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Assessment Practices in EFL Literature Classrooms: Students' Voices

ABSTRACT

The current study is an attempt to shed light on assessment practices in EFL literature classrooms, focusing on the perspectives of fourth year students at Salahaddin University-Erbil. Recognizing that literature courses pose unique challenges for language learners, the research aims to identify the types of assessments employed, investigate the reasons behind instructors' choices, evaluate the perceived effectiveness of these assessments, and uncover the challenges students face during the assessment process. The study implements a mixed methods approach that helps in combining quantitative data from a structured questionnaire distributed to 100 students across three colleges with qualitative insights which are gathered through open-ended responses. Descriptive and inferential analyses reveal that while a wide range of assessment types is in use including traditional exams, essays, group projects, and peer assessments, students express a clear preference for formative and collaborative assessments that provide continuous feedback and promote deeper engagement with texts. Significant statistical findings confirm the positive impact of creative and formative tasks on learning outcomes, while traditional exams are perceived as less effective and less engaging. Lastly, the qualitative data secures these tendencies in stressing that writing assignments, presentations, and group work are the most helpful in regards to critical thinking and comprehension in general.

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ممارسات التقييم في صفوف الأدب الإنجليزي كلغة أجنبية: أصوات الطلبة

شهين شفيق خضر / جامعة صلاح الدين / كلية التربية الأساسية

هازه صالح حسن / جامعة صلاح الدين / كلية التربية الأساسية

الخلاصة:

تُحاول هذه الدراسة تسليط الضوء على ممارسات التقييم في فصول الأدب المُدرّسة كلغة أجنبية، مع التركيز على وجهات نظر طلاب السنة الرابعة في جامعة صلاح الدين-أربيل. وإدراكًا للتحديات الفريدة التي تُشكّلها مساقات الأدب على مُتعلّمي اللغة، يهدف البحث إلى تحديد أنواع التقييمات المُستخدمة،

ودراسة أسباب اختيارات المُدرّسين، وتقييم مدى فعاليتها المُتصوّرة، وكشف التحديات التي يواجهها الطلاب أثناء عملية التقييم. تعتمد الدراسة على نهج مُختلط الأساليب يُساعد على الجمع بين البيانات الكمية من استبيان مُنظّم وُزِعَ على ١٠٠ طالب من ثلاث كليات، ورؤى نوعية جُمعت من خلال إجابات مفتوحة. وتُظهر التحليلات الوصفية والاستنتاجية أنه على الرغم من استخدام مجموعة واسعة من أنواع التقييم، بما في ذلك الامتحانات التقليدية، والمقالات، والمشاريع الجماعية، وتقييمات الأقران، إلا أن الطلاب يُعبّرون عن تفضيل واضح للتقييمات التكوينية والتشاركية التي تُوفّر تغذية راجعة مُستمرة وتُعزّز التفاعل مع النصوص. وتؤكد النتائج الإحصائية المهمة الأثر الإيجابي للمهام الإبداعية والتكوينية على نتائج التعلّم، في حين يُنظر إلى الامتحانات التقليدية على أنها أقل فعالية وجاذبية. وأخيراً، تؤكد البيانات النوعية هذه الاتجاهات من خلال التأكيد على أن مهام الكتابة والعروض التقديمية والعمل الجماعي هي الأكثر فائدة. فيما يتعلق بالتفكير النقدي والفهم بشكل عام الكلمات المفتاحية: التقييم التكويني، أدبيات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، فعالية ، تحديات ، تصورات الطلاب.

1. Introduction

It is vital to understand the integration of literature into EFL classrooms offers a multidimensional platform for language acquisition, cultural exploration, and critical thinking development. Literature provides authentic and meaningful content that encourages students to involve intensely with language in background, enabling both accessible and creative language aids as highlighted in (Lazar, 2015). As well as that, including literary texts improves students' cultural awareness by exposing them to diverse perspectives, idiomatic expressions, and sociocultural nuances embedded within narratives (Tomlinson, 2023).

Nevertheless, the process of assessing students in terms of making progress in regards to EFL literature classes gives us some challenges that are very much different from the ones that already exist in the instruction that is given by traditional language approach. Literature assessments are not like standard language tests that only focus on grammar or vocabulary, these tests evaluate the interpretive abilities, analytically criticizing and creative expression (Klimova, 2018). As a result of such analysis, educators actually need to use different methods in reference to assessment that can cope with the goals in literature teaching practices. At the same time, these kinds of tests need to showcase the students' literary appreciation and language development.

The research that is conducted in line with assessment practices inside of classrooms that offer literature practices is quite limited. This being said, it is important not to forget how important a role literature plays in regards to knowledge in general. In fact, Richards (2017) asserts that such limitations result in lack of understanding in terms of the ways that teachers use to use types of assessment that support perfectly the learning objectives that they wish to get. This study addresses these gaps by investigating the types of assessments employed in EFL literature classrooms, exploring the underlying reasons for their selection, evaluating their perceived effectiveness, and identifying challenges that are faced by learners. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute valuable insights to educators, curriculum designers, and representatives to enhance assessment practices and advance the quality of literature education in the context of EFL. In light of this, the research questions that are addressed in this research include the following:

- 1- What assessment types are normally used in EFL literature classrooms?
- 2- What are the reasons behind instructors' choices for specific assessment methods from students point of views?
- 3- How do students perceive the effectiveness of different assessment types?
- 4-What challenges do students encounter regarding assessment in EFL literature classes, and how are these challenges managed?

2. Literature Review

One of the most vital parts in any form of assessment relies heavily on the idea of formative assessment which is a very crucial aspect in the process of EFL teaching. The formative assessment of EFL is extremely vital in assessing the constant growth and learning process of students as it enables educators to understand the needs of the learners. It also helps to support learners throughout their long, painstaking process of learning. Researchers, Black and William (1998), propose that formative assessment assistances a lot in allowing student development and accomplishment as this unresolved type of assessment unceasingly delivers educators with plentiful ways to care for their students. Moreover, Harmer (2015), sheds light on some of the most amazing strategies that can be used to make formative assessment far more influential. According to the researcher, these strategies include: feedback for the educator and feedback from the students. The former highlights the appropriate and

educational contribution; the latter stressing the student's ability to think analytically and to learn collaboratively within a group of other learners.

Apparently, formative assessment is essential in EFL classrooms as it is specifically in service of a large number of learning objectives for the learner. Such objectives are in alliance with setting clear goals for the learners in terms of enhancing their skills in regard to mainly accuracy and fluency. Given that, teachers may design their assessment strategies in ways that can serve both meaning and purpose of learning. These activities might include the idea of emphasizing peer conversation between the learners, so that learners are able to think and relate to their thoughts more comfortably with their peers. Nonetheless, such assessment is not only strict to conversation among learners. Clearly, quizzes can help learners improve their general language, grammar and vocabulary skills. Such activities can reinforce learner's sense of improvement and achievement. Previous research approves of this argument as formative assessment is vital for learners in achieving lots of progress in their learning. As well as that, formative assessment can ensure a huge amount of progress for learners in becoming more proficient language learners (Brookhart, 2010).

Furthermore, student's reflection on their assessment can only be achieved via crucial assessment tools that can make the learners feel far more uplifted and confident in their own learning. Such tools apparently are helpful in terms of helping students and enabling them to self-assess themselves and highlight their strengths and weakness in their long process of learning language. Besides, previous research sheds light on the importance of rubrics as it is claimed to aid learners in regards to self-assessment. It is argued by Andrade (2000), that self-assessment can lead to transparency and fairness. It is transparent and fair because this really allows pupils to recognize their zones of weakness and those areas that require some sort of development or upgrading.

It is understandable that both types of assessment namely; summative and formative assessment types are both implemented in EFL literature classes. Formative assessment which in the words of Popham (2011) is described as "assessment for learning", gives instant feedback and informs the teacher about the levels of the students. Formative assessment is mainly ongoing and it is of great help to teachers and students to be well-aware of the learning needs. Contrary to formative type of assessment, there is summative type of assessment. Summative assessment evaluates the learner's level of understanding by the end of the units. It is different from formative assessment because the process in summative assessment is not ongoing. This is hard to be

used in literature classes because literature classes require various skills such as: critical thinking, synthesizing ideas, a complex understanding of texts and analysing numerous themes. Nevertheless, Vogt and Tsagari (2014) suggest that summative assessment can be as rewarding as formative assessment.

Most EFL students at Salahaddin University recommend mixing summative and formative assessment with a greater emphasis on formative assessment. They believe that formative assessment offers continuous feedback throughout the process of learning, allowing them to enhance their learning continuously and better prepare them for their final assessment Mahmood & Ghaleb (2024).

2.1 Types of Assessments in EFL Literature

Assessment in EFL literature classrooms plays a vital role in determining how effectively students grasp literary concepts and language skills. The following are the types of assessment that are usually adopted in EFL literature classrooms:

2.1.1 Traditional Exams

Traditional exams are thought to be used a lot in the classrooms of EFL literature and these are designed to evaluate students' understanding and the ability of them to interpret such literary texts. Traditional exam assessments mainly include essays, exams and research papers. These exams basically require students to show their skills in order to be able to analyse or assess critically the basic ideology or ideas presented in literature (Lawson, 2009). Such exams give space for students to elaborate on their ideology in a very systematic format. This actually lets the teachers to have the ability in order to assess the language capability of their students. Moreover, Popham (2011) asserts that such practices actually allow the teachers to also evaluate the students' ability to comprehend literary techniques.

2.1.2 Creative Assessments

In EFL literature classes, creative assessments are progressively more implemented that function as influential tools in assessing students' spoken language skills, critical thinking and the ability to creatively engage with literary texts. Apparently, presentations, group discussions, debates, role-plays, dramatizations and further engaging activities that need students to relate to their understanding of literature in interactive and novel methods as stated by (Lawson, 2009). As well as that, creative assessments help with fluency,

pronunciation and critical thinking in a very up to date terms. Fulcher (2024) suggests that such assessments also encourage students use language in a much more dynamic way.

2.1.3 Peer Assessments

Nowadays, one of the most important components in EFL literature classrooms are peer assessments. These assessments help in promoting accountability, self-reflection and collaborative learning strategies among learners. They also let students to assess their own work or the one of the other students. In light of that, Topping (2009) highlights that peer assessments motivate students to own responsibility for their learning process and make better a more developed comprehension of the ideas regarding literary concepts. As well as that, Boud & Falchikov (2006) claim that peer assessments assist students in building critical thinking and improving their engagement with texts that are related to literature through motivating them in considering many different clarifications. In addition to that, Andrade & Valtcheva (2009) suggest that peer assessments demonstrate a chance for students to think carefully about their own progress, recognize their strengths and identify areas where they can make better enhancements.

2.1.4 Alternative Assessments

Another influential tool for the process of assessment are undoubtedly alternative assessments that are utilized in EFL literature classrooms. Alternative assessments foster a way where students could document their learning progress and know the amount of progress being made. Some types of assessments such as portfolios mainly involve a bunch of work done by the learner. Such work includes drafts, completed assignments, reflections and the feedback which is given by the teacher (Barrett, 2007). Such alternative assessments permit students in checking and reflecting on their work that is specifically worthy in literature courses that involve interpretations and analysis as students are paved with a way to get involved a lot more effectively with everything (Gonzalez et al., 2007). It is also contended that portfolios acting as alternative assessments give a very comprehensive view of a student's progress in line with learning process. Thus, this is not just to assess the final product of learning but also allowing the students to make a practical use of formative assessments through these alternative methods (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000).

2.1.5 Group Projects

Group projects are novel and influential ways to assess students in EFL literature classrooms. Group projects require students to finish long term projects that incorporate literary analysis with a more practical application of it. This type of assessment can be different from research and other presentations to more developed projects that permit students to search literary themes and concepts deeply (Bell, 2010). Moreover, group projects assist learners to develop problem solving, collaboration and critical thinking capabilities that are integral part of studying literature (Thomas, 2000). Group projects function also in promoting a more experimental sort of learning approach that students can mix with their prior understanding in general.

2.1.6 Essay Writing

One of the most established assessment methods in EFL literature classrooms is essay writing. This enables the students to show their analytical skills and understanding of the texts in literature. As well as that, essay writing helps students with critical thinking and construction of coherent arguments that are supported by evidence (Hyland, 2019). Besides, essay writing is very essential in helping learners to logically organize their thoughts and build academic writing rules which are very important for proficiency in terms of the usage of advanced language and vocabulary (Tribble, 2009).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Instrument

The current research utilizes a mixed method approach to make certain a comprehensive way of collecting the required data for the study. To begin with, quantitative data is collected via a structured questionnaire designed to search for the types of assessments that are used in EFL literature classrooms. The rationale that is behind teachers' selection of particular assessment methods, learners' perceptions of their efficiency, and the challenges which are faced in their utilization. To sum this up, qualitative data and insights are achieved via open ended questions that are embedded in the student questionnaire. This helps to enable participants in the articulation of their personal reflections and experiences related to in their own utterances. The combination of these mixed sources of data sources offer a more nuanced comprehension of practices in regards to assessment in the context of EFL literature.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The current research directs a hundred EFL senior students in the departments of colleges of languages, education and basic education at Salahaddin University during the period of the academic year 2024-2025.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire that is used in this study is first of all assessed by a panel of experts in English literature and applied linguistics from universities in Kurdistan region to develop both content validity and face. Then the conduction of a pilot study is utilized to evaluate the clarity of the items and the appropriateness of their language level for the target population. Based on the feedback obtained during this phase, minor revisions are made to enhance the instrument's effectiveness. To determine its reliability, internal consistency is measured using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.701; an acceptable indicator of the questionnaire's reliability for purposes of research.

4. Data Analysis and Results

This section provides a thorough analysis of the data that is collected to explore how assessment practices in EFL literature classrooms are perceived by students.

4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

4.1.1 Demographic Information of Participants

Table 1 and Figure 1 present the demographic characteristics of the 100 student participants. The gender distribution reveals a notable predominance of female respondents, who constitute 82% of the sample, while male participants account for 18%. Age-wise, the majority (97%) fall within the 20–25-year age range, suggesting that the data primarily reflect the views of younger adults. Only 3% of respondents are above 25 years of age.

In terms of academic affiliation, the participants are fairly evenly split between the College of Education and the College of Basic Education (41% each), with a smaller proportion (18%) from the College of Languages. This distribution underscores the relevance of the findings to students preparing for careers in language and education-related disciplines.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for Demographic information in Students' Questionnaire

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	18	18.0%
	Female	82	82.0%
Age	20-25	97	97.0%
	over 25	3	3.0%
College	Language	18	18.0%
	Basic Education	41	41.0%
	Education	41	41.0%

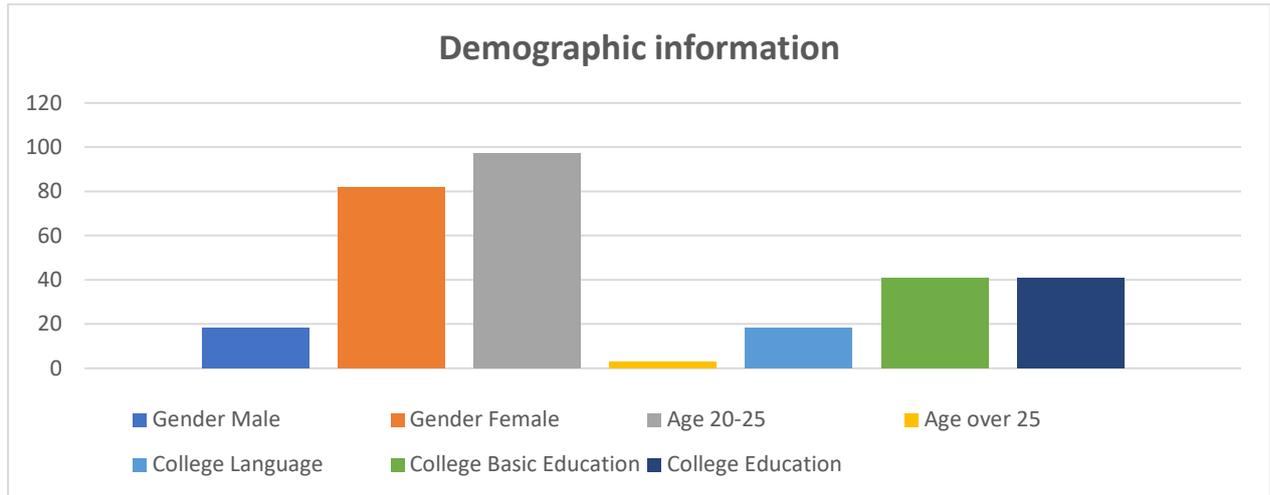


Figure 1: Bar chart for Demographic information

4.1.2 Types of Assessment Practices

Table 2 summarizes students' responses to various assessment types used in EFL literature classrooms. Formative assessments (Item A7) receive the highest level of support, with a mean score of 3.73 and a Ratio of Argument of 74.6, indicating strong endorsement for continuous, feedback-oriented evaluation. In contrast, traditional exams (Item A1) are rated lowest, with a mean of 2.97 and a Ratio of Argument of 59.4, reflecting relative disapproval or indifference.

The data indicate a clear student preference for assessment formats that emphasize interaction and development over summative testing. This suggests that formative assessments are perceived as more effective for fostering engagement and enhancing understanding.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for Assessment Types in Students' Questionnaire

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Ratio of Argument
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency			
A1	10	21	35	30	4	2.97	1.039	59.4
A2	12	13	31	37	7	3.14	1.119	62.8
A3	6	14	26	43	11	3.39	1.053	67.8

A4	12	19	32	28	9	3.03	1.150	60.6
A5	11	11	39	30	9	3.15	1.095	63
A6	11	21	31	31	6	3.00	1.101	60
A7	4	6	27	39	24	3.73	1.024	74.6

4.1.3 Rationale Behind Assessment Choices

Table 3 presents students' perceptions of the reasons instructors select specific assessment types. Group projects (Item B4) emerge as the most highly endorsed rationale, achieving a mean of 3.74 and a Ratio of Argument of 74.8. Creative tasks (B3) and formative assessments (B6) also receive strong support.

Conversely, traditional exams (B1) are rated lowest (mean = 3.12; ratio = 62.4), suggesting they are not perceived as pedagogically beneficial. These findings indicate that students value assessments that promote collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for Reasons for Assessment Choices in Students' Questionnaire

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Ratio of Argument
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency			
B1	8	22	28	34	8	3.12	1.094	62.4
B2	7	16	28	37	12	3.31	1.098	66.2
B3	6	9	23	35	27	3.68	1.145	73.6
B4	5	12	14	42	27	3.74	1.134	74.8
B5	1	12	37	35	15	3.51	0.927	70.2
B6	7	6	27	38	22	3.62	1.108	72.4
B7	7	10	33	34	16	3.42	1.093	68.4

Regression analysis (Table 4) further underscores these patterns. Items B3, B4, and B6 exhibit statistically significant predictive power ($p < 0.05$), confirming their importance in influencing assessment choices. In contrast, B1, B2, B5, and B7 do not show significant associations, indicating weaker perceived relevance.

Table 4: Reasons for Assessment choices in Students' Questionnaire

Reasons for Assessment choices					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
B1	.002	.043	.003	.039	.969
B2	.059	.045	.121	1.307	.194
B3	.128	.043	.275	2.982	.004
B4	.090	.043	.192	2.105	.038
B5	.071	.053	.123	1.346	.182
B6	.102	.051	.213	2.016	.047

B7	.011	.052	.022	.203	.840
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4.1.4 Perceived Effectiveness of Assessment Types

As shown in Table 5, students rate formative (C7) and peer assessments (C5) as the most effective, both achieving high mean scores (3.62 and 3.60 respectively) and strong Ratios of Argument. These formats are seen as supportive of learning through feedback and collaboration.

In contrast, traditional exams (C1) receive the lowest mean score (3.05) and Ratio of Argument (61), aligning with earlier findings that question the efficacy of summative assessment methods in literature classes.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for Effectiveness of Assessments in Students' Questionnaire

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Ratio of Argument
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency			
C1	11	20	29	33	7	3.05	1.123	61
C2	10	14	24	36	16	3.34	1.199	66.8
C3	4	10	34	36	16	3.50	1.010	70
C4	6	13	29	27	25	3.52	1.176	70.4
C5	3	10	29	40	18	3.60	0.995	72
C6	9	8	32	43	8	3.33	1.045	66.6
C7	2	9	32	39	18	3.62	0.951	72.4

An ANOVA test (Table 6) confirm that perceived assessment effectiveness vary significantly by type ($F = 12.674$, $p = 0.001$), reinforcing the influence of assessment format on students' learning experiences.

Table 6: ANOVA table for Effectiveness of Assessments in Students' Questionnaire

ANOVA ^a					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3.230	1	3.230	12.674	0.001
Residual	24.978	98	.255		
Total	28.208	99			

4.1.5 Challenges Encountered in Assessment Practices

Table 7 outlines the major challenges students face. The most significant difficulties reported are related to skill evaluation (D5) and language proficiency (D3), with respective means of 3.54 and 3.43, and high Ratios of Argument. These challenges suggest that many students struggle to adequately demonstrate their learning, possibly due to limited language skills or misalignment between assessments and instructional goals.

Conversely, assessment criteria (D1) and instructor expectations are less frequently cited, though still noteworthy. These findings highlight the need for clearer rubrics, scaffolding, and ongoing language support in assessment design.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for Challenges in Students' Questionnaire

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Ratio of Argument
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency			
D1	10	22	25	33	10	3.11	1.163	62.2
D2	13	17	33	29	8	3.02	1.146	60.4
D3	8	10	29	37	16	3.43	1.121	68.6
D4	10	15	38	21	16	3.18	1.175	63.6
D5	7	7	26	45	15	3.54	1.058	70.8

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The open-ended responses offer deeper insights that contextualize the quantitative results.

4.2.1 Students' Experiences with Assessment Types and Their Helpfulness

Responses to the question, “*What types of assessments have you encountered in your EFL literature courses, and which do you feel best helped you understand the material?*”, (table 8 and figure 2), reveal a clear preference for writing-based assessments, especially essays. Essays are mentioned explicitly in multiple responses (approximately 33% when combining those referring to essay writing, close reading, and paraphrasing). These tasks are commonly cited for their ability to foster critical thinking and facilitate deep analysis. Tasks requiring students to explain texts in their own words are also frequently mentioned, reflecting a belief that such activities enhance comprehension.

Group projects, and creative writing (each 11-12%) are also acknowledged, reflecting student appreciation for interactive and imaginative approaches. Less

common are oral presentations, peer assessments, and quizzes. These results confirm that students value assessments that encourage engagement, originality, and personal interpretation over purely summative forms such as traditional exams.

Table 8: Students' Experiences with Assessment Types and Their Helpfulness

Students Responses	Frequency	Percent
I've had essays, exams, presentations, and group projects. Essays helped the most by deepening analysis.	6	6.0
Pop quiz or group projects	11	11.0
In my EFL literature courses, I have encountered various types of assessments,	17	17.0
Formative assessment.	3	3.0
Essay format, short answer questions, and quotations. The best one is explaining in your own words what you understood.	11	11.0
"Group project Essay Exam Peer work "	11	11.0
"Self / peer assessment Group work Journal Exam paper Quizzes Oral test Video project Presentation	2	2.0
Creative writing	12	12.0
EFL literature courses employ a diverse range of assessments to evaluate students'	5	5.0
For me, close reading analyses and essay writing were the most effective.	5	5.0
Learn language	4	4.0
Total	87	87.0
missing	13	13.0
	100	100.0

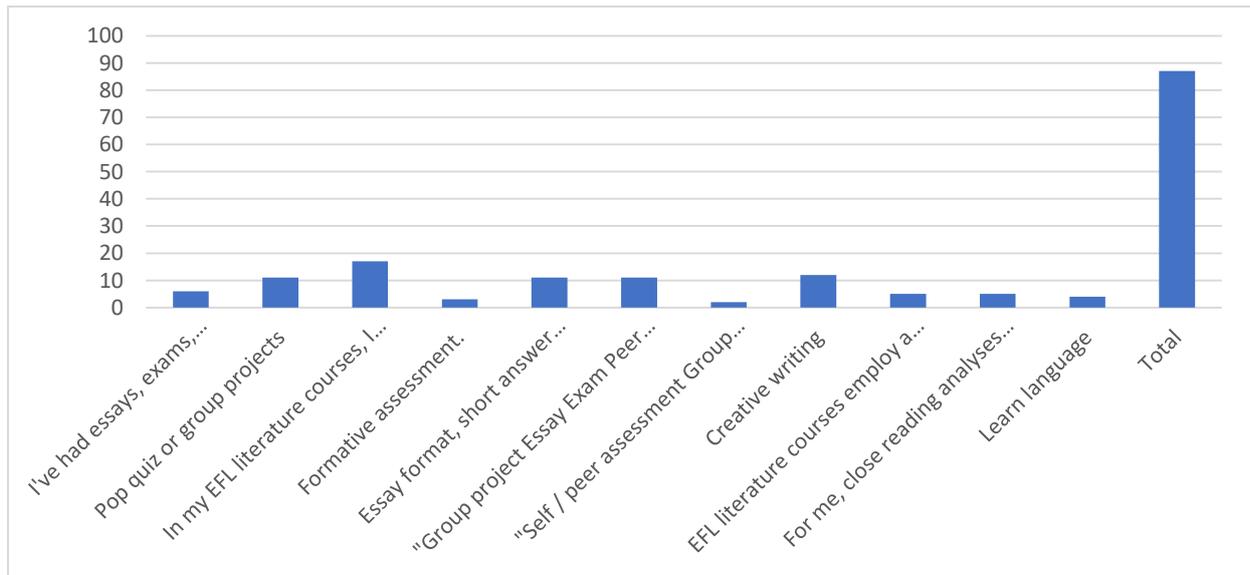


Figure 2: Students' Experiences with Assessment Types

4.2.2 Perceived Reasons for Instructors' Assessments Choices

In response to the question, “*Why do you think your instructor chooses certain types of assessments, and how do these choices affect your learning?*”, (table 9 and figure 3), students offer diverse explanations. The most common response (13%) notes that instructors use specific assessments like presentations and quizzes to reinforce different learning skills. An additional 10% believe assessments are used to engage all students actively. However, 10% perceive assessment choices as being based primarily on instructor preferences, not pedagogical rationale.

Approximately 9–10% of students feel that assessment types align with developing specific language skills or evaluating critical thinking. A smaller percentage (5–8%) emphasize how assessments like essays are chosen to promote analysis, exams to test recall and group projects or peer work help demonstrate abilities and promote teamwork. These patterns reveal mixed perceptions; some students view assessment as purpose-driven, while others attribute it to personal teaching styles or convenience.

While some responses reflect concerns about fairness or lack of variety, the majority acknowledge that different assessments target different learning outcomes. This awareness demonstrates students' growing metacognitive understanding of assessment design and its pedagogical implications.

Table 9: Perceived Reasons for Instructors' Assessments Choices

Students' Responses	Frequency	Percent
They use essays for analysis, exams for recall, and projects for teamwork. This shapes how we learn.	8	8.0
Because every instructor has its own rules, no.	10	10.0
My instructor uses presentations for deeper understanding and quizzes for reinforcement.	13	13.0
Well, everyone has their own style of assessment so I don't really have a comment.	6	6.0
For improving language skills	8	8.0
Teachers choose assessments to test knowledge, build skills, and make learning effective.	9	9.0
To increase students critical thinking.	5	5
Group projects are the best because all of the students learn about their own part	8	8.0
Can demonstrate my skills	5	5.0
I think they use different types to engage most of the students. It makes everyone interact.	10	10.0
Sometimes they use what they feel like to do.	3	3.0
These types are easier for them	5	5.0

Total	90	90.0
missing	10	10.0
	100	100.0

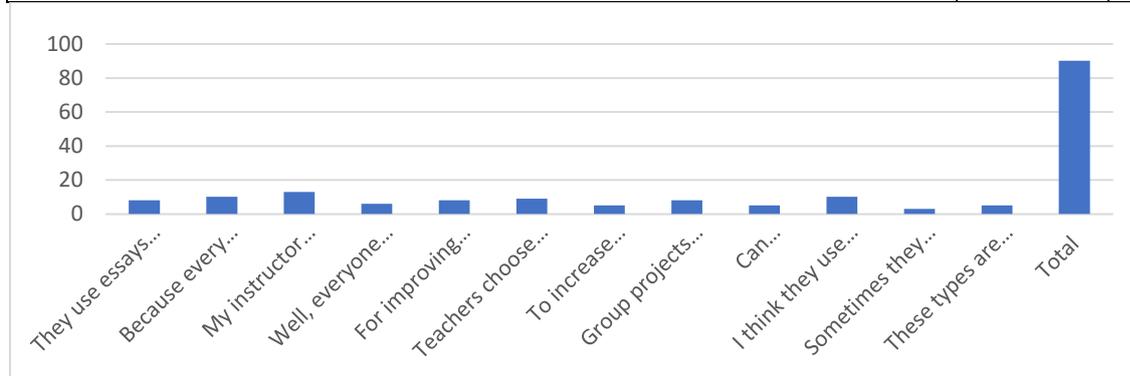


Figure 3: Perceived Reasons for Instructors' Assessments Choices

4.2.3 Perception of the Most Effective Assessment Types

When students are asked, “Which types of assessments do you feel are most effective in helping you understand literature, and why?” writing-based tasks again dominate the responses, (table 10 and figure 4). Writing-based assessments are perceived as the most effective, with nearly 30% of respondents citing them as key tools for understanding literature. Students emphasize how writing tasks help develop critical thinking and analytical depth.

Presentations and discussions are also highly valued (22.2%) for fostering interaction and collaborative thinking. Peer and group work collectively account for over 33% of responses, highlighting students' appreciation for cooperative learning in literature courses.

Notably, while exams are occasionally mentioned, their effectiveness is perceived as dependent on format, with poorly designed exams being seen as counterproductive.

Table 10: Perception of the Most Effective Assessment Types

Students Responses	Frequency	Percent
Essays and presentations help the most by improving critical thinking and understanding.	2	7.40
I find presentations and group discussions most effective for understanding literature.	6	22.22
Peer working.	5	18.52
Writing	8	29.62
Exams of course are important to determine effectiveness but it all depends on the exams format.	2	7.40

Group work	4	14.81
Total	27	100.0

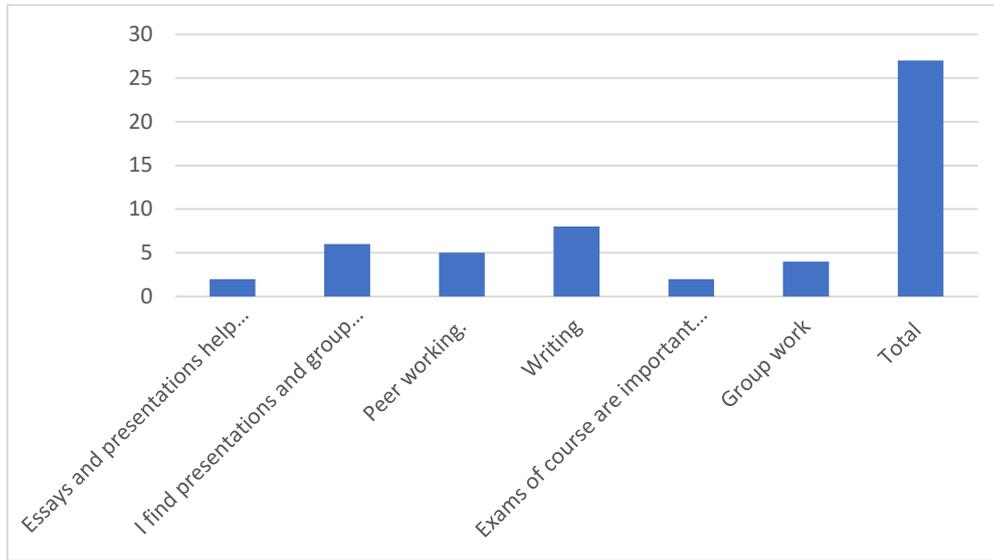


Figure 4: Perception of the Most Effective Assessment Types

4.2.4 Challenges and Suggestions for Improvement

Table 11 and figure 5 represent the challenges students encounter when completing literary assessments in response to “*What difficulties have you faced when completing assessments in your EFL literature classes? How could these be improved?*”

The most frequently cited challenge is “*unclear instructions*”, that is noted by nearly 45% of respondents. Many students express difficulty understanding assignment requirements and expectations, which in turn affects their performance and confidence.

Subjective grading (14.4%) is another concern, with some students believing that marks are based on teacher preferences rather than consistent standards. As a way of improving assessment practices, about 10% advocate for a more straightforward rubrics and sample answers to guide in regards to preparation. Others suggest that making assessments more instructional would be better than basically making them more like summative assessments. Such recommendations relate closely to the principles of constructive configuration and more so to formative assessment types (Biggs & Tang, 2022; Sadler, 2009). Students also note the need for stronger learning strategies and language support, particularly for complex literary tasks. These findings point to a need for transparent assessment criteria, explicit instructions, and formative feedback to help students succeed.

Table 11: Challenges and Suggestions for Improvement

Students Responses	Frequency	Percent
Unclear instructions and strict grading are issues. Clearer guidelines and flexible grading would help.	7	7.0
By using these assessments for teaching not just making marks or give marks	11	11.0
I've had trouble with unclear instructions and not knowing exactly what the assignment needs.	14	14.0
The grading. Sometimes the teachers give grades based on their preference.	9	9.0
Learning strategies	17	17.0
Difficulties include unclear instructions and meeting grading criteria. Clear guidelines and examples could help.	4	4.0
"Unclear instructions Language professional "	8	8.0
unclear instructions, this could be improved through providing real examples	5	5.0
Some common difficulties in EFL literature assessments include unclear instructions,	9	9.0
Of course, unclear instructions in question and about what the teacher exactly wants	6	6.0
Total	90	90.0
Missing	10	10.0
	100	100.0

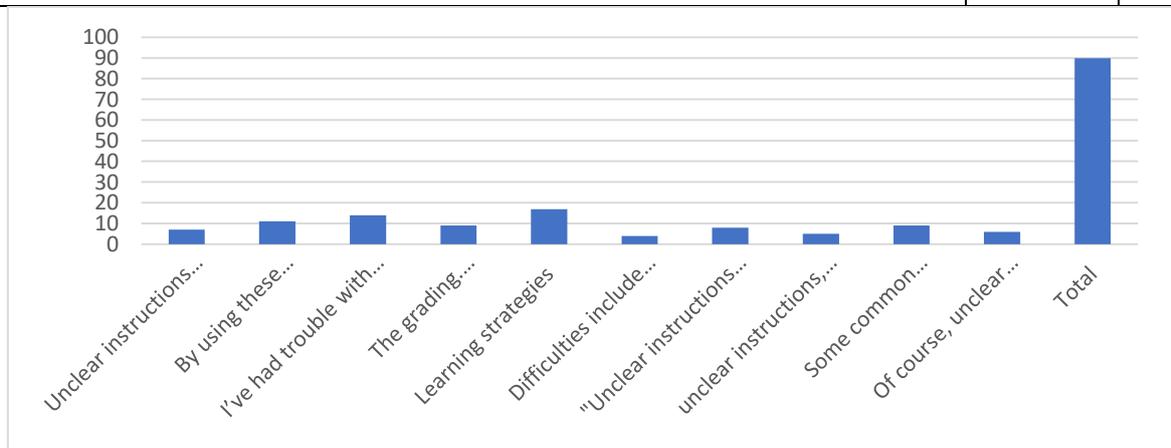


Figure 5: Challenges and Suggestions for Improvement

5. Discussion

The results of the current research provide very important insights into assessment practices in EFL literature classrooms. To address the first research question of the current study in regards to types of assessment widely utilized, the findings suggest that however a bunch of assessments are used, peer work, formative assessment, group projects and creative writing are majorly prevailing. Amongst those assessments, traditional exams are the lowermost in

gaining support among the students for their effectiveness. This demonstrates that traditional exams are far less effective in boosting meaningful learning and student involvement. It is noteworthy to highlight that such findings touch upon a shift in EFL education toward a more student centered and performance-based assessments that highlight the importance of processes over memorizing texts (Shepard, 2000). Moreover, such results go in line with constructivist and experimental learning approaches (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Thus, the study comes to the conclusion to suggest that students proactively seek to develop knowledge through a wide range of tasks that are thought to be a lot more interactive.

As it pertains to the second research question on the reasons behind the instructors' assessment choices, the findings indicate that teachers design tasks not only to cover course content but also to build skills such as, critical thinking, language proficiency and collaboration. Such findings are undoubtedly reinforced by both statistical data and by the qualitative data responses that students reiterate that group projects and creative writing assist them in practicing and a wide range task achievement. Such results go directly to align with prior arguments of (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). They argue that authentic assessments align academic tasks with contexts in real world. Besides, the findings of current research go hand in hand with Hillocks (2002) noting that learning of literature requires deeper interpretive and analytical tasks than the simply learning of language.

Regarding the third research question on students' perceptions of assessment effectiveness, the data emphasize a clear preference for interactive and reflective activities. It is reported by the students that peer assessments, writing tasks and presentations are more influential than traditional exams in terms of assisting students in comprehending texts and building abilities and skills in language. These tasks encourage critical reading, deeper engagement with literary themes, and improve analytical writing. This settles the role of formative and dialogic assessment in endorsing learner independence and inspiration in EFL settings (Black and William, 2009; Andrade and Cizek, 2010). This backings Lazar (1993) who contends that literature teaching aids greatly from open ended assessment set-ups that request interpretation and creative manifestation.

As it pertains to the fourth research question about the challenges faced, the findings of the current research show an absence of a straightforward criteria that stays as a tremendous barrier for the learners. Almost half of the

participants touch upon confusion over assignment expectation and standards of grading that lead to frustration of the students and little their confidence levels. Such finding goes with the previous results of Sadler (2005) who emphasizes the importance of clear criteria for learning effectively. Students suggest more straightforward guidances, rubrics, guidelines and examples to make clear the expectations. This as well is supported by findings of Carless (2007) emphasizing the significance of getting together the intended learning outcomes with assessment practices.

The usage of descriptive and inferential statistics alongside qualitative insights enhances strength to these findings and supports their validity. The ANOVA and regression analyses settle that creative and formative assessments have an important outcome on students' views of assessment practicality. The consistency between quantitative tendencies and qualitative advice proves that students reliably favour writing tasks, collaborative activities and presentations. Such organisational configuration strengthens the study's credibility and bring into line with Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) advocating for mixed methods in educational research papers.

To address wider research problems, the current research contends that there is indeed a transparent gap between traditional assessments and the necessity of EFL students in courses of literature that require interpretation, creativity and expression. The findings highpoint the prominence of designing responsive assessments that take students' feedback and engagement into account. Essentially, this provides important leadership for teachers, curriculum planners, and representatives who should contemplate on apprising assessment policies to include clearer, skill-focused, and comprehensive methods (Boud and Falchikov, 2006). If that is done, assessments become a tool for grading and an essential part of growth in regards to literary boost and language development skills.

6. Conclusion

The current research examines the ways assessment is thought of and are experienced by Salahaddin University students in Erbil. The current study also is key in showing a gradual change in traditional exams to a more comprehensive and practical approaches mainly, peer assessments, group projects and tasks of creative writing. Such alternative assessments go with novel pedagogical methods that promote active learning development, authentic language use and critical thinking. The findings of the current research suggest

that students in fact expressed a transparent preference for assessments that help in terms of engagement and ongoing learning development. The students view these assessment practices as an important part for their linguistic and literary development. Students also show dislike for continuous grading tools that triggered their ability to learn more. Nevertheless, issues such as unclear instructions, inconsistent feedback, and ambiguous grading criteria continue to be problems to effective application. By foregrounding student perspectives, the current research highlights the need for transparent, fair, and student-centered assessment practices that support both academic growth and personal development in literature schoolrooms. The current research concludes that well-designed and clearly communicated assessments are vital for improving not only student achievement but also their confidence, autonomy and appreciation of literature.

7. Recommendations, limitations of the Study, & Suggestion for Further Studies

As it pertains to the current research's findings, it is recommended that teachers use a more different range of methods for assessment. These include, group projects, peer reviews, creative tasks, and reflective writing. These methods of assessment promote deeper engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking. To address concerns around fairness and clarity, all assessments should be accompanied by detailed instructions, transparent rubrics, and timely formative response. Achieving an effective balance between ground-breaking and traditional approaches needs institutional sustenance in the form of training, resources, and policy improvements. Reassuring student involvement in assessment design may also increase motivation and nurture a sense of shared obligation among the students. However, the current research suggests an important insight into assessment practices, the scope of it is limited because its concentration is mainly on one university. Also, the reliance of the research is on self-reported data which may not be fully effective. In light of these limitations, future research needs to integrate instructor perspectives, longer methods across institutions to support generalizing the scope and classroom observations to develop a more complete comprehension of EFL literature classrooms in the betterment of assessment practices.

Appendix: Students Survey

Dear student,

I invite you, through this letter, to complete this survey. The purpose of this survey is to understand your experiences with and perceptions of the assessments used in EFL literature classrooms. Your feedback will help improve the teaching and assessment practices in these classes. Your responses will remain anonymous and will only be used for research purposes. Please provide honest answers based on your actual experiences. The survey will take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time and feedback!

The survey consists of three parts as follows:

Part A: Demographic information

Part B: Items that are designed to collect data on the assessment types used by EFL literature instructors at the university level, the reasons behind their choices, their perceptions of the assessments' effectiveness, and the challenges they encounter.

Part C: Open-ended questions

Part A: Demographic information

1-Gender: Male Female

2- Age: Under 20 20-25 Over 25

3-College: Languages Education Basic-Education

Part B: Each statement in this part is followed by a 5-point Likert scale ranging from **Strongly Disagree** to **Strongly Agree**. Please select the response that best reflects your experience or opinion. The following are the scale definitions:

Strongly Disagree (1): You strongly disagree with the statement.

Disagree (2): You somewhat disagree with the statement.

Neutral (3): You neither agree nor disagree.

Agree (4): You somewhat agree with the statement.

Strongly Agree (5): You strongly agree with the statement.

No.	Assessment Types	1	2	3	4	5
A1	Traditional exams (e.g., multiple-choice or short-answer questions) are frequently used in my literature classes.					
A2	I am often asked to write essays as part of my literature class assessments.					
A3	Group projects are a common part of the assessments in my literature classes.					
A4	Creative assessments (e.g., role-playing, digital storytelling) are used in my literature classes.					
A5	Peer assessments are regularly used in my literature classes to evaluate students' understanding.					
A6	Alternative assessments (e.g., portfolios, journals) are used in my literature classes.					
A7	Formative assessments (e.g., class discussions, teacher questions, pop quizzes, group work, surveys, and self-					

	reflections) are frequently used in my literature classes.					
Reasons for Assessment Choices						
B1	My instructors use traditional exams because they are easier to administer and grade.					
B2	Essays are assigned because they effectively evaluate our ability to analyze literature.					
B3	Creative assessments make learning literature more engaging and enjoyable.					
B4	Group projects are used because they help students learn through collaboration.					
B5	Assessment choices in my literature classes are influenced by curriculum requirements and guidelines.					
B6	Using alternative assessments foster creativity, motivate critical thinking, and support different learning styles.					
B7	Formative assessments help me understand my learning, and diagnosis my weaknesses.					
Effectiveness of Assessments						
C1	Traditional exams are an effective way to assess my knowledge of literary texts.					
C2	Writing essays helps me to demonstrate my ability to analyze literature.					
C3	Creative assessments help me engage more deeply with the literary material.					
C4	Group projects allow me to better understand and interpret literary texts.					
C5	Peer assessments help me learn by sharing perspectives with classmates.					
C6	Using alternative assessments are effective because they enhance student engagement, provide holistic evaluations, and facilitate immediate feedback on learning progress.					
C7	In literature class, formative assessments are effective because they motivate me to learn new things.					
Challenges						
D1	The assessment criteria for literature assignments are not clear to me.					
D2	I struggle to understand the expectations for assessments in EFL literature classes.					
D3	Language proficiency affects how well I can perform on literature assessments.					
D4	Some assessment types feel unfair or biased based on students' language abilities.					
D5	I believe the assessments in my EFL literature classes could be improved to better evaluate my skills.					

Part C: Answer the following open-ended questions

1. What types of assessments have you encountered in your EFL literature courses, and which do you feel best helped you understand the material?

2. In your experience, why do you think your instructor chooses certain types of assessments (e.g., essays, exams, group projects) over others? How do these choices affect your learning experience?
3. Which types of assessments do you feel are most effective in helping you understand the literature in your course, and what makes them so?
4. What difficulties have you faced when completing assessments in your EFL literature classes (e.g., unclear instructions, difficulty in meeting assessment criteria)? How could these be improved?

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