

Investigating Iraqi EFL Intermediate School Teachers' Difficulties in Implementing E- assessment

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**التحقق في الصعوبات التي يواجهها مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في المدارس المتوسطة
في العراق في تنفيذ التقييم الإلكتروني**

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تهدف الدراسة إلى التحقق من الصعوبات التي يواجهها معلمي المدارس المتوسطة في مدرسة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في تطبيق التقييم الإلكتروني. ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة، تم أخذ عينة من (٤٠) معلماً من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بشكل عشوائي من مدارس مختلفة. تم استخدام استبيان موسع كأداة قياس في هذا البحث. وأثبتت النتائج قبول فرضيات هذا البحث، مما يعني أن مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للمرحلة المتوسطة في العراق يواجهون صعوبات كثيرة في تطبيق التقييم الإلكتروني لطبقتهم. الكلمات المفتاحية: المدارس المتوسطة، صعوبات المدرسين، التقييم الإلكتروني.

Abstract

The study aims at investigating Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers' difficulties in application e-assessment for their students. To fulfill the aim of the study, a sample of (40) EFL intermediate school teachers chosen randomly from different schools. A scaled questionnaire as a tool of measurement is used in this research to be an investigation instrument. The results of the study asserts that the hypotheses of this research is accepted, which indicates that Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers face difficulties in their application e-assessment. **Key words** : Intermediate school ,Teachers' Difficulties , E-assessment

1-Introduction

1.1The Problem of the Study and Its Significance

Assessment should develop knowledge and quantify or certify results . It can be a very important part of the teaching and learning environment. E-assessment refers to managing and delivering assessments using technology, which can serve as a formative, diagnostic, or summative assessment . Education has changed from being a content-based process where students are given material by a course instructor so they can study at their own speed. E-assessment is a fruitful tool in education since it provides students with immediate, personalized feedback that enables them to improve their achievement . Different digital tools can transform student-centered instructional methods in the context of teaching and learning. A virtual learning environment that can enhance the learning process can be created using wikis, blogs, various online forums, e-portfolios, learning management systems, and computer-mediated communication. It is undeniable and well-documented that assessment is essential for promoting thinking, reasoning, and problem solving. Monitoring pupils' progress has long been a crucial component of education. Teachers typically do this by administering curriculum-based classroom examinations and assessing the proportion of correct answers. Unfortunately, this common method of evaluation frequently fails to give teachers the data they need to raise student performance. It became an integral part of the development; therefore, an individual can benefit from its advanced materials and educational techniques. Individuals can implement them and achieve the best impact on the learning process, especially by adopting transparency and consistency. When cognitive objectives are achieved and the mechanism to access them is implemented, it will lead to the emergence of modern methods to evaluate students through electronic tests, which are considered as ideal alternative to traditional paper tests. Consequently, it saves effort and time at the highest levels of transparency when used to assess students' achievements. Assessment is the main interest in the educational process, the more an individual conduct assessment in certain course, the more burden will be on the teacher, especially in marking papers and check and review the students' answers. Al-Husseini (2013) describes the advantages of electronic test over traditional paper test using new types of questions that measure skills. It also provides instant and accurate marking of the test, measurement of the performance of students and instant feedback. Moreover, it is inexpensive, offers flexibility in conducting multiple tests, and easy for the teacher to prepare and implement through the bulk of questions. It became an integral part of the development; therefore, an individual can benefit from its advanced materials and educational techniques. Individuals can implement them and achieve the best impact on the learning process, especially by adopting transparency and consistency. When cognitive objectives are achieved and the mechanism to access them is implemented, it will lead to the emergence of modern methods to evaluate students through electronic tests, which are considered as ideal alternative to traditional paper tests. Consequently, it saves effort and time at the highest levels of transparency when used to assess students' achievements. Assessment is the main interest in the educational process, the more an individual conduct assessment in certain course, the more burden will be on the teacher, especially in marking papers and check and review the students' answers. Al-Husseini (2013) describes the advantages of electronic test over traditional paper test using new types of questions that measure skills. It also provides instant and accurate

marking of the test, measurement of the performance of students and instant feedback. Moreover, it is inexpensive, offers flexibility in conducting multiple tests, and easy for the teacher to prepare and implement through the bulk of question Relying on the researcher's experience as EFL teacher, she has found that Iraqi EFL teachers face many difficulties with the modern concepts and techniques in the field of education that could be provided through e- assessment so ,this study intends to answer this question: What are the main difficulties that Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers' faced in implementing e-assessment?

1.2 Aims The present study aims at investigating Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers' difficulties in implementing E-assessment.

1.3 Hypotheses The hypotheses of this research as Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers face difficulties in application E-assessment..

1.4 Limits This research is limited to:

1. Applications' difficulties for students' E-assessment.
2. Iraqi EFL Intermediate school teachers.
3. The academic year 2022 -2023.

1.5 Procedures The following methods will be used to gather data in order to fulfill the study's aim:

1. Randomly selecting a number of Iraqi EFL teachers from intermediate schools to serve as the study sample.
2. Several experts oversaw the creation of the scaled questionnaire, checked its validity, commented on it, and provided numerous suggestions and revisions.
3. Utilizing the appropriate statistical methods for the study to interpret the data in light of the hypothesis .

1.6 Value of the Study 1. The current study may be useful for Iraqi EFL teachers in identifying the challenges they confront when implementing students' E- assessments.

2. English teachers should come up with alternate strategies and procedures to evaluate their students' progress throughout time.

2-Literature review

2.1 Definition of Assessment The practice of assessment in education has always changed along with instructional pedagogies. Formative and summative assessments are the two types of evaluation that are used in schools, and both are important components of our educational system (Bartlett,2015,p.13).

Assessment is a method for figuring out what has been learned, what can be recalled, what is understood, or what can be applied from what is being learnt in a different setting, according to Sieborg and Macintosh (2004, p. 5). Evaluating is comparable to assessing. When one uses the phrase "assessment," they are not just considering tests, exams, or written assignments; they are also considering a variety of additional techniques to gather data and provide feedback regarding the development of the students in question (Sieborg & Macintosh, 2004,p.31). Erwin (1991, p. 15) contrasts this and states that assessment is the process of defining, choosing, creating, gathering, analyzing, and applying information to improve teacher learning process and development. Assessment is a systematic basis for drawing conclusions about the learning and development of students. Despite the complexity of assessment, it should take into account the simultaneous needs of many audiences for various goals. Assessment is about learning. Learning is the focus of assessment. In the past, assessments have been used to determine what has been learnt and to report on it, illustrating how it relates to classroom activities. Assessment, an essential part of the teaching and learning activities in the classroom, mediates the relationship between teachers and students. Teachers and students participate in assessment tasks to gather data that may be used to alter teaching and learning. This entails reviewing student work (homework, tests, essays, reports, practical procedures, and classroom discussions of concerns) and observing teachers. These are all geared toward learning more about what a student may or may not know. In addition, assessment is used to "choose, control, or motivate students, as well as to meet the public's expectations as to standards and responsibility (Biggs, 2003,p.141). While teaching and learning are important aspects of education, concerns about evaluation, particularly high-stakes external assessment, are much more important. This supports the claim that since teaching to the test might affect student learning, it's critical to make sure that students are practicing the knowledge and abilities that the tests call for as they get ready to take them. In that instance, preparing pupils for tests will have the expected learning outcomes (Black & Wiliam,2006,p. 41).

2.2 Notions of assessment -done Assessing anything implies comparing it to predetermined standards or criteria in order to determine its fundamental value (Sieborg and Macintosh,2004,p.5) Peer and self -evaluation in the classroom serve as common examples of the concept of assessment as learning. Students

participate in creating their own learning routes since this is ongoing. Summative assessment is the term for the evaluation of learning, and it usually takes place after the conclusion of a topic or stage in the growth of the learner. Summative evaluation must follow the same methods as formative evaluation and be made as easy on teachers and students as possible. All students making improvement is the key component of a great lesson. This book illustrates how assessment for learning can be used to improve and assist all parts of the learning process, using the structure of a lesson as the starting point. (Bartlett,2015,p.12). According to Stiggins and Duke (1988,p.52) : “Teacher assessment is key to school improvement. As we pursue excellence in education through the promotion of the professional development of teachers, we cannot overlook the potential contribution of the teacher appraisal process to that development The term "evaluation" is a general one with many definitions. First of all, the phrase "assessment" should be understood as the first phase in the human resource process, which is intended to identify the needs of the person and the school so that both parties may plan for future development and activities. (Anthony, Kacmar & Perrewe, 2002,p.339). To "evaluate" is to quantify something that is typically measurable, learned, re collectible, understandable, or applicable from what is being learned in a different context. (Sieborg & Macintosh, 2004,p.5).According to Sieborg and Macintosh (2004), the use of the word ‘assessment’ not only refers to tests, examinations or written exercises, but also to other ways of getting data and giving feedback about the performance of learners. In contrast, Erwin (1991,p.15) describes assessment as the process of identifying, selecting, planning, gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and applying information to improve students' learning and development. It serves as a systematic framework for drawing conclusions about the learning and development of learners.

2.4 Assessments Forms

Teacher-made tests and assessments can be quickly adjusted to accommodate ELLs. Accommodations can be selected according the English level of the ELL. Here are examples for quick adjustments for multiple choice, matching, short answer, discussion/essay, fill in the blank, and true/false tests:

- **Multiple choice:** eliminate one or more of the choices
- **Discussion and essay:** have ELLs label terms, draw and label diagrams and pictures
- **Matching:** reduce the number of matches required, give an equal number of possibilities in each column, and eliminate “trick” language matches
- **Short-answer:** accept one-word answers and phrases in place of complete sentences
- **True/False:** eliminate or clarify “tricky” language, reduce the number of questions
- **Fill in the blank:** provide two or three options (make the answer multiple choice) The goal of assessment for learning is to inform students of their progress so they can take the appropriate measures to raise their performance. Teachers must design learning opportunities that allow students to advance at their own rate and engage in consolidation exercises as needed. It has been said that teachers have gotten better at helping students who are less able to learn, often at the expense of students who are more gifted. Assessment for Learning strategies should be put into practice in a way that high-quality feedback given to students based on, say, a decision from an interim assessment, will encourage the more gifted student to accomplish at higher levels and, in doing so, attain their full potential. The uniqueness of feedback is inherent in (Jones,2005,p.35).

2.5 Incorporate other Forms of Assessment Alternative assessments offer the mainstream and ESL teacher a better insight into the ELL's comprehension and language skill development than testing alone. Two such accommodations are:

- Adjust the “weighting” of curricular components (tests, homework, and class work) to reflect student achievement.
- Give vocabulary tests on the course content in place of textbook generated tests Alternative assessments are continuous process that adapts a much broader domain for instruction. When a student answers a question, make a comment, or uses a new word or phrase, the teacher subconsciously evaluates students achievement and performance (Brown, 2004,p.4 Since the early 1900s, student data have been collected by ways of teacher-made or standardized tests. Today there is an increasing call for alternative forms of assessment (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009,p.297). In authentic assessments, unlike traditional assessments, students can create and form a response to a question or a task. However, in traditional assessments, the students just pick up a certain response from a given list, such as multiple-choice, true/false, or matching. Because the range of literacy proficiencies maybe quite vast in any classroom with learners, traditional testing formats is insufficient for the evaluation of English for the nonnative English speaker. The most effective types of

assessments that teachers can use for making educational decisions are authentic performance-based assessments such as workshops, observations, journals, portfolios, and self - assessments (Schultz, 2008,p.180) Additional Suggestions for Alternative Assessments Teachers who are able to invest additional time in assessment of ELLs might try some of the following:

Incorporate dialogue journals, especially in English language arts and social studies and for the incorporation of reading and writing language objectives. Dialogue journals are a low-stress, high-interest tool for assessment. Long-term progress is easily assessed since dialogue journals are a permanent and ongoing record of language skills ***Incorporate project assessments***, especially in science, math, and social studies, although project assessment and be adapted to all subject areas. Project assessments can easily incorporate the four language domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking. ***Incorporate oral presentations*** and demonstrations that offer an alternative for students who are at a higher level in the speaking domain but at a lower level in reading and writing domains. ***Incorporate portfolio assessments*** that will be a source of data for a continuous evaluation of progress (Gottlieb, 2006,p.61). ***Incorporate Authentic Assessments*** (real world challenges) that relate to the life of the students such as letter or journal writing, completing or demonstrating a task from the world outside the classroom (such as an art artifact or report based on researching a topic), or reading or writing an online friendship page (Haley, & etal,2004,p.35).

2.6 Authentic Assessment

It is a continuous process that adapts a much broader domain for instruction. When a student answers a question, make a comment, or uses a new word or phrase, the teacher subconsciously evaluates students achievement and performance (Brown, 2004,p.4 Since the early 1900s, student data have been collected by ways of teacher-made or standardized tests. Today there is an increasing call for alternative forms of assessment (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009,p.297). In authentic assessments, unlike traditional assessments, students can create and form a response to a question or a task. However, in traditional assessments, the students just pick up a certain response from a given list, such as multiple-choice, true/false, or matching. Because the range of literacy proficiencies maybe quite vast in any classroom withlearners, traditional testing formats is insufficient for the evaluation of English for the nonnative English speaker. The most effective types of assessments that teachers can use for making educational decisions are authentic performance-based assessments such as workshops, observations, journals, portfolios, and self-assessments (Schultz, 2008,p.180).

2.7 E-Assessment

Electronic assessment, also known as digital assessment, e-assessment, online assessment or computer-based assessment, is the use of information technology in assessment such as educational assessment. Since e-learning and e-assessment have been introduced the learning process has developed. E-assessment has enhanced the measurement of learner outcomes and made it possible for them to obtain immediate and direct feedback(Gilbert ,et al ,2011,p.21). It is essential to create a system to assess students, which take into account the educational goals and help students to develop their skills which will be a useful for the society .E-assessment can have different forms such as, automatic administrative procedures, digitizing paper-based systems and online testing that includes multiple choice tests and assessment of problem solving skills . E-assessment includes supporting the assessment by using a computer for example: with web-based assessment tools(Sitthisak & Gilbert 2008,p.62). E-assessment supports educational goals, by supporting high-order thinking skills such as critiquing, reflection on cognitive processes and facilitate group work projects .Also, it support the new educational goals, that focused on problem solving using mathematics, science and supported by information technology, for instant understanding and presenting the problem, especially in mathematical and scientific literacy E-assessment has the ability to sort question which cannot create it using the paper test for example software simulation, it helps to represent the information in simple and fast way (Ridgway, et al ,2004,p.63).

2.8 The role of E-assessment in instructional design

Nowadays, E-assessment in its various forms has always been a central part of educational practice. Evidence gleaned from the empirical literature suggests that assessment, especially high stakes external assessment has effect on how teachers teach and consequently, how students learn.E-assessment activity can help learning if it provides information to be used as feedback, by teachers, and by their pupils in assessing themselves and each other, to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Broadfoot,1996,p.31). E-assessment and other means of evaluation need to gather data on the

person as a whole: cognitive, affective, emotional, and moral dimensions. When student and teacher work and interact within various contexts and milieus. They interact with others inside and outside school. They need to evaluate the amount and quality of such online communication, interactions and how they affect the curriculum, in order to achieve teaching and learning goals for promoting all instructional development dimensions (Orstein & Hunkins, 2009,p.302). The role of e-assessment in instructional design is paramount. E-assessment within context of instructional design, should answer questions about learners performance as well as the worth and unintended effects of any planned instruction (Branch,2009,p.11).It is crucial for teachers to share the assessment criteria with learners to promote the chances of learning taking place. The e-assessment criteria should be clear and should not be added after learners have generated the work for a given task. It is therefore vital that all learners in a group understand what they are trying to achieve in a given task and why they are doing it. If teachers want learners to understand and demonstrate their commitment to a task, they need, as far as it is possible, to decide on the goals and define the e-assessment criteria on which their progress is to be assessed. Teachers need to use appropriate language and terminology which learners have developed, communicate the learning goals and e-assessment criteria, and check learner understanding demonstrate how the e-assessment criteria can be met by use of examples encourage peer assessment through effective use of e-assessment criteria promote self-assessment through effective use of the e-assessment criteria(Jones,2005,p.29).

3- Procedures

3.1 Population & Sample The population refers to “any set of items, individuals, etc. which shares some common and observable characteristics and from which a sample can be taken” (Richards. et al, 1992,p.282). The population of this research comprises Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers. Forty English language intermediate school teachers were chosen randomly to represent the main study sample and other twenty teachers represent the pilot administration.

3.2 The Instrument To fulfill the aim of this study, which is “Investigating Iraqi EFL intermediate School Teachers' Difficulties in Implementation of E-assessment”, a questionnaire was formed by the researcher, as shown in table (1.2). The questionnaire type used in this research is a rating scales questionnaire. Richards & Schmidt, (2002,p. 438) define the questionnaire as “questions on a topic or group of topics designed to be answered by a responden The items of the questionnaire have been set depending on the related literature, the open ended questionnaire that has been distributed to teachers, interviews, previous studies of the process of teaching large classes and experts views since this questionnaire was assessed by a jury of specialists in ELT (Table 1.2)**The List of Questionnaire Items**

No.	Item	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
1	E- assessments contribute to increase in student achievements.			
2	E- assessments preparation needs more time.			
3	E- assessments do not give much time to teachers so as to spend on other classroom communicative skills.			
4	Language teachers face difficulties in grading the large amount of students' work.			
5	Composing e- assessments are better as written paper			
6	E- assessments ease for cheating			
7	E- assessments are right place for students' inspiration and reflection.			
8	Lack of technical equipment for using e- assessments			
9	E- assessments gives teachers more space for developing curricula.			
10	Limited students' contact			
11	Using e- assessments increase teachers stress and dissatisfaction.			
12	Language teachers suffer from e- assessments ' organizational problems.			

13	E- assessments have negative effects on practicing effective teaching strategies.			
14	E assessments became more time-consuming.			
15	Difficulties in dealing with individuals from different backgrounds (social, economic)are one of the e- assessments problems.			
16	E- assessments effect the quality of the learning process.			
17	Emphasizing the skills of learner autonomy			

3.4 Face Validity

A test is said to be face valid if it appears to be measuring what it claims to measure. "It is the best type of validity in the case of self- rating" (Kline, P. 2013,p.53 The questionnaire items, after benign constructed, were submitted to the jury to assess their validity. The selection of the *Jury members were done on the basis of specialization and experience in the field of education, psychology, and ELT. The jury were requested to point out their remarks and suggestions concerning the suitability of the given questionnaire items. Thus, some items have been excluded and others have been modified. A large number of the jury members have verified the questionnaire items validity. The remaining 17 items have constituted the final version of the questionnaire. *The jury of experts were:

- Prof, Fatima Almosawy, University of Myasaan, College of Education .
- Asst.Prof. Bushra Al-Naama, PH.D University of Baghdad, College of Education. Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences.
- Inst. Ali Arif, PHD University of Baghdad / College of Languages.
- Inst .Liq'a'a Habeb Aboud , PH.D University of Diyala , College of Education / Department of English.
 - Asst. Prof., Huda Hadi, M.A Language and Linguistics, University of Baghdad College of Education for women .

3.5 Pilot Administration

After constructing a questionnaire items, a pilot study was needed to find out whether the questionnaire is well constructed or not . For the pilot administration, Twenty English language teachers have been chosen randomly from different preparatory schools. The pilot sample has not been included in the sample of the study. To determine the effectiveness of the items in the light of the subjects' responses, the Results of the pilot administration can be depended upon since they represent the best indicator for making any modifications in the final version of the questionnaire.

3.6 Final Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire final version was distributed to the participants at the mid of December 2022.

The teachers were directed to state their points of view on the items according to scale. The distributing and receiving period of the copies of the questionnaire lasted for two weeks.

3.7 Overall Performance

To investigate the hypothesis of the study which reads "Investigating Iraqi EFL intermediate School Teachers' Difficulties in Implementation of e- assessment" . The subject responses were investigated using the mean and the hypothetical mean formula. The mean score of the subjects was (45.22) compared with the hypothetical mean (34).Results indicated that the hypothetical mean is higher than the theoretical mean. This indicates that Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers face difficulties in implementation e-assessment". **Table (3): Weighted Mean for Questionnaire Items**

Item (NO.)	<i>I Agree</i>	<i>I partially agree</i>	<i>I disagree</i>	Weighted Mean
1	35	5	0	87.5%
2	40	0	0	100%
3	38	2	0	95%
4	31	7	2	77.5%
5	34	6	0	85%

6	28	10	2	70%
7	40	0	0	100%
8	35	3	2	87.5%
9	24	11	5	60%
10	17	11	12	42.5%
11	9	13	18	22.5%
12	28	11	1	70%
13	25	13	2	62.5%
14	18	7	15	45%
15	36	3	1	90%
16	37	3	0	92.5%
17	34	6	0	85%

4- Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Further Studies.

4.1 Conclusions

As a result of the methodologies used in this study and the data analysis that follows, the following conclusions can be drawn on the challenges teachers face when implementing e-assessment:

- Rather than being constrained to a small number of responses on a pencil and paper test, as they would be in a traditional exam, students have the opportunity to create the range of what they have learned through e-assessments.
- E-assessments are a useful teaching tool for students in elementary and preparatory schools .In order for students to understand how they will be rated, teachers should encourage them to set goals for their ongoing development based on the provided criteria.

Recommendations

1-Based on study results, it is confirmed that it is crucial to create guidelines and norms for the use of e-assessment in educational institutions. These regulations aim to underline the significance of using electronic examinations because to their obvious benefit in raising students' academic progress and to support teachers by providing ongoing e-assessments, particularly during the pandemic COVID-19.

2- Students need high-quality online assessments, consistent feedback, and support for their requirements in order to learn effectively. Giving students the tools and methods for peer and self- evaluation.

3- E-assessment encourages learners to engage in metacognition. giving pupils the best chance to gain a deeper understanding of how and what they learn.

4.3 Suggestions for Further Research

1. The opinions and attitudes of teachers toward alternative assessment require similar study .
2. A comparable study is required to look into the challenges English teachers have during the evaluation process

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