

## Assessment Literacy of EFL Teachers in Badung, Bali, Indonesia: Conception and Practices

Isidorus Bagus Geovenda Nyudak

[isidorus@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:isidorus@undiksha.ac.id)

Ganesha University of Education

Ni Luh Putu Eka Sulistia Dewi

[sulistia.dewi@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:sulistia.dewi@undiksha.ac.id)

Ganesha University of Education

A.A. Gede Yudha Paramartha

[yudha.paramartha@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:yudha.paramartha@undiksha.ac.id)

Ganesha University of Education

### Abstract

*Teachers' assessment literacy is defined as teachers' knowledge, conception, and skills in administering classroom assessment practices. By the excellent assessment literacy, teachers could maximize students' learning outcomes. Concerning the essential roles of teachers' assessment literacy in instructional activities, the present study describes EFL teachers' assessment literacy in Badung Regency, Bali. The researcher utilizes a descriptive research design, in which the required data is collected from a questionnaire and interviews. Forty-two EFL teachers responded to the questionnaire containing thirty items and then analyzed statistically and descriptively. Four representative subjects are invited to the interviews to confirm and elaborate on how EFL teachers put their assessment literacy into practice in the following stages. The present study found that the general level of EFL teachers' assessment literacy is fair. Teachers' professional experience, motivation, professional development, and social are essential in improving their assessment knowledge and practices.*

**Keywords:** *Classroom Assessment Practices, EFL Teachers, Professional Experience, Teacher Assessment Literacy*

### INTRODUCTION

The ELT has become one of the most critical aspects of education, particularly in Indonesia. The ELT must be a concern in the Indonesian context concerning every nation and institution is linked worldwide, and English is its universal language of communication, business, science, and technology (Nishanthi, 2018; Shehata et al., 2020). Numerous countries have given serious attention to ELT. For example, in China, a developed country, English popularity is steadily expanding, and parents and children's enthusiasm in learning English is growing, and they are willing to pay a higher price and devote more time to learning English starting in kindergarten (Bhayo & Yuyou, 2018). This situation in numerous nations might grow significantly because

English is the crucial medium of communication and advanced academic needs (Altan, 2017). However, the Indonesian government has also prioritized the ELT. For instance, the government has designated the ELT as one of the elementary-level curriculum subjects, and the status is local content (Padmadewi et al., 2019). This technique might be considered a way to improve English instruction quality for Indonesian students and instructors. Besides, assessment processes carried out by teachers could also determine the quality of English Language Teaching. The use of appropriate assessment procedures will continuously influence the development of students' actual competencies (Mellati & Khademi, 2018). Proper assessment practices will positively influence the learning process, whereas inappropriate assessment techniques will negatively impact the learning processes of instructors and students (Marhaeni et al., 2020; A. Marhaeni et al., 2020; Padmadewi et al., 2019).

Assessment, one of the primary competencies required by teachers, is an essential component of instructional activities. It becomes essential because assessment processes are integral parts of the ELT and an integral component of the entire learning activity, as it is conducted during the instruction (Rahayu et al., 2021; Stăncescu & Drăghicescu, 2017; Tosuncuoglu, 2018). Unsurprisingly, assessing students' competencies is the fundamental skill teachers must master since it also indicates teachers' quality. Teachers may use assessment to gather information to improve students' accomplishments, monitor students' acquisition levels, and develop curriculum and classroom activities following students' needs (Effendy Gultom, 2016; Frank, 2012; Meidasari, 2015; Tosuncuoglu, 2018). Besides, the assessment in English Language Teaching may be teachers' consideration medium for further decision-making of teachers' perceptions on their students. For example, based on the decision-making processes, teachers might have better classroom instructions, manage learning activities according to students' learning styles, construct assignments based on students' capabilities and needs, and develop several methods for additional decisions.

Relating to the EFL teachers' assessment practices, several pieces of research have demonstrated that assessment practices in the Indonesian context are ineffective. Assessment practices of EFL teachers in Indonesia, particularly in Bali, might be classified as moderate (Marhaeni et al., 2018). Numerous factors influence good assessment practices, but teachers' assessment literacy (TAL) might be essential. Mellati and Khademi (2018) asserted that teachers' assessment literacy might influence assessment practices and syllabuses, in which teachers' assessment literacy is critical in organizing classroom assessment practices to promote students' learning processes. Besides, Stiggins (as cited in Marhaeni et al., 2018) revealed a similar concept in which assessment-literate teachers understand what they assess, why they assess, how they assess, the potential problems with assessment, and how to avoid the potential negative consequences of inadequate, inaccurate assessment. However, the idealized concepts outlined above do not correspond to classroom assessment practices in Indonesia, particularly in Bali. As discussed previously, teachers' assessment practices in Indonesia, particularly in Bali, are not very sophisticated. These phenomena may have a strong correlation with teachers' assessment literacy levels.

Few academics in the Bali context have explored EFL teachers' assessment literacy. For example, Marhaeni et al. (2018) undertook research to investigate the disparities in EFL teachers' authentic assessment practices. The researchers examined authentic assessment techniques in a multi-step process, including planning, administering, analyzing, and reporting. This study

indicated some disparities in EFL teachers' authentic assessment practices. Additionally, the researchers found that authentic assessment implementation was insufficient, with the disparities ranging from moderate to severe. The researchers interpreted that the teachers' assessment literacy of the EFL teachers who participated in the study was insufficient.

Moreover, in the following years, a study related to teachers' assessment literacy was conducted by Marhaeni et al. (2020), focused on TAL seen from teachers' professional development, teachers' service experience, and teachers' educational qualification. The research subjects involved were 111 instructors from middle and high schools in Bali, Indonesia. The questionnaire was used to gather data, then analyzed descriptively and inferentially using the t-test and ANOVA. Based on the research, teachers' assessment literacy was considered fair, and there is no significant effect of teachers' professional development, service experience, and educational qualification on their assessment literacy.

Concerning the above results and urgency, it is critical to conduct research on teachers' assessment literacy to examine teachers' literacy using assessment methods and strategies in instructional activities in Bali, particularly in Badung Regency. Besides, the few numbers of TAL-related studies in Bali, especially in the Badung Regency, must be a concern for educational stakeholders because it would benefit various parties. Therefore, this study attempts to describe the level of assessment literacy of EFL teachers' assessment in Badung Regency and how EFL teachers utilize their assessment literacy in classroom assessment practices.

### **Teacher Assessment Literacy (TAL)**

Assessment literacy refers to the teachers' capacity to comprehend assessment conception, ethics, and principles. As defined by Luthfiyyah et al. (2020), TAL is the competence of possessing knowledge, concepts, and skills in conducting the assessment. Based on Stiggins (as cited in Marhaeni et al. (2018), TAL is the capacity to distinguish between fair and unfair assessment. Assessment-literate teachers would make suitable decisions about which option is best for their students. Besides, Lee (2017) asserted that TAL assists teachers in effective classroom assessment practices, decisions, and feedback. Marhaeni et al. (2020) pointed out that TAL impacts not only teacher assessment techniques but also the quality of students and graduates. TAL mastery aims to promote instructional activities and students' learning outcomes. Teachers will benefit from having assessment literacy since it will direct them to credible assessments. Therefore, TAL is essential for teachers to be mastered.

### **METHOD**

The current study is descriptive research that aims to describe EFL teachers' assessment literacy levels in Badung Regency. A questionnaire and interviews were conducted to gather the data. Teachers' assessment literacy questionnaire was given to the teachers, which was constructed based on the previous research conducted by Marhaeni et al. (2020) and based on the seven standards of assessment literacy by Plake et al. (1993). Those seven standards of assessment literacy then developed into 30 items relevant to the assessment practice in the Indonesian context. The data will be analyzed statistically and descriptively to measure the EFL teachers' assessment literacy level. The researcher utilized the formula by Dixon and Massey (1987), in which the interval level of EFL teachers' assessment literacy will be divided into five categories: Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, and Very Poor. The questionnaire result showed how literate the EFL teachers

implement their classroom assessment practice. Meanwhile, the interviews were conducted to confirm and elaborate on how EFL teachers put their assessment literacy into practice.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Several findings were obtained in the current study utilizing two research objectives. The current findings consist of two subsections that intend to display the data, elaborate on the findings, and provide related previous studies. The first subsection describes the EFL teachers' assessment literacy level in Badung Regency, and the following subsection describes the assessment literacy implementation in classroom assessment practices, especially teachers' conceptions of assessment, assessment procedures, and challenges.

### The EFL Teachers' Assessment Literacy Level in Badung Regency, Bali

The present study instrument covered seven standards of assessment literacy which contains 30 items. The research subjects were 42 EFL teachers in Badung Regency, Bali. The classification of teachers' assessment literacy level is divided into five categories: Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, and Very Poor. The following table describes the categorization technique:

**Table 1**  
**Category of Teachers' Assessment Literacy Level**

Category	Interval
Very Good	$22.5 < X \leq 30$
Good	$17.5 < X \leq 22.5$
Fair	$12.5 < X \leq 17.5$
Poor	$7.5 < X \leq 12.5$
Very Poor	$0 < X \leq 7.5$

The following table summarizes the survey result relating to EFL teachers' assessment literacy level in the Badung Regency based on the above categorization.

**Table 2**  
**The Category Distribution of EFL Teachers' Assessment Literacy Level in Badung Regency, Bali**

Category	Interval	<i>N</i>	<i>f</i>	%
Very Good	$22.5 < X \leq 30$	42	4	9
Good	$17.5 < X \leq 22.5$	42	12	29
Fair	$12.5 < X \leq 17.5$	42	24	57
Poor	$7.5 < X \leq 12.5$	42	2	5
Very Poor	$0 < X \leq 7.5$	42	0	0

Table 2 serves the category distribution of EFL teachers' assessment literacy level in Badung Regency, Bali. Based on the above table, 4 (9%) EFL teachers in Badung Regency had Very Good assessment literacy level, 12 (29%) EFL teachers had Good assessment literacy level, 24 (57%) EFL teachers had Fair assessment literacy level, 2 (5%) EFL teachers had Poor assessment literacy level, and 0 (0%) EFL teachers had Very Poor assessment literacy level. The researcher invited four research subjects into the interview session to obtain more comprehensive and representative data on teachers' assessment literacy levels. The representative research subjects were selected based on the five categories in Table 2 above because of practical reasons. Therefore, each category would be represented by one research subject in the interview session.

**EFL Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practices**

In this interview session, teachers' classroom assessment practices topic addressed to the four research subjects. The interviews consist of teachers' conception, practices, and difficulties in classroom assessment practices. The interviewed research subjects' teaching experiences vary from 1-5 years. Three of them are Junior High School teachers, and the other one is Elementary School teachers. Relating to their assessment practices, most teachers knew some principles and ethics in implementing classroom assessment practices, but they need to be more literate to implement classroom assessment practices ideally. The difficulties found by teachers in classroom assessment practices vary from each other.

*"Up to this time, I have been teaching English for two years in Junior High School, especially in the eighth grade. The institution always requires me to implement classroom assessment practices as ideal as possible. Relating to the assessment principles, I am quite familiar, but I do not implement all of the principles because only a few principles I remember. However, I always try to implement classroom assessment practices based on the available principles and ethics. Sometimes I found difficulties, especially in the first year teaching my students. Therefore, I need to communicate and consult classroom assessment practices with my colleagues and seniors. Besides, I am looking for some references online."* (Subject 1, whose assessment literacy level is Very Good)

*"I have been teaching English for about four years in Junior High School. I teach eighth and ninth-grade students. Concerning the essence of assessment in instructional activities, the institution requires me to assess students as best as possible. To assess my students as the institution requires, I need to know the assessment principles and ethics. I am just familiar with a few points of those principles and ethics, so I need to learn more. The difficulties I found so far is when I was in my first year of teaching in a formal institution. I was a BIPA teacher in an informal institution, and it was different from the formal institution, especially in how we assess our students. In my first year of teaching, I need to communicate and consult my assessment practices with my colleagues and seniors. However, I became more confident and better at assessing my students at this time."* (Subject 2, whose assessment literacy level is Good)

*"I have been teaching English in Junior High School for five years in a formal institution, especially seventh and eighth-grade students. Concerning the assessment practices, my institution might not emphasize them but always communicate and inform them. The assessment practices in my institution depend on the teachers themselves. If the teachers are persistent, they will implement assessment practices ideally and consistently. I personally implement the ideal assessment practices just in the early-to-middle semester, while in the middle-to-end of the semester, I assess my students objectively. I know some assessment principles and ethics. For example, in the classroom assessment practices, the learning and assessment methods must be related to each other. In implementing assessment, I found difficulties in the consistency of assessment practices. As what I said previously, I am not quite persistent. I just implement assessment ideally at the beginning-*



*to-middle of the semester. For the rest of the semester, I implement assessment objectively, but it is fair in my viewpoint.” (Subject 3, whose assessment literacy level is Fair)*

*“I belong to the junior teacher, whose teaching experience is one year. Currently, I have been teaching English in Elementary School. Because of the private school, the institution requires me to give the best services to my students, including implementing well-structured learning and assessment practices. I know some principles and ethics in assessing students, but I need to learn more. The difficulty I found so far is the complexity of online learning, especially assessment method and technique in online learning. I hardly assess my student ideally because online learning makes the learning and assessment practices complex.” (Subject 4, whose assessment literacy level is Poor)*

The interviewed subjects perceived that professional career experience could improve their knowledge and practice in instructional activities. As their professional career experience increases, classroom assessment knowledge and practices also increase. However, even though most of the interviewed subjects revealed that professional experience improves classroom assessment knowledge and practices, one of the interviewed subjects does not consistently implement ideal classroom assessment practices. One of the interviewed subjects consistently implemented an ideal assessment at the beginning-to-middle of the semester. The rest of the semester is conducted objectively in the field. This problem occurred because of personal motivation. Another problem occurred because one of the interviewed subjects had minimum experience in teaching. One of the interviewed subjects has been teaching English online for less than a year because of the pandemic. The interviewed subject revealed that online learning makes assessment processes complex.

## Discussion

The findings above showed that most EFL teachers in Badung Regency had a Fair level of assessment literacy, in which 57 percent of the research subjects had a Fair level. These findings might match the previous research by Suarimbawa et al. (2017), which revealed that assessment literacy of EFL teachers in Buleleng Regency was categorized as sufficient and did not meet the standards of an ideal assessment implementation. The empirical research by Marhaeni et al. (2018) also found that authentic assessment implementation by EFL teachers in Bali did not meet ideal implementation requirements. Besides, Wahyuni et al. (2020) revealed that teachers' understanding of authentic online assessment could be considered sufficient. Assessment competence and literacy might be crucial for today's and future education. Their existence in education becomes essential because, based on Nitko (as cited in Marhaeni et al., 2018), most of the time spent in classroom practices is assessment-related activities. Concerning the importance of assessment in education, teachers must be knowledgeable in assessment, especially principles and ethics in instructional activities. Volante and Fazio (2007) supported this view in which they argued that assessment-literate teachers would correctly employ the assessment into classroom practices to maximize learning. Teachers must be encouraged to gather information about students' learning processes through assessment rather than employ assessment as final results (Marhaeni et al., 2020). In other words, efficient classroom assessment procedures are essential to successful learning activities. Effective learning methods and assessment techniques would improve

graduation quality. Thus, teachers' professional roles are critical in classroom practice, particularly assessment.

Moreover, the present research found interesting findings relating to teachers' classroom assessment practices. Some of the interviewed research subjects revealed that their seniors and colleagues assisted them in classroom assessment practices, especially junior teachers. These findings might be similar to the statement as stated by Xu and Brown (2016), in which teachers' assessment practices are not only influenced by internal factors, such as teachers' assessment knowledge and skills. Teachers' assessment literacy and practices might also be affected by teachers' conception, policy, social, and culture. In this context, teachers could collaborate by sharing knowledge and experience, discussing tasks construction, observing classroom assessment practices, and communicating with each other (Babaii & Asadnia, 2019). Therefore, communication among professionals is essential in improving teachers' assessment literacy and classroom practices.

Instructors must also be persuaded to enhance their assessment literacies and practices to improve classroom assessment practices. In the present research, professional career experience influences the classroom assessment practices of the interviewed subjects' viewpoints. These findings might be following the view commented by Chalachew and Terefe (2020), Hanafi et al. (2020), and Zolfaghari and Ashraf (2015), in which the more experienced teachers tend to be skillful and have better assessment practices. Even though the present study's findings indicate that teachers' assessment literacy is Fair-to-Good, teachers must continuously extend and improve their assessment-related abilities and literacy. Professional career development programs might be essential strategies for teachers in improving their assessment practices' quality. As in Alkharusi (2011) and Said et al. (2013), teachers with adequate training or certification would feel more confident and capable of implementing classroom assessment practices. Therefore, teachers and educational stakeholders must organize and structure this endeavor. Teachers need to keep learning assessments to increase their assessment literacy and overall learning quality through professional career development and professional career experiences.

Generally, EFL teachers' assessment literacy level in Badung Regency is fair. Teachers involved in the study need more professional career development to develop their conception, literacy, and classroom assessment practices. Besides, personal motivation and other external factors could affect teachers' conception and practices in implementing classroom assessment consistently. Therefore, teachers need more professional career development to focus on the assessment consistently because the literacy level reflects their classroom assessment practices.

## CONCLUSION

Some points are highlighted in this present study. First, EFL teachers' assessment literacy level in Badung Regency could be considered fair. Second, teachers' classroom assessment practices are affected by several factors, such as teachers' professional experience, personal motivation, and social. Relating to these findings, the urgency of providing professional career development programs, especially regular assessment training, becomes necessary to improve teachers' classroom assessment practices, instructional activities, and motivation. Professional career development programs could be initiated by government agencies, institutions, or MGMP. However, the present study only considers EFL teachers' assessment literacy level and its practices. The present study found various factors influencing teachers' assessment practices. The researcher

suggested that a further similar study consider several potential factors influencing teachers' assessment literacy level and classroom assessment practices. Besides, the impact of teachers' classroom assessment practices on students learning outcomes based on students' viewpoints might be the potential topics to be observed in more detail.

### Acknowledgments

The author would like to express gratitude to God for his amazing grace. A special thank is given to the author's supervisors for the essential guidance and assistance in completing this study. The author would also express the highest gratitude to the principals and EFL teachers in Badung regency for their permission and willingness to respond to the questionnaire and in-depth interview session. The author realized that the present study is incomplete, so correction, development, and improvement are needed. Therefore, the author welcomes supportive critics and suggestions for better improvement. The author hoped that the present study would benefit various parties.

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