance. Traditional language assessment often relies on psychometric approaches, which emphasize reliability and validity, focusing on standardized tests to ensure consistency and objectivity. According to Hughes (2003), "a test is said to be reliable if it consistently produces the same results under similar conditions" (p. 36). This approach aligns with the behaviorist view of language learning, where language is seen as a set of discrete skills that can be quantified. However, while standardized tests are praised for their fairness and ability to provide measurable outcomes, critics argue that they may not fully capture the dynamic and communicative nature of language use, particularly in real-life contexts (Brown, 2004).

In response to the limitations of traditional assessments, alternative theories, such as communicative language testing, have emerged. These approaches prioritize the practical use of language in authentic contexts, focusing on assessing learners' ability to perform communicative tasks rather than isolated linguistic elements. Bachman and Palmer (1996) introduced the concept of communicative language ability, which integrates linguistic competence with sociolinguistic and pragmatic competencies. They argue that "language assessment should reflect the way language is used in real-world situations" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 67). This shift towards communicative assessments is influenced by the constructivist theory of learning, which emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing knowledge and the importance of context in language use.

More recent developments in language assessment theory include the adoption of formative assessment and dynamic assessment models. These approaches align with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which views learning as a socially mediated process. Formative

assessments, such as peer reviews and self-assessments, provide ongoing feedback to support learners' development, rather than merely evaluating their performance. According to Black and Wiliam (1998), "assessment becomes formative when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching to meet student needs" (p. 140). Dynamic assessment, on the other hand, integrates assessment with instruction, emphasizing learners' potential for growth rather than their current level of proficiency. This perspective highlights the role of assessment as a tool for learning, not just a means of measurement, thus promoting a more holistic understanding of language development (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004).

Additionally, Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA) has emerged more recently as a concept emphasizing assessment practices explicitly designed to enhance student learning rather than merely measure it. In other words, LOA aligns with formative assessment in stressing feedback, student involvement, and ongoing evaluation rather than only summative outcomes.

2.2 Previous Studies on Teacher Perceptions

Recent research on EFL teachers' perceptions of assessment highlights a growing concern regarding the alignment between assessment practices and pedagogical goals. According to Cheng and Fox (2017), many teachers feel that standardized testing pressures often undermine their ability to implement assessments that foster language development. They note, "teachers are often constrained by institutional requirements that prioritize test scores over genuine language learning" (p. 204). This misalignment can lead to what is known as negative washback, where the focus shifts from meaningful language use to test preparation (Spratt, 2005). The findings suggest that teachers are aware of the limitations of high-stakes assessments but often lack the autonomy to adopt more formative approaches.

Furthermore, studies indicate that teachers' assessment literacy plays a critical role in shaping their perceptions and practices. Fulcher (2012) argues that "without a solid understanding of assessment principles, teachers are less likely to use assessments effectively to enhance student learning" (p. 118). Recent work by T sagari and Vogt (2020) supports this claim, showing that teachers with higher assessment literacy are more inclined to use diverse and formative assessment techniques, such as self-assessments and peer reviews, which promote learner autonomy. This underscores the need for targeted professional development to improve teachers' assessment competencies and confidence.

Another key finding from recent studies is the impact of contextual factors on teachers' assessment perceptions. Research by Lam (2019) reveals that cultural, institutional, and policy contexts significantly influence how EFL teachers perceive and implement assessments. As Lam (2019) observes, "teachers' beliefs and practices are shaped by the educational culture and expectations of their institutions" (p. 432). For instance, in contexts where summative assessments dominate, teachers are more likely to rely on traditional tests, whereas in learner-centered environments, they may adopt more holistic assessment methods. This indicates that any effort to reform assessment practices must consider the broader educational environment.

Lastly, the issue of assessment fairness and ethics has been a prominent concern among EFL teachers, as highlighted by Green (2021). Many teachers are aware of potential biases in language assessments, particularly for students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Green (2021) notes, “teachers often struggle with balancing the demands of standardized assessments with the need to provide equitable opportunities for all learners” (p. 76). This suggests that teachers are not only concerned with the technical aspects of assessment but also with its ethical implications. To address these concerns, there is a call for more inclusive assessment practices that recognize the diverse needs of EFL learners.

Research on EFL teachers’ perceptions of assessment in Algerian higher education highlights several challenges and contextual factors that influence assessment practices. Bouhadiba (2018) found that many Algerian EFL teachers view assessment primarily as a means of measuring students’ linguistic accuracy rather than as a tool for promoting communicative competence. According to her findings, “teachers often rely on traditional, summative assessments, such as written exams, due to institutional expectations and the need for standardized grading” (p. 72). This preference for traditional assessments is partly driven by the pressures of large class sizes and limited resources, which make it difficult for teachers to implement formative assessment techniques like oral presentations or peer assessments (Bouhadiba, 2018). As a result, assessments tend to focus on grammar and vocabulary rather than the holistic use of language, which can limit opportunities for students to develop communicative skills.

Further studies emphasize the role of assessment literacy and professional development in shaping teachers’ perceptions. Bensemmane (2020) found that while some Algerian EFL teachers are aware of the benefits of formative assessment, they often lack the necessary training to apply these methods effectively. “Teachers express a desire for more workshops and training programs that focus on alternative assessment strategies,” Bensemmane notes, “as they feel ill-prepared to shift away from the traditional exam-based system” (p. 55). In addition, Bouzar Fodil (2021) highlights the influence of cultural factors, arguing that there is a strong preference for high-stakes assessments in the Algerian educational system, which can hinder the adoption of more learner-centered approaches (p. 90). These studies collectively suggest that while there is an awareness among Algerian EFL teachers of the need to diversify assessment practices, systemic and contextual barriers continue to reinforce traditional, summative approaches.

2.3 More Recent Studies

The recent studies developed between 2022 and 2025 continue to deepen understanding of some issues related to assessment namely Formative assessment literacy, teachers and students’ perception of assessment, technology implementation in assessment and learning oriented assessment. Some of these researches can be mentioned in the following:

- “*Understanding EFL Teachers’ Formative Assessment Literacy: Insights from a Mixed-Methods Study*” (Amirian, 2025) shows that in Iran, teaching experience is a strong predictor of formative assessment literacy; experienced teachers score higher in both the practical and socio-emotional dimensions of formative assessment.

- “*Iranian EFL Teachers’ and Students’ Perceptions of Assessment for Learning Practices*” (Muhammadpour & Sabet, 2025) investigates monitoring and scaffolding practices (components of assessment for learning/AFL). It finds that both teachers and students appreciate these practices but the extent of their use depends heavily on the teaching context (resources, class size, etc.).
- “*Technology-enhanced Formative Assessment in Higher Education: A Voice from Indonesian EFL Teachers*” (Luthfiyyah et al., 2024) reports that Indonesian teachers view tech tools positively for formative assessment; they find them meaningful, especially for giving feedback and tracking progress. However, implementation is uneven due to infrastructural and training challenges.
- “*Exploring Algerian EFL University Instructors’ Understanding and Practices of Learning-Oriented Assessment*” (Boudibi & Beleulmi, 2024) explores how Algerian EFL teachers understand and practice Learning-Oriented Assessment across several universities. It reveals that while many teachers recognize LOA concepts, actual practices vary, and in many cases still lean toward summative and traditional assessments.

2.4 Major Challenges in EFL Assessment in Higher Education

One of the primary challenges in EFL assessment within higher education is the overreliance on traditional, summative assessments, such as standardized tests and final exams, which often fail to capture the full range of students’ language abilities. According to Bacha (2020), many institutions prioritize these assessments due to their perceived objectivity and ease of grading, despite their limitations in measuring communicative competence. “Summative assessments often reduce language learning to a set of discrete skills, ignoring the complexities of real-world language use” (Bacha, 2020, p. 98). As a result, these assessments can lead to negative washback effects, where both teaching and learning are driven by the need to perform well on exams rather than fostering meaningful language acquisition (Brown, 2004).

Another significant challenge is the lack of assessment literacy among EFL teachers, which hinders their ability to design and implement effective assessment strategies. Fulcher (2012) emphasizes that “teachers often lack formal training in assessment principles, leading to a limited understanding of how to create valid and reliable assessment tools” (p. 120). This gap in assessment literacy not only affects the quality of assessments but also reduces teachers’ confidence in using alternative methods, such as formative assessments, which could better support student learning (Tsagari & Vogt, 2020). Without adequate professional development, teachers may default to traditional methods that do not align with best practices in language education.

The challenge of large class sizes further complicates the assessment process in EFL higher education settings. According to Lamri (2018), “teachers often face difficulties in providing individualized feedback and conducting oral assessments in overcrowded classrooms” (p. 47). This limitation not only impacts the quality of feedback but also restricts opportunities for formative assessments, such as class discussions, presentations, and peer evaluations. The

result is a reliance on written exams that are easier to administer in large groups, but which do not adequately measure interactive language skills. This issue is particularly prevalent in countries where higher education institutions are under-resourced and overburdened with increasing student enrollment.

Technology and infrastructural constraints have also been more deeply documented in 2022–2025 research. For example, in the Indonesian study by Luthfiyyah et al. (2024), while teachers held positive perceptions of technology-enhanced formative assessment, issues such as unstable internet, lack of adequate training, and insufficient institutional support were significant barriers.

Finally, cultural and institutional factors can pose challenges to effective EFL assessment. In many contexts, there is a strong preference for high-stakes assessments, driven by cultural expectations of fairness and objectivity (Bouzar Fodil, 2021). This cultural bias towards summative assessments often leaves little room for alternative methods, such as portfolios or project-based assessments, which are seen as less rigorous. “Teachers feel pressured to conform to institutional norms, even when they recognize the limitations of traditional assessments” (Bouzar Fodil, 2021, p. 92). The institutional emphasis on standardized testing can create a rigid assessment culture that stifles innovation, making it difficult for educators to adopt more holistic approaches that address the diverse needs of EFL learners.

2.5 The Algerian Higher Education Context

Assessment in Algerian higher education has traditionally been dominated by summative practices, particularly written examinations that aim to ensure fairness and objectivity in grading (Bouhadiba, 2018). This approach reflects a long-standing cultural and institutional preference for high-stakes testing, where student performance is measured at the end of a semester or academic year. Such summative evaluations are perceived as reliable and transparent, especially in contexts where large student numbers make individualized assessment challenging (Bouzar Fodil-Cherif, 2021). However, this emphasis often narrows the scope of assessment to linguistic accuracy, grammar, and vocabulary, rather than communicative competence or critical thinking skills.

In Algerian universities, structural constraints further shape assessment practices. Overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and insufficient use of technological tools restrict teachers’ ability to adopt formative or alternative assessments (Lamri, 2018). Teachers frequently highlight difficulties in providing ongoing feedback due to the sheer number of students and the administrative pressures of grading (Bensemmane, 2020). Moreover, institutional frameworks rarely offer explicit guidelines for integrating formative assessments, leading to inconsistencies across faculties and departments.

Despite these challenges, recent reforms in Algerian higher education, particularly within the Licence-Master-Doctorat (LMD) system, have encouraged greater emphasis on competency-based education (Benrabah, 2014). These reforms implicitly call for more varied and student-centered assessment approaches. However, in practice, many teachers continue to rely on traditional testing methods due to limited professional development opportunities in

assessment literacy (Tzagari & Vogt, 2020).

The recent study by Boudibi and Beleulmi (2024) underscores this gap in Algeria: their research with 56 Algerian university EFL teachers shows that although many understand Learning-Oriented Assessment theory and appreciate its goals, their actual practices often revert to traditional or summative methods under institutional pressure.

3. Methodology

In this section are exhibited the research design and procedure, as well as the results reached after analysis. This explanation will give a clear picture about the research approach adopted, the participants, the research tool and data collection and interpretation.

3.1 Research Design and Procedure

With the perspective to capture insights from EFL teachers regarding various aspects of assessment in higher education, a mixed method approach was adopted. Regarding the term mixed methods, it implies the involvement of both quantitative and qualitative methods. In other words it entails the involvement of “different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research either at the data collection or at the analysis levels” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 24). In this respect, quantitative research implies the collection of numerical data which is analysed statistically. Concerning the qualitative data, the latter involves the collection of non-numerical data which is then analysed by non-statistical methods. This combination of both methods is advocated by Lazaraton (2005, p. 219) who expressed his hope to “combine qualitative and quantitative research methods, since each highlights “reality” in a different, yet complementary way”.

Therefore, in October 2024, a survey was submitted to 45 Algerian EFL teachers belonging to different universities namely University of Algiers², University of Algiers³, University of Boumerdes, and University of Setif. The data collected were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The participants range from novice teachers with 0-5 years of experience to those with over 16 years of experience. They teach various subjects such as Reading and Writing, Literature, Listening and Speaking, and more specialized areas like Didactics, Linguistics, and Materials Design.

3.2 Data Analysis and Findings

The analysis of the collected data derived from the survey revealed significant results that ought to be considered. In fact, the most prominent issue, identified by 80% of respondents, is the need for better tools and resources, indicating a widespread perception that current materials and support systems are insufficient for effective assessment.

Closely following this concern, Improving Student Learning was emphasized by approximately 85% of teachers, highlighting the central role of assessment in fostering student progress. The impact of large class sizes was also notable, with around 75% of teachers identifying it as a challenge that affects the effectiveness of assessment. Additionally, Focus on Improving Learning and Teaching was marked by 70% of respondents, showing that teachers view assessment not just as a measuring tool, but as an integral part of the

instructional process.

Other important areas include the Primary Purpose of Assessment, around 68%, the debate between Formative versus Summative Assessments (approximately 60%), and Technology Use in Assessment (about 55%). Lastly, Comparing Technology Use Versus Traditional Assessments was the least cited issue, mentioned by just 50% of respondents, which may suggest a growing familiarity with digital assessment methods or a lesser perceived impact.

In sum, EFL teachers view assessment as a powerful tool to enhance learning but express concerns over resources, class size, and the integration of technology, all of which must be addressed to optimize educational outcomes. On the basis of what has been exhibited previously, the next section will focus on the analysis of three major areas to which the researcher sought to find answers. The latter refer to EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Assessment, Technology in Assessment, and Challenges encountered in the language classroom.

3.2.1 Perceptions of Assessment

As regards teachers' perceptions of assessment, the participants' responses reveal a nuanced understanding of the role of assessments in EFL higher education, focusing primarily on its role in improving student learning and shaping teaching practices.

In fact, 85% of teachers (based on a 5-point scale) agree that assessment contributes positively to student learning outcomes. Several respondents rate this statement with 4 or 5, indicating a strong belief that assessments, when well-implemented, serve as crucial feedback mechanisms that help students identify strengths and weaknesses. This view aligns with contemporary educational theories that advocate for ongoing assessment as a learning tool rather than just a measure of performance.

As regards Formative vs. Summative Assessments, teachers hold varied opinions on the efficacy of formative assessments compared to summative ones. While some respondents (60%) strongly believe that formative assessments (ongoing assessments throughout the learning process) are more beneficial for student learning, others are more neutral or even favor summative assessments (end-of-course evaluations).

Those in favor of formative assessments argue that they allow for continuous feedback and adjustment, benefiting both students and teachers. This form of assessment is seen as a tool for deeper engagement and understanding. On the other hand, some teachers believe summative assessments provide a clear, concise measurement of student achievement and are essential for official evaluations like certifications and grading.

As concerns the Purpose of Assessment, 70% of the respondents agree that the primary purpose of assessment is to measure student achievement. However, some also highlight the diagnostic function of assessment, which helps teachers identify students' learning gaps and adapt teaching methods accordingly. This dual purpose—achievement and diagnosis—is crucial in modern pedagogical approaches, particularly in EFL, where learners have diverse levels of proficiency.

In sum, teachers seem to recognize the multifaceted role of assessment: it not only measures outcomes but also informs teaching strategies and facilitates learning progression.

3.2.2 Technology in Assessment

The integration of technology into assessment practices elicits mixed reactions from the teachers surveyed. The varying opinions suggest that while technology offers practical benefits, concerns about its efficacy and reliability persist.

Indeed, 55% of respondents hold positive Views on Technology-based Assessment. They view technology as a useful and practical tool for assessment, especially in higher education settings where digital literacy is expected. For instance, teachers who support technology-based assessments highlight their efficiency, particularly in terms of automating grading and providing immediate feedback. Tools such as Moodle, which are mentioned in the responses, allow for diverse assessment forms like quizzes, peer reviews, and automated feedback systems. The flexibility of online assessments is also noted as a key advantage. For example, technology enables assessments to be conducted asynchronously, which is especially useful in distance learning environments or hybrid models.

Despite these advantages, 50% of teachers express skepticism about relying on technology for assessments. Some teachers argue that technology-based assessments are less reliable, particularly for more subjective areas of learning such as literature or critical analysis. They believe that face-to-face interaction offers a more nuanced understanding of student capabilities. A portion of the respondents expressed their preference for Traditional Methods, in-person assessments, especially for areas like speaking and listening, where immediate teacher feedback is seen as invaluable.

Furthermore, some teachers seem to advocate for a balanced approach, where technology complements rather than replaces traditional assessment methods. This hybrid view suggests that while digital tools can streamline certain assessment processes, core skills like language proficiency are best assessed through direct, personal interactions between students and teachers.

Overall, the responses reflect the ongoing transition in education towards embracing digital tools, but they also highlight the need for cautious implementation, ensuring that technology supports rather than undermines the assessment's core objectives.

3.2.3 Challenges Identified by Teachers

Several challenges emerge from the teachers' responses, reflecting broader systemic issues in higher education as well as specific concerns about assessment practices. Among these challenges can be mentioned large class sizes, time and resource constraints besides assessment overload and technology-related challenges.

One of the most frequently mentioned challenges (75%) is the number of students in EFL classrooms. Teachers note that the high student-to-teacher ratio makes effective assessment difficult, particularly when it comes to providing personalized feedback. Some suggest that reducing the number of students per class would enable more detailed and meaningful

evaluations, enhancing the overall quality of education. In a language-learning context, where individualized feedback is crucial for skills like speaking and writing, large class sizes severely limit the teacher's ability to assess students holistically.

Many teachers also cite time limitations and a lack of resources as key challenges in conducting thorough assessments. The preparation, execution, and feedback phases of assessments are all time-consuming, and with large class sizes, it becomes increasingly difficult to manage.

Furthermore, a few respondents also mention that the tools available to them—whether technological or traditional—are not always sufficient for conducting robust assessments. There is a demand for better resources, particularly those that can assist with feedback delivery and formative assessments.

Additionally, while some teachers see the benefits of technology in assessment, others report technical issues as a significant challenge. Problems such as unreliable internet access, lack of digital literacy among students, and technical glitches can undermine the efficacy of technology-based assessments. Additionally, some educators feel that technology does not adequately measure complex student learning outcomes, especially those related to critical thinking and creativity.

Another challenge that surfaces is assessment overload. Teachers feel that students are often over-assessed, particularly with frequent summative assessments, which can lead to fatigue and disengagement. This challenge points to a need for balance in the assessment design—incorporating both formative and summative assessments at appropriate intervals to keep students motivated and focused on learning rather than merely performing.

In response to these challenges, several teachers suggest structural changes, such as reducing class sizes, improving assessment tools, and refining the balance between technology and traditional methods. These changes would not only alleviate some of the logistical issues but also allow for more meaningful, student-centered assessments.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight a clear tension between traditional summative assessment methods and the growing recognition of formative approaches among Algerian EFL teachers. This duality reflects broader trends in international research. Similar to Cheng and Fox's (2017) observation that teachers often feel constrained by institutional testing requirements, Algerian teachers in this study acknowledged the pressures of high-stakes assessments while expressing interest in formative techniques such as peer evaluation and self-assessment. The persistence of summative testing in Algeria appears closely tied to institutional culture, large class sizes, and resource limitations, echoing Lam's (2019) findings that contextual and policy environments significantly shape teachers' assessment practices.

Another key finding is the limited integration of technology in assessment, which some teachers welcomed for its efficiency but others distrusted for its inability to capture complex language skills. This ambivalence resonates with Green's (2021) concern that teachers often struggle to balance the advantages of digital assessments with the need to maintain fairness

and validity. The present findings here are also consistent with Luthfiyyah et al. (2024): although Indonesian EFL teachers view technology-enhanced formative assessment positively, their implementation is hindered by infrastructure, training, and administrative support constraints.

Importantly, the study reaffirms the crucial role of assessment literacy. Teachers who valued formative and diagnostic assessments often linked their practices to broader pedagogical goals, while others viewed assessment primarily as a tool for grading. This finding aligns with Fulcher's (2012) assertion that teacher assessment literacy is central to the effective use of assessments for learning rather than merely of learning. In addition, the Amirian (2025) Iranian study reveals that teaching experience strongly predicts formative assessment literacy, suggesting that the present Algerian sample experience might also explain variation in teachers' readiness and uptake of alternative assessment methods.

Finally, issues of fairness, workload, and institutional conformity emerge strongly. The prevalence of assessment overload, coupled with large class sizes, suggests that Algerian teachers are often forced to compromise between efficiency and pedagogical quality. Similar concerns have been raised in other contexts where high-stakes testing dominates (Spratt, 2005). For Algeria, the Learning-Oriented Assessment study by Boudibi and Beleulmi (2024) further supports this: many teachers are aware of LOA ideals, yet revert to traditional methods when institutional expectations or limited resources demand efficiency over innovation.

5. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, several recommendations can be made to address the challenges and leverage the opportunities identified by EFL teachers regarding assessment practices in higher education. These have to do with: promoting the use of formative assessment, enhancing assessment literacy among teachers, using technology to support diverse assessment methods, addressing large class sizes to improve assessment quality, invest in resources and tools for effective assessment besides aligning assessment practices with teaching improvement.

- Given the mixed perceptions on formative versus summative assessments, institutions should encourage the integration of more formative assessment strategies, such as quizzes, peer evaluations, and self-assessments. These methods not only measure learning progress but also actively support student development. Professional development workshops can be organized to help teachers design and implement effective formative assessments that align with their course objectives.
- Teachers' varying views on the purpose of assessment suggest a need for improved assessment literacy. Institutions should offer training programs focused on the principles of assessment, including formative, summative, and diagnostic approaches. This can help teachers use assessments more effectively to diagnose learning needs, inform instruction, and ultimately enhance student learning outcomes.
- To address the mixed stance on technology use, educators should receive training on

how to effectively integrate digital tools like Moodle, audio-visual aids, and online quizzes into their assessment practices. This can be particularly beneficial for large classes, where technology can streamline grading and provide immediate feedback. However, it is also important to allow flexibility for teachers who prefer traditional methods, especially in subjects where face-to-face interactions are crucial.

- The challenge of large student numbers was a common concern among teachers, as it limits the ability to provide personalized feedback. Institutions should consider strategies to reduce class sizes or provide additional support, such as teaching assistants, to help manage assessments more effectively. Smaller classes would enable more individualized feedback and the use of varied assessment types, which can better cater to diverse student needs.
- Teachers indicated a need for better tools to facilitate assessments. Educational institutions should invest in resources that support both traditional and technology-enhanced assessment methods. This includes not only software and digital platforms but also access to training on best practices for using these tools to enhance both teaching and learning.
- Some teachers believe that assessments should not only evaluate student performance but also contribute to refining teaching practices. Institutions can encourage reflective assessment practices where teachers analyze assessment data to adapt their teaching methods. Regular feedback sessions and collaborative discussions among faculty members can foster a culture of continuous improvement in both assessment and instruction.

The findings of this study, together with recent research (2022–2025) mentioned in the literature review above, point to several recommendations for improving EFL assessment practices in Algerian higher education. The latter can be listed as follows:

- *Enhance teachers' assessment literacy through sustained professional development.* In fact, this study, echoing Fulcher (2012) and Tsagari and Vogt (2020), highlights limited teacher preparedness in formative assessment. Recent evidence (Amirian, 2025) shows that formative assessment literacy grows with experience but remains uneven. Universities should therefore establish structured professional development programs, including workshops, mentoring, and communities of practice, that focus on assessment design, formative feedback strategies, and ethical considerations. Early-career teachers in particular may benefit from scaffolded training that accelerates their acquisition of assessment literacy skills.
- *Promote Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA) to bridge the gap between awareness and practice* as stated by Boudibi and Beleulmi's research (2024). Their findings reveal that Algerian EFL teachers often understand LOA principles but struggle to enact them in practice. Institutional policies should explicitly support LOA by embedding formative tasks into curricula, providing model rubrics, and recognizing assessment for learning in evaluation frameworks. Pilot programs could be launched

where departments gradually integrate LOA into select courses, allowing teachers to experiment with balanced formative-summative approaches.

- *Leverage technology for formative and diagnostic assessment.* Indeed, while teachers in this study expressed ambivalence toward digital tools, evidence from Indonesia (Luthfiyyah et al., 2024) suggests that technology-enhanced formative assessment can increase efficiency and feedback quality, provided adequate training and infrastructure are available. Algerian universities should invest in platforms that enable low-stakes quizzes, peer review, and automated feedback, while simultaneously offering training to teachers to ensure meaningful use rather than mere substitution of paper-based tests.
- *Foster a culture of fairness, inclusivity, and student involvement in assessment.* Building on Green (2021) and recent Assessment for Learning (AFL) studies (Muhammadpour & Sabet, 2025), there is a pressing need to ensure that assessment practices promote equity for students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Student voices should be incorporated into assessment design processes, ensuring transparency and alignment with learning goals. Portfolios, self-assessment, and reflective journals can be piloted to foster student agency and engagement with learning outcomes.

By addressing these recommendations, higher education institutions can create a more supportive environment for EFL teachers, enabling them to use assessments more effectively to enhance student learning and instructional quality.

6. Limitations and Future Research

Like any empirical study, the present research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was relatively small (45 teachers) and limited to four universities in Algeria. While the data provide valuable insights into teachers' perceptions, they may not fully represent the diversity of assessment practices across the country. Future studies could include a larger and more diverse sample, covering different regions and institutions, to capture a broader picture of EFL assessment in Algerian higher education (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Second, the study relied on self-reported data collected through questionnaires and interviews. Although this method is effective for exploring teachers' perceptions, it does not necessarily reflect their actual classroom practices. Teachers may report what they believe is expected or desirable, a phenomenon known as "social desirability bias" (Dörnyei, 2007). Future research could combine self-report instruments with classroom observations and analysis of assessment materials to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how perceptions align with practice.

Third, the study did not directly investigate students' perspectives on assessment, which could offer a complementary dimension. Learners' views on fairness, feedback, and assessment methods are critical for evaluating the effectiveness of assessment practices, as students are the ultimate stakeholders in the learning process (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Future research

should therefore integrate both teacher and student voices to provide a more balanced perspective.

Finally, the study focused on assessment practices in a general sense without disaggregating by skill areas (e.g., speaking, writing, listening, or reading). Since each skill requires distinct assessment approaches, future research could conduct skill-specific investigations. For example, studies on speaking assessment in the Algerian context would be particularly valuable, given the challenges of evaluating oral performance in large classes.

Taken together, these limitations point to several promising directions for future research. Expanding the scope to include longitudinal studies, larger populations, and multiple stakeholders would enrich the field's understanding of assessment in Algeria. Moreover, exploring the impact of teacher training in assessment literacy and the integration of digital assessment tools would be especially relevant as Algeria moves towards more competency-based higher education. Furthermore, future research should adopt mixed-methods designs to explore the interaction between teacher assessment literacy, institutional culture, and student outcomes. Longitudinal studies in the Algerian context could examine how sustained professional development influences teachers' uptake of formative and learning-oriented assessment. Comparative research across North African and Middle Eastern contexts may also illuminate shared challenges and region-specific solutions. Finally, more work is needed on the role of AI and digital assessment tools in Algerian universities, particularly in relation to fairness, scalability, and alignment with communicative language teaching principles.

7. Conclusion

Assessment plays a crucial role in shaping the teaching and learning process, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context within higher education. However, EFL teachers' perceptions of assessment practices can significantly influence their instructional approaches and student outcomes. This study explored EFL teachers' perceptions of assessment in higher education and examined how these perceptions impact their teaching strategies. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected from a diverse sample of EFL teachers across various universities through a semi-structured survey. The findings reveal a range of perspectives on assessment, highlighting a tension between traditional and alternative assessment methods. While some teachers value the reliability of standardized tests and formal exams, others advocate for formative assessments, such as projects and peer evaluations, which they believe better support language acquisition and learner autonomy.

The study also identifies several challenges that EFL teachers face in implementing effective assessment practices. These include limited time, lack of resources, and institutional pressures to conform to standardized testing frameworks. Many teachers expressed concerns about the negative washback effect of high-stakes assessments on students' motivation and language development. Moreover, the research indicated that EFL teachers' assessment literacy significantly affects their confidence in designing and delivering assessments that align with pedagogical goals.

Overall, this study highlights a persistent tension in Algerian higher education between traditional summative assessments and the growing awareness of formative and learning-oriented approaches. While many teachers recognize the pedagogical value of assessment for learning, their practices often remain constrained by institutional culture, large class sizes, and resource limitations. Recent research in Algeria (Boudibi & Beleulmi, 2024) confirms that although teachers are familiar with Learning-Oriented Assessment, its implementation remains partial and inconsistent, reflecting similar challenges observed in other contexts (Muhammadpour & Sabet, 2025; Luthfiyyah et al., 2024). Furthermore, evidence from Iran (Amirian, 2025) shows that formative assessment literacy develops with experience, suggesting that targeted professional development could accelerate this process for early-career teachers in Algeria. Taken together, these insights underscore the urgent need for systemic support—through policy reforms, institutional training, and technological investment—to move assessment practices beyond summative traditions and toward approaches that genuinely foster learning.

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