

## **Teacher's Perspective toward Alternative Assessment and Online Assessment in Iraqi EFL Context**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research, therefore, sought to investigate the perceptions of EFL teachers on conventional, alternative, and online assessments in EFL teaching and learning. The population of this study consisted of sixty Iraqi EFL teachers, with diversified experiences at different teaching levels and demographic backgrounds. Two questionnaires were administered as research instruments. The first questionnaire was developed by Rezaee, Alavi, and Shabani (2013) with the theme of teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessments and their use in class. On the other hand, the second questionnaire was adapted from Abduh (2020) to investigate the teachers' perception of online assessment. The result of the study showed that the majority of the participants are in support of alternative assessment. The fact, however, is considered not easy to correct. The participants also felt that the classroom is the place where both the traditional testing methods as well as alternate assessment methods need to be taught. The participants also felt that the alternative methods of assessment were less practical and more time-consuming for teachers when compared to traditional testing. More specifically, the feedback to the questionnaire regarding teachers' views on online assessment indicated that most of the teachers agreed that online assessments assist teachers to enhance their technological skills, enter grades more quickly and measure learning outcomes in a more accurate way; however, many of the teachers reported that they often face problems regarding the

assessment of students online and that online summative assessment is stressful. Technical difficulties such as an overloaded platform were one of the primary challenges during online exams. Additionally, many students submitted assignments that include a high proportion of plagiarism and are directly copied from websites without modification or paraphrasing. The findings of this study suggested teachers consider using a variety of assessment methods, including traditional, alternative, and online methods, to ensure that students are evaluated fairly and accurately.

**Key words: Teacher's Perspective, Alternative Assessment, Online Assessment, Iraqi EFL Context**

وجهة نظر المعلم تجاه التقييم البديل والتقييم عبر الإنترنت في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة  
أجنبية في العراق

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#### الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تصور معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول التقييمات التقليدية والبديلة وعبر الإنترنت في تدريس وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تألف المشاركون من ٦٠ مدرسًا عراقيًا للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يتمتعون بدرجات متفاوتة من الخبرة في التدريس وخلفيات ديموغرافية متنوعة. استخدمت الدراسة استبيانين لجمع البيانات. ركز الاستبيان الأول، الذي وضعه رضائي وعلوي وشعباني (٢٠١٣)، على مواقف المعلمين تجاه التقييمات البديلة واستخدامها في الفصل الدراسي. أما الاستبيان الثاني، المقتبس من عبده (٢٠٢٠) للمؤمني (٢٠٢٢)، فقد فحص تصورات المعلمين حول التقييم عبر الإنترنت. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن غالبية المشاركين يعتقدون أن التقييم البديل مفيد للمتعلمين، لكنه لا يعتبر سهل التصحيح. يعتقد المشاركون أيضًا أن طرق التقييم التقليدية والبديلة ضرورية ويجب ممارستها في الفصل الدراسي. ومع ذلك، يُنظر إلى طرق التقييم البديلة على أنها أقل عملية وتستغرق وقتًا أطول للمعلمين مقارنة بالاختبارات التقليدية. من ناحية أخرى، أظهرت نتائج تصورات المعلمين حول استبيان التقييم عبر الإنترنت أن غالبية المشاركين اتفقوا على أن التقييمات عبر الإنترنت تساعد المعلمين على تحسين مهاراتهم التكنولوجية، وتمكينهم من دخول الدرجات بشكل أسرع، وتسمح للمعلمين بقياس نتائج التعلم بشكل أكثر دقة. ومع ذلك، ذكر العديد من المعلمين أنهم

واجهوا صعوبات عندما يتعلق الأمر بتقييم الطلاب عبر الإنترنت، وارتبطت التقييمات الختامية عبر الإنترنت بالقلق. كانت الصعوبات التقنية مثل النظام الأساسي المتقل أحد التحديات الأساسية أثناء الاختبارات عبر الإنترنت. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، قدم العديد من الطلاب واجبات تتضمن نسبة عالية من السرقة الأدبية ويتم نسخها مباشرة من المواقع الإلكترونية دون تعديل أو إعادة صياغة. اقترحت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن يفكر المعلمون في استخدام مجموعة متنوعة من أساليب التقييم، بما في ذلك الطرق التقليدية والبديلة وعبر الإنترنت، لضمان تقييم الطلاب بشكل عادل ودقيق.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** وجهة نظر المعلم، التقييم البديل، التقييم عبر الإنترنت، سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

## Introduction

The amount of time spent on tests in the classroom has dramatically increased in recent years. The educational literature now places a lot of focus on the assessment of student learning. Numerous words that were formerly foreign to educational periodicals' established vocabularies, such authentic assessment, alternative assessment, and portfolios, have now become commonplace. Alternative assessment argues that, as training is unrelated to evaluation, traditional assessment methods frequently fail to reflect actual EFL/ESL experience (Monib et al., 2020). In order to gain a deeper comprehension of the impacts of education and evaluate the communicative skills of learners in their non-native language, it is advisable to use supplementary evaluations that incorporate authentic, inauthentic, and neutral materials, in addition to the typical methods (Brindley, 2001). Non-traditional methods of assessment, like portfolios, interviews, journals, project works, and self or peer evaluation, prioritize student-centered learning as opposed to traditional testing methods. This new approach stands apart from traditional testing by focusing on the learning process and using evaluation to help students grow. As a result, alternative evaluation is considered beneficial for education (Hamp-Lyons, 1997).

According to Colby–Kelly and Turner (2007), evaluation is about gathering evidence to make informed judgments from a learning experience. This means that evaluation is part of the learning process, helping students improve their English language skills, as supported by research from Cho et al. (2020), Mazloomi and Khabiri (2018), and Shohamy et al. (2017). Additionally, Zaim (2020) suggests it's time to move away from standardized testing and adopt alternative or authentic methods, a view shared by Hancock (1994). Hancock explains that alternative assessment is an ongoing process that evaluates a student's language proficiency in non–traditional ways, involving both teachers and students. This method applies to assessing reading and writing skills in both classroom and real–world settings, as highlighted by Barnard Bachelor (2017) and Moqbel (2020).

The goal of alternative assessment goal is to assess a variety of literacy abilities in contexts that mirror those in which they are used. For instance, alternative evaluation encourages students to interact with genuine texts, to write on particular subjects for real audiences and purposes, and to participate in real literary activities like book discussions, journaling, and letter writing. As much naturalness as possible has been built into the materials and activities. As a result, a substitute test is developed to align with the objectives, instruction, and syllabus of the classroom.

### **Literature Review**

The emerging alternative methods of evaluating language proficiency are perceived as a fresh and advantageous approach to address the increasing apprehensions in the language assessment domain. The focus of these alternative assessment techniques revolves around the student and is considerably distinct from traditional testing methods. Rather than focusing solely on the outcome, these innovative approaches prioritize the learning journey and utilize assessment as a

tool to encourage student advancement. It is thought that this methodology can have a constructive influence on education, commonly referred to as the washback effect (Hamp-Lyons, 1997).

According to Hamayan (1995), several stakeholder groups may find value in the information obtained through alternative assessment techniques. Teachers have the have the chance to assess their students in a suitable, authentic context, and gather data about the merits and deficiencies of their curriculum throughout the duration of the program, and then revise and modify it as needed based on the achievements of their students and the course's ongoing requirements. Assuming more responsibility for their own learning, students are also able to see their own development in a less intimidating environment and without having to utilize an esoteric language designed by professionals for use only by specialists (Hassel & Lourey, 2005). Additionally, parents can see clearly, what their kids are doing in school. Last but not the least, administrators, who are said to be "least convinced of the advantages of alternative assessment" (Hamayan, 1995, p. 215), have also discovered various applications for alternative assessment (see Clapham, 2000; Tsagari, 2004).

To examine the degree of consistency and differences among many alternative evaluation methodologies, Chang, Tseng, and Lou (2012) examined them. They discovered high levels of consistency between teacher and student evaluations, but poor levels of consistency between peer and student evaluations and teacher evaluation. The efficiency of several alternative evaluation methods on English proficiency of EFL learners was evaluated in Leach's study (2012), and the results showed that there was no significant contrast between the effects of self-assessment by students and assessment by teachers. Yildirim and Orsedemir (2013) used the alternative assessment approach in addition to pen and paper assessments to study the performance of young

students. It was demonstrated that the alternative assessment technique could be utilised in conjunction with other evaluation techniques, such as instructor review of project results, portfolio, self-evaluation, and peer review. Musfirah (2014) used an alternate method of speaking ability testing. The improvement in speaking performance is noted in the data as a result of using alternative assessment. Similarly, Domnguez et al. (2016) found high consistency across various alternative assessment techniques, including self-, peer-, and teacher-assessment. Recently, alternative and online assessments have gained attention due to their potential to improve teaching and learning outcomes (Birenbaum & Dochy, 2010; Brown & Hudson, 2015). Alternative assessment refers to using non-traditional methods like performance-based evaluations, portfolios, and self-assessments to measure students' knowledge and skills (Gulbahar & Tinmaz, 2006). Meanwhile, online assessment leverages digital technologies to administer and score assessments, offering flexibility and efficiency in the process (Deng & Yuen, 2011). Teachers' viewpoints play a crucial role in the success and effectiveness of both alternative and online assessments. Studies have shown that teachers' attitudes and beliefs about assessment impact their assessment practices (Black & William, 1998; Stiggins, 2001). Teachers who embrace alternative and online assessments are more likely to incorporate them into their teaching (Gulbahar & Tinmaz, 2006; Deng & Yuen, 2011). Furthermore, teachers' views on the benefits and challenges of these methods influence their acceptance and implementation. For instance, teachers often see alternative assessments as providing a more thorough and authentic evaluation of students' learning compared to traditional tests (Gulbahar & Tinmaz, 2006; Brown & Hudson, 2015), but they may also face hurdles like time constraints and insufficient training in designing and implementing these assessments (Gulbahar & Tinmaz, 2006).

Similarly, teachers have varied opinions on online assessments. While some appreciate the flexibility and efficiency they offer (Deng & Yuen, 2011), others worry about their validity and reliability (Cizek, 2012). Additionally, challenges such as adapting to new technologies and ensuring equitable access to online assessments remain (Deng & Yuen, 2011). Teachers' attitudes toward these assessment methods can shape their assessment practices and, ultimately, affect student learning outcomes. Understanding teachers' perspectives on alternative and online assessments is key to successfully integrating these methods into the classroom.

Despite growing attention and increasing literature on alternative assessments, these newer forms of evaluation still have considerable development ahead before they can be fully realized. Nonetheless, the aim of this study is not to enforce ethical guidelines on language testers or to arrive at a universal agreement on the ethical principles that should be implemented within the industry. It is crucial to comprehend and depict any issues that may arise before it can be solved. Therefore, the current study attempts to investigate the perspectives of EFL teachers on using alternative assessment in Iraq. The following research question was posed to address the objective of the study:

- What are the Iraqi EFL teachers' perceptions on alternative assessment?
- What are the Iraqi EFL teachers' perceptions on the benefits and challenges of online assessment?

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The participants of this study consist of 60 Iraqi EFL teachers teaching in different schools and language institutes. They were 24 male and 36 female. Their teaching experience varied from 2 to 26 years. They were selected based on convenience sampling. The sample enjoyed a great



diversity of demographic features. The highest degree attained by the sample is split between MA ( $n = 42$ ) and BA ( $n = 14$ ), with 3 teachers being PhD candidates and one having already attained a PhD. The most common major among the sample is TEFL, with 52 individuals having studied it. Literature is the second most common major, with 5 individuals having studied it. translation is less common major, with 3 individuals having studied them. The highest percentage of the sample consists of individuals teaching at institutes, with 44 people reporting this as their primary teaching location. Schools are the second most common, with 16 people indicating this.

### **Instruments**

This study used a questionnaire developed by Rezaee, Alavi, and Shabani (2013) to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' attitudes toward alternative assessments and how they use these methods in the classroom. The data collected helped identify patterns and trends in teachers' attitudes and practices related to assessment. The questionnaire consists of 33 items divided into three parts. The first part, with 27 items, assesses teachers' general attitudes toward alternative and traditional assessments, including questions about the effectiveness, advantages, disadvantages, and openness to alternative methods. The second part has three questions focused on how often teachers use alternative assessments in their classrooms, covering types like performance-based or project-based assessments. The third part includes three general questions on ethical standards and values, addressing issues such as fairness, bias, and confidentiality in assessment practices.

Additionally, another questionnaire adapted by Momeni (2022) from Abduh (2020) explored teachers' perceptions of online assessment. This adapted questionnaire had three sections: the first section (items 1–8) collected demographic information, the second (items 9–19) examined



teachers' perceptions of online assessments, and the third section (items 20–33) focused on the challenges teachers faced when conducting online assessments. This questionnaire provided a comprehensive view of teachers' perceptions, practices, and challenges regarding the use of online assessment tools in their teaching practices.

### **Procedure**

One powerful way of evaluating students beyond traditional tests and exams is through the introduction of alternative assessment techniques in the classroom. In advance, the participants of this study were informed about the concept of alternative assessment and its benefits. It was described that alternative assessments focus on students' application of knowledge, critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity and they provide a more comprehensive view of students' abilities. The participants were taught and asked to use the following techniques of alternative assessment:

- **Performance-based assessments:** The teachers required students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge by performing a task or completing a project, such as, presentations, debates, role-plays, portfolios, and exhibitions.
- **Authentic assessments:** These assessments reflected real-world scenarios and tasks. They asked students to apply their knowledge and skills in relevant and meaningful contexts. Examples include case studies, simulations, fieldwork, and interviews.
- **Self and peer assessment:** EFL teachers involved students evaluating their own work or providing feedback to their peers. It promotes self-reflection, metacognition, and collaboration. Examples include self-assessment checklists, peer feedback forms, and group evaluations.
- **Journals and reflections:** EFL teachers encouraged students to reflect on their learning experiences, thoughts, and progress. They provided

insight into students' understanding, growth, and metacognitive processes like learning journals, reflective essays, and learning logs.

- **Clear assessment criteria:** In this technique, teachers developed clear and specific assessment criteria for each technique they chose. They clearly talked about the expectations and standards to students, so they understand how they would be assessed. Examples are rubrics, scoring guides, or checklists to ensure consistency and objectivity in assessment.
- **Providing adequate support:** Teachers supported the students before and during the assessment process by clearly explaining the purpose of the assessment, the criteria, and the expectations. Teachers provided examples and models of high-quality work to help students understand what is expected of them.

Generally, it was mentioned that the key to successful implementation of alternative assessment techniques is to align them with your learning objectives, provide clear criteria, and offer support to students throughout the process.

On the other hand, the participants of this study, to some extent, used online assessment in their online instruction. However, they were reminded the main techniques of online assessment as follow:

1. **Selecting appropriate online assessment tools:** Teachers chose online assessment tools that align with the learning objectives and the nature of the assessment. Some commonly used online assessment tools include:
  - a. **Quizzes and tests:** Online platforms allow teachers to create and administer quizzes and tests with various question types, such as multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, or short answer. Platforms like Google Forms, Quizlet, or Learning Management Systems (LMS) offer such features.

b. Interactive assignments: The platforms that enable students to submit multimedia assignments, such as videos, audio recordings, or presentations. Tools like Flipgrid, VoiceThread, or Padlet can facilitate interactive assignments.

c. Discussion boards and forums enable students to participate in online discussions to assess their critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills. LMS platforms like Moodle, Canvas, or Edmodo have built-in discussion boards for this purpose. d. Online portfolios: Teachers encourage students to create and maintain digital portfolios that showcase their work and progress. Tools like Seesaw, Google Sites, or WordPress can be used for this.

d. Student readiness: Teachers familiarized students with online assessment tools and provided practice sessions before the actual assessments. They guided students on how to navigate platforms, submit assignments, and engage in online discussions, addressing any technical issues along the way.

2. Monitoring: Teachers kept track of students' progress during the online assessments and provided assistance for any technical problems or questions that arose.

3. Marking and feedback: Teachers evaluated students' work based on established criteria, offering timely and constructive feedback focused on strengths, areas for improvement, and next steps. They utilized features in online assessment tools for efficient grading and feedback delivery.

The next step, was distributing the questionnaires among EFL teachers to explore their views on alternative and online methods. The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of Iraqi EFL teachers from different regions and educational levels. To efficiently collect data from EFL teachers, an online copy of the questionnaire was created and uploaded in Google Form. The researcher used social networks such as LinkedIn, Telegram, and Facebook to identify potential participants, and

the remaining data were collected through direct contact with teachers in language institute. The questionnaire took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete, and participants were asked to provide their honest opinions about the components of the questionnaire. Ethical considerations were taken into account during data collection, and participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The collected data would be used for research purposes only.

## Results and Discussion

To answer the first research question in finding the perceptions of Iraqi EFL teachers toward alternative assessment, the items of the alternative assessment questionnaire was analyzed as follow:

Table 1

*Descriptive statistics of the participants' performance on alternative assessment questionnaire*

Statement	1 (Strongly Agree)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Completely Disagree)
1. I am satisfied with the evaluation process and practices used in my classes	15 (25%)	21 (35%)	18 (30%)	3 (5%)	2 (3.3%)	1 (1.7%)	15 (25%)
2. Traditional testing is easy for correction	9 (15%)	17 (28.3%)	24 (40%)	4 (6.7%)	4 (6.7%)	2 (3.3%)	2 (3.3%)
3. On the whole, traditional testing is beneficial to learners	3 (5%)	12 (20%)	23 (38.3%)	8 (13.3%)	10 (16.7%)	2 (3.3%)	2 (3.3%)

4. Through traditional testing, teachers can provide students with ample feedback on their progress and performance throughout the course	1 (1.7%)	6 (10%)	24 (40%)	9 (15%)	14 (23.3%)	2 (3.3%)	4 (6.7%)
5. Traditional testing is administrable in almost all situations and classes	2 (3.4%)	22 (37.3%)	22 (37.3%)	5 (8.5%)	7 (11.9%)	2 (3.3%)	1 (1.7%)
6. Traditional testing is an ethical and fair approach of evaluation	4 (6.7%)	9 (15%)	16 (26.7%)	10 (16.7%)	10 (16.7%)	6 (10%)	5 (8.3%)
7. Alternative assessment is easy for correction	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	7 (11.7%)	11 (18.3%)	19 (31.7%)	17 (28.3%)	3 (5%)
8. On the whole, alternative assessment is beneficial to learners	13 (21.7%)	23 (38.3%)	18 (30%)	3 (5%)	2 (3.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.7%)
9. Through alternative assessment, teachers can	19 (32.2%)	16 (27.1%)	13 (22%)	7 (11.9%)	2 (3.4%)	2 (3.4%)	0 (0%)

provide  
students with  
ample  
feedback on  
their progress  
and  
performance  
throughout  
the course

10.	3 (5%)	14	17	11	12	2	1 (1.7%)
Alternative assessment is administrable in almost all situations and classes		(23.3%)	(28.3%)	(18.3%)	(20%)	(3.3%)	

11.	21	16	14	5	2	1	1 (1.7%)
Alternative assessment is an ethical and fair approach of evaluation	(35%)	(26.7%)	(23.3%)	(8.3%)	(3.3%)	(1.7%)	

12. Ethics and ethical issues are adequately addressed in present approaches to language testing and evaluation	12 (20%)	15 (25%)	20 (33.3%)	10 (16.7%)	2 (3.3%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0%)
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13. Exact results can be expected from	1 (1.7%)	9 (15%)	11 (18.3%)	16 (26.7%)	7 (11.7%)	7 (11.7%)	9 (15%)
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traditional

testing

14.	Exact	22	22	9 (15%)	3 (5%)	4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
results	can	(36.7%)	(36.7%)			(6.7%)		

be expected

from

alternative

assessment

15.		16	19	16	6 (10%)	1	1	1 (1.7%)
Traditional		(26.7%)	(31.7%)	(26.7%)		(1.7%)	(1.7%)	

testing

adequately

measures the

learning

outcomes

16.		2	5	12	8	21	10	2 (3.3%)
Alternative		(3.3%)	(8.3%)	(20%)	(13.3%)	(35%)	(16.7%)	

assessment

adequately

measures the

learning

outcomes

17.		15	18	17	8	2	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Alternative		(25%)	(30%)	(28.3%)	(13.3%)	(3.3%)		

assessment

forms an

essential part

of education

for its

flexibility and

adjusting to

the student

learning

styles and

individual

development

18.		6 (10%)	15	18	15	4	2	0 (0%)
Alternative			(25%)	(30%)	(25%)	(6.7%)	(3.3%)	



assessment								
should be								
used in								
primary and								
secondary								
education								
(and not								
higher								
education,								
i.e. at								
university								
level)								
19. Results of traditional testing procedures demonstrate an objective picture of the students' progress in a given course	3 (5%)	7 (11.7%)	22 (36.7%)	11 (18.3%)	8 (13.3%)	7 (11.7%)	2 (3.3%)	
20. No matter how useful it may be to use alternative assessment methods, at the end of the course, teachers are expected to report scores for their students	2 (3.3%)	8 (13.3%)	29 (48.3%)	7 (11.7%)	11 (18.3%)	2 (3.3%)	1 (1.7%)	
21. Since in traditional	11 (18.3%)	15 (25%)	24 (40%)	6 (10%)	4 (6.7%)	11 (18.3%)	0 (0%)	

testing,  
students’  
performance  
and progress  
throughout  
the course  
will be  
assessed  
mainly in an  
end-of-the  
course exam  
(also known  
as final  
exam), and  
shown by a  
single score,  
traditional  
testing cannot  
be  
considered  
ethical and  
fair to  
students

22.  
Alternative  
assessment  
can be  
considered  
more as 6 (10%) 19 (31.7%) 19 (31.7%) 8 (13.3%) 4 (6.7%) 3 (5%) 1 (1.7%)  
supplement  
to rather than  
substitutes for  
traditional  
testing

23. It is very  
difficult for 10 (16.7%) 16 (26.7%) 22 (36.7%) 11 (18.3%) 1 (1.7%) 0 (0%) 0 (0%)  
the teacher to  
use

alternative  
assessment  
at university  
level

24.

Alternative  
assessment

methods			14	10	12		
seem less	3 (5%)	9 (15%)	(23.3%)	(16.7%)	(20%)	9 (15%)	3 (5%)
practical than							
traditional							
testing							

25. No  
matter how  
useful

alternative  
assessment

can be to							
students'	4	14	23	13	3 (5%)	2	1 (1.7%)
learning, in	(6.7%)	(23.3%)	(38.3%)	(21.7%)		(3.3%)	
the end it is							
their scores							
that count in							
later							
decisions and							
judgments							

26.

Alternative  
assessment

and

traditional

testing	22	16	15	4			
strategies are	(36.7%)	(26.7%)	(25%)	(6.7%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
both							
necessary							
and needed,							
and both							
should be							

practiced in the classroom								
27. Using alternative assessment takes more time for the teacher in and out of the classroom than traditional testing.	22 (36.7%)	19 (31.7%)	11 (18.3%)	6 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.7%)	1 (1.7%)	

The findings presented in the table show the responses of participants to statements related to traditional and alternative assessment methods. The responses indicate that a majority of participants are satisfied with the evaluation process and practices used in their classes (statement 1). However, traditional testing is not considered easy for correction by a majority of participants (statement 2). Despite this, a majority of participants believe that traditional testing is beneficial to learners (statement 3) and that teachers can provide students with ample feedback on their progress and performance throughout the course through traditional testing (statement 4). Additionally, a majority of participants believe that traditional testing is administrable in almost all situations and classes (statement 5) and that it is an ethical and fair approach to evaluation (statement 6). On the other hand, a majority of participants believe that alternative assessment is beneficial to learners (statement 8) and that teachers can provide students with ample feedback on their progress and performance throughout the course through alternative assessment (statement 9). However, alternative assessment is not considered easy for correction by a majority of participants (statement 7). Participants also believe that

alternative assessment is administrable in almost all situations and classes (statement 10) and that it is an ethical and fair approach to evaluation (statement 11). The findings also indicate that participants believe that both traditional and alternative assessment methods are necessary and needed, and both should be practiced in the classroom (statement 26). However, participants believe that alternative assessment methods seem less practical than traditional testing (statement 24) and that using alternative assessment takes more time for the teacher in and out of the classroom than traditional testing (statement 27).

This may be due to several factors, such as the perceived complexity or unfamiliarity of alternative assessment methods, a lack of resources or training to implement them, or the view that traditional testing is simpler and easier to manage. It's important to remember that the practicality of assessment methods can vary based on context, available resources, and the goals of the assessment. While alternative assessments may take more time initially, they offer valuable insights into students' learning, foster engagement and independence, and provide a deeper understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement.

Participants' perspectives often reflect the influence of traditional testing practices, where scores are typically used as the primary measure of student performance. However, alternative assessment methods offer a more comprehensive and authentic view of students' abilities, including their progress, skills, and growth over time. A balanced approach to assessment, using different methods for different purposes, provides a more complete picture of students' learning. Integrating both alternative and traditional testing strategies allows for a holistic evaluation of students' abilities, including content knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The findings in the table align with previous research (Dikli, 2003; Phongsirikul, 2018; Lustgarten, 2022), which highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of traditional and alternative assessments. The results suggest that a combination of both methods may be necessary for a comprehensive evaluation of student performance and development.

Table 2 Frequency of using alternative and traditional assessment in classroom

Statement	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
28. How often do you use some form of traditional testing in your classes?	13 (21.7%)	29 (48.3%)	10 (16.7%)	6 (10%)	2 (3.3%)
29. How often do you use some form of alternative assessment in your classes?	3 (5%)	14 (23.3%)	17 (28.3%)	20 (33.3%)	6 (10%)
30. Think of a course in which you want to use alternative assessment approaches. Ideally, how many students will be in this course?	Less than 10	10-20	21-30	31-50	More than 50
	36 (60%)	19 (31.7%)	4 (6.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.7%)

.In this table, three questions were asked about how often traditional testing and alternative assessment are used in classes, and the ideal class size for implementing alternative assessment. The results show that traditional testing is used frequently (48.3%) or sometimes (30%) in classes, while alternative assessment is used frequently (23.3%) or sometimes (28.3%). Additionally, 60% of respondents preferred using alternative assessment methods in classes with fewer than 10 students. These findings suggest that while traditional testing remains common, alternative assessment is also being applied, particularly in smaller class sizes where it may be more effective.

Table 3

*Participants' perceptions on ethical standards*

Statement	Strongly Agree (1)	2	3	4	5	6	Completely Disagree (7)
31. All ethical standards are relative, to the degree that there are no permanent, universal, objective values and standards	2 (3.3%)	9 (15%)	24 (40%)	18 (30%)	6 (10%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0%)
32. There are at least some ethical values, standards or principles that are not relative	2 (3.3%)	5 (8.3%)	29 (48.3%)	17 (28.3%)	6 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.7%)

The table shows participants' responses to two statements about ethical standards. Statement 31 suggests that all ethical standards are relative, while statement 32 suggests that some ethical values, standards, or principles are not. The results reveal that 40% of participants responded "sometimes" to statement 31, while 48.3% responded "usually" to statement 32. This indicates that most participants believe certain ethical values, standards, or principles are not entirely relative.

Ethical relativism argues that ethical standards vary based on individual, cultural, or societal differences (Resnik, 2021). However, some scholars believe that certain ethical values and principles are universal (Beauchamp & Childress, 2019). The results here suggest that many participants agree with the idea of universal ethical principles. It's important to remember that ethical standards and principles are not always clear-cut and may need interpretation depending on the context. Overall, the results suggest that while some ethical standards might be relative, many participants also believe in universal principles that are not. This reflects the complexity of ethical standards and the need for careful consideration and interpretation.

In addressing the second research question about Iraqi EFL teachers' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of online assessment, the



first section of the questionnaire analyzing these benefits is discussed as follows:

Table 4 *Descriptive statistics of the participants' performance on benefits of online assessment questionnaire*

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I prefer online assessments to paper-based assessments.	5 (8.3%)	10 (16.7%)	2 (3.3%)	20 (33.3%)	14 (23.3%)
2. Online assessment helps teachers improve their technological skills to assess students effectively using various techniques.	6 (10%)	8 (13.3%)	3 (5%)	23 (38.3%)	20 (33.3%)
3. Effective evaluation of students' performance is possible in online assessment.	18 (30%)	22 (36.7%)	2 (3.3%)	10 (16.7%)	10 (16.7%)
4. Online assessment measures students' achievements fairly.	14 (23.3%)	8 (13.3%)	2 (3.3%)	16 (26.7%)	20 (33.3%)
5. Effective use of the online assessment platform enables teachers to assess their students more effectively.	18 (30%)	14 (23.3%)	3 (5%)	15 (25%)	10 (16.7%)
6. Compared to paper-based assessments, online assessments provide faster entry of grades into the electronic grading center.	8 (13.3%)	2 (3.3%)	0 (0%)	22 (36.7%)	28 (46.7%)
7. Online assessment allows teachers to measure learning outcomes more	9 (15%)	5 (8.3%)	1 (1.7%)	26 (43.3%)	19 (31.7%)

accurately.

8. Providing teachers with managerial, pedagogical, and technological support during online assessment enables them to increase the accuracy with which they assess.	14 (23.3%)	13 (21.7%)	3 (5%)	22 (36.7%)	8 (13.3%)
9. E-portfolios, a form of online assessment, support students' reflective thinking, develop creativity, and increase collaborative work.	24 (40%)	13 (21.7%)	3 (5%)	12 (20%)	8 (13.3%)
10. Online assessment approaches such as online discussion and personal activities for learning problem-solving are effective assessment strategies.	11 (18.3%)	14 (23.3%)	1 (1.7%)	20 (33.3%)	14 (23.3%)

From the responses to the first item, it's clear that most participants either agreed or strongly agreed that they prefer online assessments over paper-based ones. This preference can be explained by several factors. Online assessments offer flexibility, convenience, and instant feedback. They also allow the use of multimedia elements, interactive features, and automated grading systems. Additionally, they can be accessed and completed remotely, making them especially useful when physical attendance is difficult. The growing use of technology in education likely also contributes to this preference for online assessments.

For the second item, 71.6% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that online assessments help teachers enhance their technological skills

for more effective student assessment. This suggests that participants see value in online assessments for boosting teachers' proficiency with technology. These platforms often require teachers to navigate digital tools, create assessments, and analyze data, helping them become more adept with educational technology and improve their assessment practices.

The third item addressed the idea that effective evaluation of student performance is possible through online assessment. Most participants (66.7%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, showing confidence in the validity and reliability of online assessments. These platforms can offer various question types—such as multiple-choice, short answers, and essays—which can effectively assess students' knowledge and skills. Features like automated grading and instant feedback also enhance the efficiency and accuracy of evaluations.

Regarding the fourth item, 59.9% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that online assessments measure student achievement fairly. This shows that participants believe online assessments offer fair evaluation. Online platforms provide standardized, consistent criteria and features like randomized questions and time limits, which help reduce bias and ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed.

For the fifth item, 53.3% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that online assessment platforms enable teachers to assess students more effectively. This suggests that participants recognize the advantages of these platforms, such as automated grading, immediate feedback, and data analysis tools, which can streamline the assessment process. These features help save time, provide constructive feedback, and give teachers better insights into student performance.

The responses to the sixth item showed that 83.4% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that online assessments allow faster grade entry into electronic grading systems compared to paper-based

assessments. This highlights the time-saving benefit of online assessments, as teachers can enter grades directly into the system, eliminating manual calculations and data entry.

For the seventh item, 75% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that online assessments allow teachers to measure learning outcomes more accurately. This suggests participants trust online assessments to capture and evaluate student achievements effectively. Online platforms can offer tailored question formats that align with specific learning outcomes, allowing for a more focused and accurate assessment of students' knowledge and skills.

Additionally, online assessment platforms often offer features like instant feedback, which can help pinpoint areas for improvement and support continued learning. The participants' agreement with this statement reflects their confidence in the accuracy and precision of online assessments in measuring learning outcomes.

Regarding item 8, 36.7% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that providing managerial, pedagogical, and technological support during online assessments improves their ability to assess accurately. This shows that participants understand the importance of support in enhancing assessment accuracy. When teachers receive proper guidance in managing assessments, applying effective teaching strategies, and using the right technological tools, they can assess student performance more precisely. This kind of support helps align assessment tasks with learning goals, provides timely and constructive feedback, and ensures fairness and reliability throughout the process.

For item 9, 20% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that e-portfolios—another form of online assessment—support students' reflective thinking, foster creativity, and promote collaboration. This indicates that participants recognize the value of e-portfolios in encouraging students to reflect on their learning, think creatively, and

work together. E-portfolios allow students to showcase their work, reflect on their learning journey, and participate in collaborative tasks, which can help improve their critical thinking and creativity.

The results for item 10 show that 33.3% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that online assessment methods like online discussions and personal activities for problem-solving are effective strategies. This suggests participants see the value in using these approaches to assess students' problem-solving skills. Online discussions give students a chance to collaborate, share ideas, and critically analyze different perspectives, while personal activities allow them to apply problem-solving skills on their own. Both methods offer valuable insights into students' critical thinking, analytical abilities, and capacity for developing solutions.

Table 5 *Descriptive statistics of the participants' performance on challenges of online assessment questionnaire*

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
11. Teachers encounter difficulties when it comes to assessing students online.	26 (43.3%)	18 (30%)	2 (3.3%)	8 (13.3%)	6 (10%)
12. The lack of physical interaction may be a constraint for assessing students enrolled in full-time e-learning.	0 (0%)	1 (1.7%)	3 (5%)	50 (83.3%)	10 (16.7%)
13. Teamwork sometimes is impractical because students are more accustomed to completing assignments individually than collaboratively with classmates.	1 (1.7%)	0 (0%)	6 (10%)	29 (48.3%)	24 (40%)
14. Online summative	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8	22	30

assessments are associated with anxiety.			(13.3%)	(36.7%)	(50%)
15. Many students fail to submit assignments on time due to their poor technical capabilities.	0 (0%)	1 (1.7%)	3 (5%)	23 (38.3%)	33 (55%)
16. E-assessment of translation courses is problematic.	8 (13.3%)	2 (3.3%)	38 (63.3%)	5 (8.3%)	7 (11.7%)
17. It is difficult to conduct peer or team assessments.	2 (3.3%)	5 (8.3%)	8 (13.3%)	22 (36.7%)	23 (38.3%)
18. There is a higher probability that students may cheat on online assessments.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (10%)	54 (90%)
19. Technical difficulties such as an overloaded platform are one of the primary challenges during online exams.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	28 (46.7%)	32 (53.3%)	0 (0%)
20. I find it difficult to E-assess students in listening and speaking courses.	2 (3.3%)	1 (1.7%)	4 (6.7%)	23 (38.3%)	30 (50%)
21. Synchronous activities are difficult to be assessed in groups of a large number of students.	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	11 (18.3%)	25 (41.7%)	21 (35%)
22. Many students frequently request postponement of the submission date of exams/assignments for various excuses.	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	1 (1.7%)	21 (35%)	35 (58.3%)
23. Many students submit assignments that include a	3 (5%)	5 (8.3%)	0 (0%)	12 (20%)	40 (66.7%)

high proportion of plagiarism and are directly copied from websites without modification or paraphrasing.

33. Many students copy each other's assignments.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.7%)	13 (21.7%)	47 (78.3)
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Item 11 states that teachers encounter difficulties when it comes to assessing students online. The majority of participants either strongly disagree or disagree with this statement, which indicates that they do not believe that teachers face difficulties in assessing students online. However, a significant number of participants are neutral or agree, which suggests that some teachers may indeed face challenges in online assessment.

Item 12 indicates that the lack of physical interaction may be a constraint for assessing students enrolled in full-time e-learning. The majority of participants agree or strongly agree with this statement, which suggests that the lack of physical interaction is indeed a constraint for assessing students in full-time e-learning. Only a small number of participants disagreed or remained neutral, which shows that most participants acknowledge the difficulties of assessing students in a fully online setting.

Item 13 states that teamwork can sometimes be impractical because students are more used to completing assignments individually rather than working with classmates. Most participants either agreed or strongly agreed with this, indicating that students generally feel more comfortable working alone. However, the fact that a significant number of participants were neutral suggests that some students may still be open to working collaboratively.

Item 14 mentions that online summative assessments are linked to anxiety. The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed, showing



that these assessments can cause stress for students. However, a notable portion of participants were neutral, indicating that not all students experience anxiety during online assessments.

Item 15 states that many students fail to submit assignments on time due to poor technical skills. Most participants agreed or strongly agreed, suggesting that technical difficulties can indeed result in late submissions. However, a significant number of participants are neutral, which indicates that poor technical capabilities may not be the only reason for late submission of assignments.

Item 16 indicates that E-assessment of translation courses is problematic. The majority of participants are neutral, which suggests that e-assessment of translation courses may not be perceived as problematic by most participants. However, a significant number of participants either strongly disagree or disagree, which indicates that some participants do perceive e-assessment of translation courses as problematic.

Item 17 states that it is difficult to conduct peer or team assessments. The majority of participants either agree or strongly agree with this statement, which suggests that conducting peer or team assessments can be challenging. However, a significant number of participants are neutral, which indicates that some participants may not have experience with peer or team assessments.

Item 18 states that there is a higher probability that students may cheat on online assessments. The majority of participants either agree or strongly agree with this statement, which suggests that cheating on online assessments is a concern. However, a significant number of participants are neutral, which indicates that some participants may not have a strong opinion on this matter.

Item 19 indicates that technical difficulties such as an overloaded platform are one of the primary challenges during online exams. The

majority of participants either agree or strongly agree with this statement, which suggests that technical difficulties can indeed be a primary challenge during online exams. However, a significant number of participants are neutral, which indicates that some participants may not have experienced technical difficulties during online exams.

Item 20 indicates that I find it difficult to E-assess students in listening and speaking courses. The majority of participants either agree or strongly agree with this statement, which suggests that e-assessment of listening and speaking courses can be challenging. However, a significant number of participants are neutral, which indicates that some participants may not have experience with e-assessment of listening and speaking courses.

Item 21 indicates that synchronous activities are difficult to be assessed in groups of a large number of students. The majority of participants either agree or strongly agree with this statement, which suggests that assessing synchronous activities in large groups can be challenging. However, a significant number of participants are neutral, which indicates that some participants may not have experience with assessing synchronous activities in large groups.

Item 22 states that many students frequently request postponement of the submission date of exams/assignments for various excuses. The majority of participants either agree or strongly agree with this statement, which suggests that many students do request postponement of submission dates. However, a significant number of participants were neutral, suggesting that some may not have experience with e-assessment in listening and speaking courses.

Item 21 reveals that assessing synchronous activities in large groups is challenging. Most participants agreed or strongly agreed, indicating that it can be difficult to assess such activities in big groups. However, a significant number were neutral, suggesting that some participants might

not have experience with evaluating synchronous activities in large groups.

Item 22 states that many students often request extensions for exams or assignments, providing various excuses. Most participants agreed or strongly agreed, showing that students frequently ask for submission postponements. However, the neutral responses indicate that some participants may not have encountered such requests.

Item 23 highlights concerns about plagiarism, with many students submitting assignments heavily copied from websites without modification or paraphrasing. The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed with this concern, but the neutral responses suggest that some may not have dealt with plagiarism directly.

Finally, item 24 addresses the issue of students copying each other's assignments. Most participants agreed or strongly agreed that this is a problem, although some neutral responses suggest that not all participants have faced this issue firsthand.

It's important to remember that these findings are specific to Iraqi EFL teachers and may not reflect the views of EFL teachers in other regions. For instance, in a study by Wang and Chen (2018) conducted in China, Chinese EFL teachers held more positive attitudes toward online assessment. They saw online assessments as offering opportunities for personalized learning, boosting student engagement, and facilitating continuous assessment. These differences suggest that attitudes toward online assessment may vary depending on cultural context, educational systems, and personal preferences.

That said, the benefits of online assessment extend beyond just the Iraqi context. Online assessments provide flexibility in terms of time and location, allowing students to complete them at their convenience (Wang & Chen, 2018). This flexibility is especially useful for students with other commitments or those who prefer self-paced learning. Online

assessments also often provide immediate feedback, helping students track their progress and address weaknesses quickly, which can improve learning outcomes and encourage self-directed learning (Wang & Chen, 2018).

Moreover, online assessments can incorporate multimedia elements like audio and video recordings, providing a more authentic evaluation of students' language skills. This can lead to a richer learning experience and a more thorough assessment of students' abilities. Additionally, online assessments can lighten the administrative load for teachers by automating grading and offering data analysis tools, freeing up time for more personalized instruction and support.

### **Conclusion**

Research comparing online and traditional assessments in education presents some intriguing findings. While attitudes toward online assessment vary among EFL teachers in different cultural contexts, Iraqi EFL teachers generally express negative or neutral views, citing concerns about reliability, validity, and effectiveness. However, it's important to remember that these findings are specific to Iraqi teachers and may not reflect the attitudes of EFL teachers elsewhere.

On the other hand, the benefits of online assessments are widely recognized. They offer flexibility, immediate feedback, multimedia integration, and administrative efficiency, which support personalized learning, student engagement, and authentic assessment while saving teachers time. Comparing online and traditional assessments is complex, as both have strengths and limitations. The choice between the two depends on factors like educational goals, learning outcomes, student preferences, and resources available. Therefore, the context and purpose of the assessment should guide the choice of method.

In conclusion, while EFL teachers' views on online assessments vary, the advantages—such as flexibility, instant feedback, multimedia

elements, and efficiency—are broadly acknowledged. However, it's crucial to consider the specific context and purpose when choosing between online and traditional assessments. Further research is needed to better understand the pros and cons of each approach in various educational settings.

From the research provided, there is no clear consensus on whether traditional or alternative assessments are more effective. Some studies suggest traditional assessments are better in terms of validity and reliability, while others highlight the positive impact of alternative assessments on student attitudes and learning outcomes.

Ethical standards play an important role in education and research. While laws enforce widely accepted moral standards, ethical norms are broader and more informal. They help build public trust in various disciplines and professions. Making ethical decisions is a key part of education and research, and having a framework for these decisions can help individuals apply ethical principles effectively. Traditional assessments, like quizzes and tests, are often easier to score but may not accurately measure student achievement. Alternative assessments, on the other hand, offer a more comprehensive view of student progress. Both have their place in education, and the choice between them should depend on the course and student needs.

To summarize, while Iraqi EFL teachers may have neutral or negative views of online assessments, it's essential to consider cultural and individual perspectives. The advantages of online assessments, like flexibility, multimedia use, and administrative efficiency, are widely recognized. More research is needed to explore the views of EFL teachers in different contexts and to better understand how online assessments affect student learning.

EFL teachers should focus on improving their classroom-based assessment literacy and professional development. They should use a

mix of formative and summative assessments to help students track their learning. Encouraging self-assessment can also help students boost their awareness and self-efficacy by improving mastery experiences. Teachers should incorporate both traditional and alternative assessments and consider how students and teachers perceive these methods in the classroom.

EFL learners should be mindful of potential sources of anxiety in language testing, such as low self-esteem, class presentations, error corrections, peer pressure, and negative interactions. They should also take an active role in decision-making about their learning, identifying their strengths and weaknesses to develop autonomy and independent learning skills.

Further research is needed to explore EFL teachers' attitudes in different cultural contexts and to study the impact of online assessments on student learning outcomes. Studies comparing online and traditional assessment methods would offer valuable insights into their respective strengths and weaknesses in specific educational settings.

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