

## An Investigation of Tertiary Level EFL Teachers' Language Assessment Literacy in Indonesia

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article History:</b> Received: February 2025 Accepted: March 2025</p> <p><b>KEYWORDS</b> Assessment practices EFL teachers language assessment literacy mixed-methods approach</p>	<p>This article investigates language assessment literacy (LAL), among tertiary EFL teachers in Indonesia, a crucial area that remains under-explored within the context of EFL education. LAL is conceived as knowledge, skills, and competencies required in designing, administering, and interpreting language assessments, contributing to high quality learning and teaching practices. Despite their importance, there has been little knowledge of Indonesian EFL teachers with regard to LAL levels, particularly in higher education. This study bridges the gap and investigates teachers' knowledge of the fundamental assessment principles (validity, reliability and practicality), their ability to put assessment practices into a classroom, the challenges they face in interpreting assessment data to inform instruction, and experience in assessing language skills and components. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, using surveys and interviews with 297 EFL teachers at various higher education institutions (102) in Indonesia. It points out that EFL teachers in Indonesia face common obstacles to LAL training, especially in the practical application of assessment knowledge. This finding underlines the need for well-rounded professional development programs to improve teachers' LAL, focusing on some aspects of language assessment practice. The study concludes with some recommendations on how teacher education programs and assessment practices can be improved in the EFL context in Indonesia. A key recommendation is that institutions and policymakers should integrate comprehensive LAL programs into teacher education curricula for both pre-service and in-service training.</p>

### 1. Introduction

Assessment has emerged as the crucial link in language education between the identification of student's proficiency and the instructional decisions themselves. Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) describes the knowledge, skills, and principles needed to develop, administer, and interpret language assessments effectively. This is a critical area, as both research and professional development focus for educators. In terms of EFL education, the assessment directly affects students' learning outcomes in language acquisition and their succeeding opportunities. Thus, evaluation

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literacy is an essential skill for teachers. In the context of Indonesian EFL tertiary education, evaluation literacy is crucial as it enables teachers to design fair, reliable, and effective assessments that align with students' diverse proficiency levels and learning objectives.

LAL refers to the use of valid, reliable, fair, and ethical assessment practices (Scarino, 2013). Teachers must also be capable of designing tests that assess various language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. However, research worldwide indicates that many teachers lack strong language assessment literacy. They tend to rely on standardized tests that fail to accurately capture students' true language abilities or contribute to fostering active learning environments (Inbar-Lourie, 2013). This problem is especially visible in non-English speaking countries such as Indonesia, where English is learned as a foreign language in the education arena with different degrees of teacher availability

Low LAL among educators can lead to several significant issues in language teaching and learning. Teachers with insufficient LAL may design ineffective language assessments, misinterpret test results, and make unsound educational decisions, all of which can negatively affect students (Weng & Shen, 2022). Additionally, a lower level of assessment literacy can result in inaccurate and invalid language assessments, as well as inadequate skills in designing assessments that promote higher-order thinking skills (Sumardi & Guci, 2023). These challenges underscore the necessity for targeted professional development to enhance teachers' LAL, ensuring fair and effective language assessments that support student learning

Indonesia is undergoing rapid educational reforms that emphasize language proficiency at all levels. As a result, the importance of teachers possessing strong language assessment literacy cannot be overstated. Research shows that Indonesian language teachers, particularly those in universities, struggle with effectively designing and interpreting practical language assessments (Isnawati, 2023). These challenges, coupled with the country's focus on high-stakes exams, which prioritize summative over formative approaches, limit teachers' opportunities for growth in language assessment literacy through more skillful, learning-centered assessment practices.

Furthermore, several aspects of LAL in Indonesia remain under-researched. One key area is pre-service teacher training, where limited studies have examined the effectiveness of assessment courses in developing LAL within teacher education programs (Rasyid et al., 2024). Another critical gap is digital literacy in assessment, as research suggests that Indonesian EFL teachers struggle to integrate digital tools into their assessment practices (Suherman, 2022). Additionally, there is a lack of comprehensive studies on assessment training programs, particularly regarding their content and effectiveness in enhancing teachers' LAL (Puspawati et al., 2024). Furthermore, policy and practice alignment is an underexplored area, with minimal research on how national policies, such as the Independent Curriculum, influence teachers' assessment literacy (Clifton, 2023). Addressing these gaps would help improve language assessment practices in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study was conducted to assess the LAL of EFL university educators in Indonesia, focusing on their understanding of key LAL topics and their ability to implement effective language assessments in the classroom. By examining the current state of LAL in Indonesia, the research aims to identify the professional development needs of language teachers and propose practical solutions to enhance their assessment practices. Specifically, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

- (1) What is the participation rate of Indonesian tertiary-level EFL teachers in language testing and assessment training?
- (2) To what extent do Indonesian tertiary-level EFL teachers need additional training in language testing and assessment to better understand and apply this concept?

## 2. Review of Literature

Language tests can range from formal, standardized exams to informal, classroom-based assessments. Since teachers are responsible for designing, administering, and interpreting these assessments, they are expected to do so with accuracy and competence. Over the past decade, the concept of LAL has evolved significantly, driven by the increasing demand for language proficiency assessments, predominantly influenced by globalization and the growing role of English as a global lingua franca (Taylor, 2013). This shift highlights the centrality of language testing in education

systems worldwide, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries. Therefore, to facilitate meaningful language learning, teachers must be equipped with the necessary LAL competencies.

Language assessment literacy extends beyond traditional assessment knowledge by focusing specifically on the complexities of assessing language skills (Inbar-Lourie, 2008). LAL requires teachers to deeply understand the different language components—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—along with their interactions within communicative competence frameworks. Inbar-Lourie (2013) proposed a model of LAL that includes technical knowledge (understanding test design and scoring), theoretical knowledge (knowing how language constructs are measured), and practical skills (being able to use assessment tools effectively in real-world teaching scenarios). In addition, recent literature emphasizes the importance of integrating assessment into classroom practices to promote on-going formative learning rather than simply using it for summative purposes (Anani Sarab & Rahmani, 2023; Giraldo, 2018).

Taylor (2013) further developed the LAL framework, claiming that language teachers should acquire the skills to operate the given technology and be able to reflect on and study the potential impact of the test tools on language learners. This aspect of LAL includes reflection, which is sure to make teachers link their assessments with learning objectives and adjust them to the different requirements of the students, especially in multilingual and multicultural classrooms.

Numerous studies conducted by researchers to evaluate the level of LAL among language teachers worldwide have revealed that teachers commonly struggle with understanding grammar and curriculum design (Dorri et al., 2025; Giraldo, 2018; Suherman, 2022; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). Fulcher (2012), in his comprehensive review of LAL research, found that many language teachers lack formal assessment training and often rely on informal intuition or traditional methods when assessing students' language proficiency. As a result, teachers frequently struggle to apply fundamental concepts of this practice, such as validity, reliability, and practicality of assessment.

Xu and Brown (2016) examined the assessment literacy of language teachers in China and highlighted the gap between the theoretical knowledge of language assessment gained during teacher training and its practical application in the classroom. They found that many teachers focused primarily on end-of-year exams and external evaluations, which led them to seldom use formative assessments that could help students improve their learning processes. Similarly, Giraldo (2018), in the Colombian EFL context, also emphasized the need for teacher education programs to offer a more comprehensive approach, addressing both the theoretical and practical aspects of language assessment. While Giraldo observed that teachers generally recognized the importance of assessment, they needed to enhance their ability to design formative assessments that align with learning outcomes and foster language development.

Several factors such as limited professional development opportunities, time constraints, and complexity of language assessment contribute to the difficulties teachers face in developing LAL (Harding & Kremmel, 2016; Tavassoli & Sorat, 2023). One major issue is the lack of formal training in language assessment within pre-service teacher education programs. Many teacher preparation programs fail to adequately address LAL, leaving teachers unprepared to design and implement effective language assessments (Davison & Leung, 2009; Momeni & Salimi, 2023). This gap is especially pronounced in non-native English-speaking countries, where the focus is often on teaching English as a subject, rather than assessing it as a communicative skill.

Furthermore, in such learning environments, teachers might be under pressure and make themselves only adhere to students passing the tests, which could lead to teachers neglecting to use education processes that have learning in view (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2014). Therefore, long-term assessment methods that could have provoked the best language learning have been pushed aside. Moreover, the problem of evaluating language mastery because of its innate complexity adds to the critique. Language is an evolving and multi-layered skill that demands assessments for grammar of scale, vocabulary awareness, intercultural communicative competence, and pragmatics (Scarino, 2013). However, many teachers are supposed to develop assignments dealing with the different aspects of language skills, especially when the class population is diverse.

To address these challenges, academic institutions and language teaching organizations have suggested several strategies to enhance Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) among language teachers. One crucial approach is to incorporate intensive assessment training into both pre-service

and in-service professional development programs. Fulcher (2012) and Taylor (2013) argue that teacher education programs should be both practical and relevant, allowing teachers to actively practice skills such as designing, administering, and interpreting language assessments.

Recent advancements in technology have also provided new tools for improving LAL. Computer-based language assessments, digital platforms, and automated feedback systems offer teachers innovative ways to assess students' language skills and monitor their progress over time (Bennett, 2015). These technological tools can support formative assessment by providing immediate feedback and allowing for more personalized learning experiences. Collaborative professional development initiatives have also proven effective in enhancing LAL. Ongoing workshops, peer observations, and collaborative assessment design projects provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their assessment practices, share best practices, and receive feedback from colleagues (DeLuca et al., 2016). These collaborative efforts are particularly important in developing countries, where access to formal assessment training may be limited.

In the Indonesian context, LAL is still an emerging field of research. Studies have shown that many Indonesian EFL teachers lack sufficient training in language assessment and often struggle to apply assessment principles effectively in their classrooms (Nyudak et al., 2022). This is particularly concerning, considering the country's heavy reliance on high-stakes exams, such as the National Examination (Ujian Nasional), which primarily focuses on reading and grammar-based assessments, leaving limited opportunities to evaluate students' communicative competence.

Efforts to improve LAL in Indonesia are underway, with some professional development programs now including assessment training. However, a more comprehensive approach to LAL in both teacher education programs and professional development initiatives is still essential. To address these gaps, targeted training and systemic changes are needed to shift the focus away from high-stakes exams and promote the use of formative assessment practices in language education.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Participants and Setting**

Data for this study were collected from 297 EFL lecturers from various higher institutions in Indonesia, both public and private. These participants were selected using a random sampling technique. Among them, 74% were from universities, 19% from colleges, and the remaining respondents were from other higher education institutions such as academies and polytechnics. The gender distribution consisted of 67% female and 33% male lecturers. The participants held different academic qualifications: 15% had Doctoral degrees, 78% had Master's degrees, and 6% had Bachelor's degrees.

#### **3.2. Instrumentation**

This research utilized a mixed-method approach, incorporating both questionnaires and interviews as research instruments. The questionnaire was adapted from Hasselgreen et al. (2004) and was administered to all respondents. In this study, the adaptation of questions in the questionnaire did not involve any validation or piloting. However, the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The overall reliability coefficient was  $\alpha = 0.82$ , indicating good internal consistency among the items.

In addition, semi-structured online interviews were conducted with twenty selected respondents. They were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Since the sample includes a range of experiences, backgrounds, and expertise (e.g., Indonesian EFL lecturers from different institutions), the saturation can be reached with fewer interviews. In this study, these interviews followed guiding questions adapted from Tsagari and Vogt (2017) to gather in-depth insights into Indonesian EFL lecturers' practices and training in language testing and assessment.

The semi-structured interviews lasted between 25 to 40 minutes, depending on the depth of responses provided by each participant. This duration was sufficient to explore key themes while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions. The primary language used for the interviews was English, given that the study focused on Indonesian EFL lecturers who were proficient in the language. However, in cases where respondents felt more comfortable expressing certain ideas in Bahasa Indonesia, code-switching was permitted to ensure clarity and depth of responses. The

interviews were conducted online and recorded using video conferencing tools such as Zoom or Google Meet. Prior to recording, informed consent was obtained from all participants to ensure ethical compliance. The recordings were later transcribed manually.

### 3.3. Procedures

The study began with the distribution of questionnaires to 297 EFL lecturers across various institutions. The questionnaire aimed to collect broad, quantifiable data regarding lecturers' experiences and training in language testing and assessment. After the questionnaire phase, twenty participants were selected for online semi-structured interviews. These interviews provided additional qualitative insights, allowing researchers to explore individual perspectives and experiences in more depth.

The study employed a mixed-method design, combining both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages and frequency counts. Meanwhile, qualitative data from the interview transcripts were examined thematically. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

## 4. Results

The results of this study are presented to answer the research questions as follows: (1) What is the participation rate of Indonesian tertiary-level EFL instructors in language testing and assessment training? and (2) To what extent do Indonesian tertiary-level EFL teachers need additional training in language testing and assessment to better understand and apply this concept?

### 4.1 Respondent' Descriptions and Their LAL in General

Based on the respondents' experiences in pre-service or in-service teacher training, it was found that 79.4% of EFL teachers had formally learned about language testing and assessment (both theory and practice). Among them, 62.8% attended the course for one semester, 19.8% for two semesters, 10.3% for more than two semesters, and 10.3% took the course for less than one semester. Language testing and assessment courses are primarily provided in the university curriculum for Bachelor's studies in English education or English teacher training. Therefore, it is a compulsory subject that needs to be learned. However, a few EFL teachers needed to learn this course more intensively due to the frequent absence of the course instructor and the need for sources and material.

When asked whether their undergraduate teacher preparation program prepares them for designing and conducting classroom-based assessments, 77.6% of the EFL teachers said they are prepared, while 22.4% are unprepared. Some felt confident since their undergraduate program emphasizes understanding the concept of classroom-based assessment, while others said they needed to be appropriately prepared due to a lack of knowledge and capabilities to practice this concept. Some EFL teachers confirmed that they reluctantly asked for advice from their senior colleagues and slowly adopted their assessment methods.

Additionally, some EFL teachers express concern about modern language testing and assessment methods, such as portfolios, and self- or peer assessments. Although they try to implement these methods, they report facing significant challenges, such as large class sizes and low student participation in the tasks. A few teachers acknowledge being familiar with these methods but admit they have never tried them, preferring to stick with traditional assessments like completion tasks, multiple-choice questions, essays, and essay writing, as they feel more comfortable with these approaches.

### 4.2 Training in Language Testing and Assessment – Basic Classroom Assessment

This section presents the data on the proportion of EFL teachers who receive and require training in language testing and assessment, with particular focus on basic classroom assessment. The data results are displayed in the following table.

**Table 1**

*The Percentage of EFL Teachers Who Received and Needed Training in Language Testing and Assessment: Basic Classroom Assessment*

	Training Received			Training Needed		
	Not at all	A little	Advance	None	Basic	Advance
a. Designing classroom tests	12.4	30.9	56.7	5.2	32.9	62.9
b. Utilizing ready-made tests from textbook packages	26.8	45.5	27.8	16.5	38.5	45.5
c. Providing feedback to students based on test assessment results	16.5	41.2	42.3	6.2	27.8	66.0
d. Implementing self or peer assessments	17.5	53.6	28.9	5.2	34.0	60.8
e. Applying informal, ongoing, non-test-based assessment	23.7	51.5	24.7	9.3	35.0	55.7
f. Using standardized language portfolios (rating scales))	29,9	45,9	20,6	9.3	33.0	57.7
Overall	23	44	33	8.6	34.4	58

The study provides valuable insights into the current status and future needs of EFL teacher training in language testing and assessment. The findings highlight a significant gap between the training teachers have received and the training they require across various assessment competencies, particularly in the foundational classroom-focused areas. Regarding the current training status, the data shows varying levels of preparation across different assessment domains. Notably, 56% of teachers received advanced training in preparing classroom tests, which represents the highest level of training across all categories. However, other key assessment areas reveal much lower levels of advanced training. For example, only 20.6% of teachers received advanced training in using standardized language portfolios, and 29.9% reported no training in this area at all. Similarly, 23.7% of teachers received no training in informal and continuous assessment methods, with only 24.7% receiving advanced training in this domain.

The analysis of training needs paints a clear picture of the professional development requirements for EFL teachers. Across all assessment categories, there is a strong preference for advanced training, with percentages consistently above 45%. Of particular note is the demand for advanced training in providing feedback to students based on test assessment results, with 66% of teachers expressing a need for more advanced training in this area. This is the highest demand across all categories and highlights the critical importance of helping teachers develop more effective and nuanced feedback mechanisms.

The aggregate data presented in this table also offers a broader view of the overall training landscape. It reveals that 23% of tertiary EFL teachers in Indonesia reported receiving no training at all in basic classroom assessment. These teachers stated that they had never been provided with any information about such training, with some even noting that their institutions did not offer language assessment training. On the other hand, 44% of teachers expressed a need for more training in this domain, particularly in areas like self or peer assessment and informal, continuous, non-test assessments. They shared that they felt unprepared for the language testing and assessment tasks required of them, often having to learn independently to manage these challenges. However, 33% of respondents acknowledged having received advanced training in basic classroom assessment, primarily in preparing classroom tests and providing feedback to students based on test results. Yet, only around 21% of teachers had received training in using standardized language portfolios (rating scales).

The need for advanced training in basic classroom assessment among tertiary EFL teachers reveals a distinct trend. Overall, 58% of respondents indicated a need for advanced training, particularly in areas such as providing feedback based on test assessments, preparing classroom

tests, and utilizing self or peer assessments. While these teachers are familiar with these concepts and have implemented them in their teaching, they face challenges in applying them effectively. This is especially true for self and peer assessments, where students are often reluctant to engage, preferring to rely on teachers instead. Teachers reported that students lack confidence in using these methods. Additionally, 34.4% of respondents expressed a need for basic training, noting that they had not received any prior preparation in this domain before starting their teaching careers. Only 8.6% of respondents stated that they do not require further training in these areas, as they had already received adequate training in the past.

These findings highlight a significant gap between the current state of assessment training in essential classroom focus and EFL teachers' desired professional development needs in this domain. The data suggests that while some teachers have received advanced training in certain areas, substantial demand remains for more comprehensive and advanced training across all aspects of language testing and assessment. This is particularly evident in student feedback, peer assessment, and standardized portfolio use, where the percentage of teachers needing advanced training significantly exceeds that of those who have already received such training.

#### 4.3 Language Testing and Assessment Training – Making Informed Decisions

This section provides an overview of the percentage of EFL teachers who have undergone training in language testing and assessment and those who still require it, with a specific emphasis on making informed decisions. The findings are summarized in the table below.

**Table 2**

*The Percentage Level of EFL Teachers Who Received and Needed Training in Language Testing and Assessment–Decision-Making*

	Training Received			Training Needed		
	Not at all	A little	Advance	None	Basic	Advance
a. Assigning grades	15.5	41.2	43.3	11.3	32.0	56.7
b. Identifying learning and teaching needs	10.3	32.0	57.7	10.3	28.9	60.8
c. Placing students in appropriate courses or programs	25.8	31.1	36.1	13.4	30.9	55.7
d. Issuing final certificates (institutional, local, regional, national, or international levels)	34.0	39.2	26.8	15.5	28.9	55.7
Overall	21.4	35.9	41.0	12.6	30.2	57.2

Since assessment practices have a significant impact on students' achievements, assessment literacy is crucial for EFL teachers in language testing and evaluation. This literacy encompasses assigning grades, identifying learning and teaching needs, placing students in appropriate courses or programs, and issuing final certificates at institutional, local, regional, national, or international levels. The findings reveal a notable gap between the training teachers receive and their perceived needs across various competencies in this field.

In terms of grading competency, 43.3% of EFL teachers reported having received advanced training, yet a greater proportion (56.7%) expressed the need for further advanced training, highlighting a perceived skills gap even among those already trained. Likewise, for diagnostic assessment—determining what needs to be taught or learned—only 10.3% of teachers had received advanced training, whereas 60.8% indicated a need for it. This represents the most significant disparity between current training and perceived needs among all assessed components.

In terms of student placement competencies, 36.1% of teachers reported receiving advanced training, while 55.7% expressed a need for it, reflecting a 19.6 percentage point gap and a strong demand for further professional development in placement assessment. Additionally, certification-related assessment competencies had the lowest reported level of advanced training received (26.8%), with 55.7% of EFL teachers indicating a need for advanced training in this area.

According to the interview, some participants stated that they received in-service training from their institution, primarily focusing on grading and identifying what needs to be taught or learned, as these are essential aspects of teaching and assessment, one participant noted: *“Our institution organizes workshops that help us understand how to assess students' work effectively, particularly in terms of grading criteria and setting learning objectives”*. However, others reported never having the opportunity to receive such training, as it is not included in their institution's program. Some participants stated: *“There's no formal training in assessment at my institution”*. They proposed that this could stem from the belief that earning a master's degree in language teaching equates to complete readiness for assessment practice. One participant mentioned that *“There was an effort to seek training from external institutions, but the knowledge gained from these programs remained limited”*.

The gathering data presented in Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the training aspects. It shows that while 41.0% of teachers received advanced training overall, a significantly higher percentage (57.2%) believe they need it. The 16.2% point of difference emphasizes a systematic gap in professional development related to assessment decision-making.

#### **4.4 Training in Language Testing and Assessment – Assessing and Evaluating Language Skills and Components**

This section examines the proportion of EFL teachers who have received training in language testing and assessment and those who still need it, with a particular focus on assessing and evaluating language skills and components. The data is presented in the table below.

**Table 3**

*The Percentage of EFL Teachers Who Received and Required Training in Language Testing and Assessment - Evaluating and Assessing Language Skills and Components.*

	Training Received				Training Needed	
	Not at all	A little	Advance	None	Basic	Advance
a. Testing/assessing reading skill	17.5	47.4	35.1	8.2	28.9	62.9
b. Testing/assessing listening skill	24.7	41.2	34.0	9.3	33.0	57.7
c. Testing/assessing writing skill	18.6	44.3	37.1	4.1	30.9	64.9
d. Testing/assessing speaking skill	18.6	45.4	36.1	5.2	32.0	62.9
e. Testing/assessing micro-linguistics aspects (grammar/vocabulary)	19.6	38.1	42.3	5.2	28.9	66.0
f. Testing/assessing integrated language skills	17.5	49.5	33.0	4.1	32.0	63.9
g. Testing/assessing aspects of culture	39.2	42.3	18.6	6.2	35.6	58.8
h. Establishing the reliability of test/assessment	26.8	43.3	29.9	7.2	33.0	59.8
i. Ensuring the validity of a test or assessment	24.7	40.2	35.1	6.2	34.0	59.8

j. Applying statistical methods to evaluate the quality of a test or assessment	36.1	40.2	23.7	10.3	35.1	54.6
Overall	24,3	43,2	32,5	6,6	32,3	61,1

The data indicates that EFL teachers have received the most training in testing and assessing integrated language skills (49.5%) and cultural aspects (42.3%). However, there is a notable gap in training related to micro-linguistics, as only 19.6% of teachers have been trained in assessing grammar and vocabulary. On average, approximately 35.1% of teachers have received advanced-level training across different assessment components.

The data highlights a significant demand for further training across all areas. Notably, 66.0% of teachers expressed a need for advanced-level training in assessing micro-linguistic aspects (grammar/vocabulary), while 63.9% required training in testing integrated language skills. Even in areas where teachers had more prior training, the demand for additional professional development remains high. For example, 62.9% of teachers sought advanced training in assessing reading skills. A striking pattern emerges when comparing overall percentages: while 32.5% of teachers had received advanced training in assessing language skills and components, a much larger 61.1% indicated they needed it. This considerable gap between existing training and perceived needs underscores the necessity for more extensive professional development programs.

The findings also highlight that teachers feel less confident in technical aspects of assessment, such as establishing test validity and using statistics to study assessment quality. This is reflected in the data showing that 59.8% needed training in establishing validity and 54.6% in using statistics to evaluate assessment quality.

These results have important implications for professional development programs in EFL teaching. While some progress has been made in providing assessment training, a substantial need remains for more targeted and comprehensive training programs, particularly in areas like micro-linguistics assessment and statistical analysis of assessments. This information could be valuable for educational institutions and policymakers in designing and implementing more effective teacher training programs.

## 5. Discussion

This study examined the current state of LAL among EFL teachers in Indonesia, focusing on their experiences with training in language testing and assessment (LTA), their perceived competencies, and the professional development they require. The findings reveal critical gaps between existing teacher training and the demands of modern assessment practices. This discussion highlights three major areas: (1) respondents' general LAL profiles, (2) training in basic classroom assessment, and (3) training in assessment decision-making and evaluating language skills and components.

### 5.1 EFL Teachers' General LAL

The data indicates that while a majority of respondents (79.4%) had received formal instruction in LTA, the depth and consistency of this training varied significantly. Most teachers had only engaged with assessment training for a single semester during their pre-service education, often marked by inconsistencies such as missing instructors and a lack of adequate learning resources. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Al-Akbari, 2023; Kurt et al., 2022; Xu & Liu, 2024), which highlight the limited emphasis on LAL in teacher education programs, particularly in contexts where resources are scarce.

Furthermore, despite these limitations, 77.6% of respondents believed their undergraduate programs prepared them to design and conduct classroom-based assessments. However, the 22.4% who felt unprepared indicate that conceptual understanding does not necessarily translate into confidence or competence in real-world assessment practices. Teachers frequently cited the need to rely on peer support and self-directed learning, a finding that aligns with Malone's (2017) assertion

that LAL development is often informal and experiential rather than systematically embedded in teacher education.

Finally, many respondents expressed apprehension about implementing modern assessment strategies such as portfolios, self-assessments, and peer assessments. This reluctance is attributed to contextual challenges, including large class sizes and low student engagement, which are commonly cited obstacles in EFL contexts (Yan & Fan, 2021). Teachers' preference for traditional assessment formats reflects a broader trend in which comfort with familiar practices often outweighs the perceived benefits of innovative approaches (Lam, 2015).

### ***5.2 Training in Basic Classroom Assessment***

The findings highlight notable discrepancies between the training teachers have received and the training they believe they need in basic classroom assessment. Although a significant proportion (56.7%) reported receiving advanced training in designing classroom tests, training in other essential areas, such as the use of portfolios and informal assessments, was markedly lower. Notably, 29.9% of teachers reported receiving no training in the use of standardized portfolios, and 23.7% indicated no training in informal, ongoing assessments.

These gaps suggest that professional development in basic classroom assessment has been uneven, leaving many teachers underprepared for comprehensive assessment practices. This echoes prior research by Scarino (2013), who emphasized that LAL requires a multifaceted understanding of both traditional and alternative forms of assessment to ensure balanced, fair, and meaningful evaluation.

The strong demand for further advanced training, particularly in providing effective feedback (66%) and implementing peer/self-assessments (60.8%), underscores a recognition among EFL teachers of the need to develop more nuanced and student-centered assessment practices. However, their challenges in applying these methods—especially managing student resistance to peer/self-assessment—highlight the importance of contextualizing training to address cultural and institutional factors (Xu & Brown, 2017).

### ***5.3 Training in Assessment for Decision-Making and Evaluating Language Skills and Components***

Assessment for decision-making represents another critical area where EFL teachers feel insufficiently prepared. Despite 43.3% of teachers having received advanced training in assigning grades, the fact that 56.7% expressed the need for further training suggests a lack of confidence in applying grading consistently and fairly. Moreover, the substantial gap between training received and training needed in diagnostic assessment (57.7% received training vs. 60.8% needing advanced training) reflects a pressing concern regarding teachers' ability to accurately identify and respond to students' learning needs.

Notably, the lowest levels of advanced training were reported in issuing final certificates, with only 26.8% having received such training, despite over half (55.7%) expressing the need for it. This finding suggests a potential risk of misaligned or inconsistent certification practices, which could have significant implications for students' academic progression and access to further education opportunities.

When it comes to assessing specific language skills and components, the results indicate uneven training coverage. Although teachers reported moderate levels of training in assessing macro-skills (e.g., reading, listening, speaking, writing), they felt considerably less prepared to assess micro-linguistic elements, such as grammar and vocabulary. The fact that 66% of respondents expressed a need for advanced training in assessing micro-linguistic aspects highlights the technical complexity of these areas and the necessity for specialized training, as suggested by Tsagari and Vogt (2017).

Moreover, teachers reported significant challenges in conducting validity and reliability analyses of their assessments and applying statistical methods to evaluate assessment quality. These findings reflect a broader trend in LAL research, which points to the need for technical knowledge in psychometrics as an essential yet often neglected area in teacher preparation (Fulcher, 2012; Yan et al., 2018). Without such skills, teachers may struggle to ensure the fairness and accuracy of their assessments, potentially impacting student outcomes.

## 6. Conclusion

This study explores the LAL of tertiary-level EFL teachers in Indonesia, providing key insights into their knowledge, practices, and challenges in evaluating language proficiency. While many teachers demonstrate a basic understanding of assessment principles, a gap remains between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The limited access to comprehensive training and exposure to modern assessment frameworks, particularly those aligned with international standards, such as CEFR, TOEFL, and TESOL International Association Standards, hinders their ability to develop and implement effective language assessments.

The study emphasizes the pressing need for specialized professional development programs to improve teachers' LAL. These programs should cover key areas of language testing and assessment, including standardized language portfolios, informal and continuous assessment methods, certification-related assessment competencies, micro-linguistic assessment, and assessment statistics. Bridging these gaps might enable teachers to create more valid, reliable, and equitable assessments that effectively support students' language learning goals.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the crucial role of institutional support in cultivating a culture of assessment literacy. This involves ensuring access to resources, continuous training, and collaborative opportunities for teachers to exchange best practices. Enhancing teachers' LAL through institutional support can significantly improve both teaching and learning in several ways. When teachers receive continuous training and access to resources, they develop a deeper understanding of effective assessment methods, enabling them to design fair, reliable, and meaningful evaluations. This ensures that assessments accurately measure students' language proficiency and learning progress, allowing for targeted instruction that meets individual needs. As a result, students benefit from more engaging and supportive learning environments where assessment is not merely a tool for grading but a means to guide learning and improve outcomes. By aligning Indonesian EFL assessment practices with international standards, students are better prepared for global communication, as they develop critical language skills in a structured and effective manner.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the sample size may not fully represent the diverse landscape of tertiary-level EFL teachers in Indonesia. Factors such as institutional type, geographic location, and individual teaching experience could lead to variations in LAL that were not entirely captured. Future studies should consider expanding the sample to include a broader and more diverse group of participants. Second, the study primarily relies on self-reported data, which may introduce response biases, such as social desirability or inaccurate self-assessment of assessment literacy. Complementary data collection methods, such as classroom observations and interviews, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' actual assessment practices. Third, while this study identifies gaps in LAL and suggests professional development initiatives, it does not measure the direct impact of such interventions. Longitudinal research is needed to assess whether targeted training programs lead to sustained improvements in assessment competencies and classroom application.

The findings of this study suggest that while EFL teachers in Indonesia have foundational knowledge of language assessment, their competencies remain limited, particularly in areas that require technical expertise and the application of innovative assessment methods. Addressing these gaps requires a systemic approach to professional development that provides sustained, context-sensitive training aligned with teachers' real-world classroom challenges.

Institutions and policymakers should consider integrating comprehensive LAL programs into both pre-service and in-service teacher education curricula. Emphasizing practical applications of assessment theories, hands-on experience with alternative assessments and technical training in test validation and analysis is crucial. Furthermore, as Xu and Brown (2017) argue, LAL development must be continuous and adaptive, encouraging reflective practice and collaboration among teachers to foster a community of assessment practitioners.

To sum up, this study sheds light on the complexities and challenges EFL teachers face in developing their language assessment literacy. While there is evidence of growing awareness and demand for professional development in this area, significant gaps remain in training provision, particularly in advanced and technical aspects of language assessment. Bridging these gaps is

essential for ensuring that teachers can implement fair, valid, and effective assessments that support student learning and achievement.

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All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest

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