

<https://www.doi.org/10.31918/twejer.2362.45>

e-ISSN (2617-0752)

p-ISSN (2617-0744)



Investigating EFL University Teachers' Writing Assessment Literacy in the Kurdistan Region–Iraq

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Abstract

Writing assessment literacy refers to the ability to understand and use different methods and tools to assess writing effectively. It involves knowing writing assessment principles, skills of assessment, and practical application of assessments that can be used to evaluate writing. By developing writing assessment literacy, educators can better support student learning and growth in writing and promote greater equity and fairness in writing assessment practices. The current study investigates the insights from EFL teachers at KRI universities on writing assessment literacy. A quantitative method is applied to collect data and analyse the results. A questionnaire is designed to collect data among selected EFL teachers across four KRI universities. The results indicate that EFL teachers are literate enough based on the questionnaire and share good insights. The results are generally positive, although there are some parts of the results which show weaknesses. The EFL teachers need more time and effort to improve since the case is significant. The results also indicate that EFL teachers are less literate in knowledge compared to skill and practice. They are skilful enough in writing assessments and can practice their shared literacy.

Keywords: assessment, writing assessment literacy, EFL teachers, writing assessment standards

1. Introduction:

Writing assessment literacy is crucial for educators who aim to effectively evaluate and support student writing. It encompasses a range of knowledge and abilities, including understanding assessment principles, methods, and tools, as well as the ability to interpret and communicate assessment results. Developing writing assessment literacy can enhance educators' capacity to evaluate and provide feedback on student writing in a fair, valid, and reliable manner. Moreover, it can help educators make informed decisions about instruction and curriculum development, ultimately improving student learning outcomes. In this era of digital communication and global connectivity, writing assessment literacy is a key skill that can empower educators to prepare students for success in an increasingly complex and diverse world.

Improving students' writing skills is regarded as one of the most important duties of teachers because, in most levels of academic study, students are required to write a writing product to identify their proficiency level in the language. This improvement can be made by assessing their writing products correctly and professionally, which is done by teachers who have enough information about assessing writing skills, which is called writing skill assessment literacy (Huang & He, 2016).

There are many studies conducted in the field of language assessment literacy generally and on writing skills specifically in the literature. In KRI, reviews are made about the topic, but they do not investigate new information and findings. The present study investigates Kurdish university EFL teachers' writing assessment skill literacy through a quantitative method. The study is trying to identify Kurdish EFL university teachers' writing skill assessment literacy level to find out the deficiencies and look for remedies. The

study also explores Kurdish University EFL teachers' challenges in implementing WAL standards.

2. Assessment Literacy

Language teaching and learning as a complicated activity require qualified teachers. In any educational system, teachers are crucial to its success. Assessment methods may be one of the most important components of teaching because numerous studies have shown that using assessment to foster learning in the classroom increases student achievement (Ashraf & Zolfaghari, 2018). Teachers are stakeholders that are directly involved in the assessment process. Teachers with a strong foundation in assessment are well prepared to combine assessment with instruction and provide meaningful learning. As a result, assessment-literate instructors appear to influence teaching and learning quality considerably (Nimehchisalem & Bhatti, 2019). Ashraf & Zolfaghari (2018), state that teachers' assessment literacy is seen as a significant link between assessment quality and student achievement.

In language teaching, writing is vital at every stage, from elementary school to college and beyond. Writing allows students to express themselves, develop creativity and critical thinking skills, and gain self-assurance. Due to rapid globalization and the international demand to learn English as a second or foreign language at a young age, writing has become an increasingly important part of teaching and learning English for younger learners. The increased significance of written communication has made writing skills development a top priority for young students. Since "developing language competence inevitably requires assessment" (Piccardo et al., 2011, p. 6), how teachers should

conduct classroom assessments to help students improve their writing skills is of critical importance (Lee, 2017).

In the teaching and learning process, assessment is an essential step that determines students' competence level. Assessment varies based on different aspects, and several theories focus on assessment. The different skills of language require different assessment methods and techniques. Teachers need to have a wide range of skills to get the process to a successful end, and this can be called assessment literacy. Writing assessment is among the language skills, which is usually seen as a significant aspect of the teaching and learning process and requires competent literacy.

2.1 Language Assessment

Assessment is a term that is multi-dimensional and has broad usage. Different fields of study require assessment in different forms and mechanisms. For the definition of assessment, Weigle (2007, P:195) states "Assessment is a broad term that encompasses all sorts of activities that teachers engage in to evaluate their student's progress, learning needs, and achievements". Also, Black and William (1998, P:140) define Assessment as "all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged."

Generally, assessment can be divided into formal and informal assessments. Formal assessments, such as tests and quizzes, determine how much students have learned in a specific learning period. In comparison, informal assessments such as presentations and class activities are used to evaluate students' performance and skill levels. Both formal and informal assessments are essential in

the teaching and learning process. They together determine students' weaknesses and strengths and make assessment an ongoing process along with teaching.

As an inherent teaching element, assessment can be viewed as a significant feature of the teaching and learning process, as the information gained through assessments is crucial for many teaching and learning decisions. Similarly, stakeholders frequently utilize assessment data to make decisions on a variety of educational policies (Puspawati, 2019).

The essential qualities of effective, appropriate and useful assessments include reliability, validity, practicality, authenticity, and washback. They should be used to evaluate all language assessment activities. Since assessment has some systematic dimensions, it can have principles. Brown & Abeywickrama (2010) describe that assessment has five main principles. They think that these core principles underpin the main pillars of assessment. Teachers in the classroom should be familiar with these five principles of assessment to have more reliable assessment results and better student achievements.

The five assessment principles, according to Brown & Abeywickrama (2010), include:

Practicality: The logistical, practical, and administrative challenges associated with creating, administering, and scoring an assessment instrument are the focus of practicality.

Reliability: A reliable assessment is consistent and dependable. If teachers give the same assessment to the same student or match students on two different occasions, the

assessment should yield similar results. The reliability is divided into student-related, rater, test administration, and test reliability.

Validity: is regarded as the most complex and important criterion of an effective assessment. It focuses on whether a test accurately measures what it intends to measure (Vie, 2022). Validity contains some types, which mainly include content-related validity, criterion-related validity, construct-related validity, consequential validity, and face validity.

Authenticity: is a complex concept to be defined comprehensively in the field of art and science of evaluating and designing tests. "Authenticity is the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test/task to the features of a target language task" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; P:23).

Washback: is the effects of assessment on students' performance, teacher's philosophy, and teaching and learning process (Vie, 2022).

Other researchers have also considered principles of language assessment and have slight differences. For example, Bachman & Palmer (1996) believe that interactiveness is also a core principle and substitute washback to impact.

2.2 Language Assessment Literacy (LAL)

Language assessment literacy has recently been common for investigation and has been the topic of several academic conducts. This notion was first mentioned by Stiggins (1991 as cited in Cano, 2020), who started indicating Assessment Literacy by highlighting that teachers were not well educationally prepared with assessment knowledge, making several educational institutions, governments,

and organizations from across the world search for enhancing teachers' assessment knowledge, skill, and practice. Educators with assessment literacy, according to Stiggins, should be able to distinguish and recognize "what to assess, why to assess, and how to assess" to investigate potential educational assessment critical issues and how to avoid them. There have been other academics who mentioned LAL.

Inbar-Lourie (2017) states that "Language assessment literacy (LAL) refers to the knowledge, skills and principles that stakeholders involved in assessment activities are required to master to perform assessment tasks." Language assessment literacy is the ability to have knowledge and skill to choose an appropriate method and identify suitable tools while assessing learners' achievements. It can also give students feedback and interpret assessment results for students and different related stakeholders. For teachers, Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) is a crucial subject that they need to have for their professional development (Anam & Putri, 2021).

The three components of language assessment, literacy, knowledge, skill, and practice, are among the teachers' general knowledge elements because assessment is one of the most crucial aspects of the teaching and learning process. Since assessment directly affects students' achievements, assessment-literate teachers cause better student achievements.

2.2.1 Knowledge

Language assessment knowledge refers to individuals' understanding and expertise in evaluating and measuring language proficiency or competence. This can involve assessing a person's speaking, writing, reading, and listening abilities in a particular

language. Language assessment knowledge can include knowledge of testing methodologies, test design, evaluation criteria, and standards for language proficiency. It also includes the ability to interpret test results, identify strengths and weaknesses in language skills, and provide constructive feedback and recommendations for improvement.

In addition, language assessment knowledge may involve understanding the cultural and social factors that can influence language use and learning. This can include knowledge of a language's different dialects, accents, and registers and understanding the cultural norms and expectations that can affect language use.

Giraldo (2018) proposes that teachers should have three types of knowledge: knowledge of applied linguistics, knowledge of theories and ideas of language assessments, and knowledge of their particular language assessment environment. These three types of language assessment knowledge make teachers knowledgeable enough to assess students' language products and have enough language assessment skills and practices.

Knowledgeable teachers in language assessment are needed in the teaching-learning process because having enough knowledge results in good and positive assessment practices. Since designing, administering, scoring, and interpreting the assessment results must be done carefully, teachers need a sound knowledge of assessment principles and techniques. Therefore, teachers must have sufficient assessment literacy knowledge (Puspawati, 2019).

Having enough knowledge of language assessment and required language assessment skills and practices results in good

learning achievements because it enhances positive assessment results.

2.2.2 Skill

Language assessment skills refer to a set of skills needed for a language teacher to put the assessment knowledge he possesses into practice. Instructional skills, language assessment design skills, educational measurement skills, and technological skills are all examples of language assessment skills (Giraldo, 2018). According to Giraldo (2018), four types of abilities are significant for teachers' LAL: instructional skills, language assessment design skills, educational measurement skills, and language measurement technological skills. Davies(2008) states that language assessment skills provide training in suitable and required methodology, including writing items, test analysis, statistics, and progressively software programs for test delivery, analysis, and reporting.

Having different abilities and sufficient skills to put the background knowledge of language assessment into practice makes teachers assessment literate.

2.2.3 Practice

Language assessment practice is using and implementing background knowledge and language assessment skills in the assessment process. Language assessment practice is regarded as the most crucial component of language assessment literacy. If the teachers have enough knowledge and sufficient skills in language assessment but do not use and implement them, they are not regarded as assessment literate teachers.

Rea-Dickins (2001) identifies four stages of the classroom assessment process that can be regarded as assessment practice.

The first stage is planning, which is identifying the purpose of the assessment, choosing the assessment method, and preparing the learners for the assessment. The second stage is implementation, which includes introducing the assessment process, scaffolding during assessment, learner self and peer monitoring, and giving immediate feedback to learners. The third stage is called monitoring, in which teachers record and interpret the assessment results, revise teaching and learning plans, share results with other teachers, and give delayed feedback to learners. The fourth stage is recording and dissemination, which includes providing formal feedback, reporting, and documenting assessment results.

Ineffective assessment practices can have a significant impact on students. Students may experience a loss in time, money, motivation, and confidence due to inaccurate assessment (Crusan et al., 2016).

A highly literate teacher has the theoretical and philosophical knowledge necessary to assess students learning, is skilled at choosing appropriate assessment methods, creates valid assessment tasks, provides feedback on students' performances, and assesses the teaching and learning process (Deluca & Klingerb, 2010).

The three components of language assessment literacy, knowledge, skill, and practice are interrelated, and one is not sufficient without the two others. Knowledge provides the framework in which skills function; hence skills are not viable without knowledge. If skills answer 'how?' questions, knowledge answers 'what?' questions. Then, as the activity gains confidence and as a profession, the practice of the activity increases.

The tool items of the current study are based on these three components of language assessment literacy. The study investigates

EFL university teachers' knowledge, skills, and practices in assessing students writing products.

According to the American Federation of Teachers (1990; p:1-7), there are seven standards described as essential for the educational assessment of students. Language assessment literate teachers are required to be familiar with these standards and are regarded as a part of language assessment literacy competencies. The following competencies are mandated by the standards for teachers:

1. Teachers should be skilled in choosing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.
2. Teachers should be skilled in developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.
3. The teacher should be skilled in administering, scoring, and interpreting- the results of both externally produced and teacher-produced assessment methods.
4. Teachers should be skilled in using assessment results when making decisions about individual students, planning to teach, developing curriculum, and school improvement.
5. Teachers should be skilled in developing valid pupil grading procedures that use pupil assessments.
6. Teachers should be skilled in communicating assessment results to students, parents, other lay audiences, and other educators.

7. Teachers should be skilled in recognizing unethical, illegal, and otherwise inappropriate assessment methods and uses of assessment information.

Each of these standards contains sets of skills and knowledge that teachers need to be familiar with.

2.3 Writing Assessment

Writing is now universally acknowledged as crucial in communicating information and altering existing knowledge to produce new knowledge. Consequently, it is crucial for students in academic and second language programs worldwide. The evaluation of writing skills is crucial in many of these contexts. Employers, academic advisors, and writing instructors must base their judgments of prospective employers and students on their ability to communicate in writing. But even though writing assessments have a long history, it is still one of the most challenging aspects of language used to evaluate. This is partially due to the wide variety of writing objectives, styles, and genres but mostly to the subjectivity of the evaluations given to writing examples (Weigle, 2002).

Writing assessment is evaluating and measuring students' writing process and products using different assessment methods. The initial step of writing is where assessment truly begins. Working with students in the class will allow them to see their progress, what modifications are required, and how their writing product will be evaluated once completed.

"The best way to test people's writing ability is to get them to write" (Hughes, 2003, p:83). To accurately assess students' writing

skills, teachers need to directly assess students writing ability that is not enhanced via indirect assessment.

2.3.1 Standards for the Assessment of Writing

According to (IRA/NCTE, 2009), there are eleven standards to guide decisions about assessing the teaching and learning process:

Standard 1: The interests of the student are paramount in assessment.

Standard 2: The teacher is the most important agent of assessment.

Standard 3: The primary purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning.

Standard 4: Assessment must reflect and allow for critical inquiry into curriculum and instruction.

Standard 5: Assessment must recognize and reflect the intellectually and socially complex nature of reading and writing and the important roles of school, home, and society in literacy development.

Standard 6: Assessment must be fair and equitable.

Standard 7: The consequences of an assessment procedure are the first and most important consideration in establishing the validity of the assessment.

Standard 8: The assessment process should involve multiple perspectives and sources of data.

Standard 9: Assessment must be based on the local school learning community, including active and essential participation of families and community members.

Standard 10: All stakeholders in the educational community—students, families, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and the public—must have an equal voice in the development, interpretation, and reporting of assessment information.

Standard 11: Families must be involved as active, essential participants in the assessment process.

Using these standards while designing assessment tasks will enhance reliable assessment results and student achievements. These standards are also used for the assessment of reading skills.

2.4 Writing Assessment Literacy

Writing assessment literacy is having enough knowledge to assess students' writing performance and sufficient skills to put this background knowledge into practice.

Writing assessment literacy refers to individuals' knowledge and skills in evaluating and measuring writing proficiency or competence. This involves understanding the fundamental principles of writing assessment, including the different types of writing assessments, the criteria for evaluating writing, and the standards for writing proficiency. Writing assessment literacy also involves designing and administering effective writing assessments. This can include knowledge of test formats, scoring methods, and the use of rubrics or other evaluation tools.

Weigle (2007) has established the main aspects of writing assessment knowledge in L2 writing based on the concepts of test

reliability, test validity, and test practicality. Writing teachers, according to Weigle (2007, P 195-196), should be able to:

1. Set explicit and quantifiable course objectives;
2. Create writing prompts that correspond to the instruction's goals. Teachers must be knowledgeable about formal and informal assessment approaches to do this.
3. Offer students with meaningful feedback. Based on instructor feedback, students should be able to recognize strengths and weaknesses in their writing.
4. Choose scoring procedures that are both practical and reliable. Writing teachers should be knowledgeable about various scoring procedures and how to create a systematic approach to giving points;
5. Choose appropriate assessment methods to measure writing talents. Teachers should be familiar with alternative assessment forms and how to holistically and discretely evaluate writing skills.
6. Analyze and apply writing assessment results to enhance instruction.

In addition, writing assessment literacy may involve understanding how to provide effective feedback on writing. This can include the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses in a writer's work, provide specific and actionable feedback, and help writers develop strategies for improving their writing.

2.5 Literature review

Writing assessment literacy has become an increasingly important topic in the field of writing studies as educators and researchers seek to improve their understanding of how to effectively assess student writing. In the context of writing, assessment literacy involves understanding the characteristics of effective writing assessments, the various approaches to assessing writing, and how to use assessment results to provide meaningful feedback to students. There are several studies on assessment in general and some specific to writing assessment literacy. Below is an overview of some relevant previous studies.

Valizadeh (2021) carried out a study entitled "EFL Teachers' Writing Assessment Literacy, Beliefs, and Training Need in the Context of Turkey" to explore EFL teachers' writing assessment literacy (WAL) level and identify teachers' training needs in Turkey. The study also examined the teachers' views about various writing assessment methods, general assessment issues in writing classrooms and scoring accuracy in writing assessments. A questionnaire collected the required data from 152 English teachers who taught English as a Foreign Language. The study's findings indicated that though most of the participants stated that they had previously received training in writing assessment literacy (WAL), most teachers declared that they needed training in all the investigated WAL areas. The findings also showed that the most needed areas for teachers to receive training are using pre-designed integrated writing tasks, designing integrated writing tasks, giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessments, designing good writing tasks/tests, using and designing the scoring rubrics, using peer-assessment and self-assessment, and using assessment portfolio.

Tayyebi & Abbasabadi (2020) investigated writing assessment literacy (WAL) from the in-service EFL teachers' perspective through a study titled "Classroom-based Writing Assessment Literacy Components and Needs: Perspectives of In-service EFL Teachers in Iran." The study tried to find out aspects of classroom-based WAL that Iranian EFL teachers believe are required to be included in the teacher education program and the classroom-based WAL levels that Iranian in-service EFL teachers think to possess. The study also wanted to show to what extent teacher education programs prepared them for assessing students' writing. The required data is collected via a questionnaire given to 200 teachers and semi-structured interviews with 10 teachers. The results showed that most teachers perceived themselves to be moderately knowledgeable in the five thematic areas, or they can be called WAL components: language pedagogy, technical skills, scoring, decision-making factor, local practice, and principles and concepts factor. However, in some items within these five thematic areas, they found themselves slightly knowledgeable, including developing or using rubrics, statistics, portfolio assessment, analytic scoring, and knowledge of validity theory. The findings also indicate that university education and the general assessment courses provided for them were insufficient to equip them with conceptual and practical knowledge regarding writing assessment.

Thirakunkovit (2019) conducted a study entitled "Exploring Writing Assessment Literacy and Classroom Practices of Thai University Instructors" to identify Thai university writing instructors' knowledge about writing assessments and teachers' perceptions of different assessment practices. The researcher also wanted to know whether Thai university instructors received any formal writing assessment training before starting teaching. The required data is collected from fifty-two teachers from ten large

universities in Thailand using an online survey and in-depth interviews. The results of the study indicate that most of the participants have received some formal training in writing assessment. Still, thirty per cent reported that they did not receive any formal training. They also said they have problems developing assessment tasks while assessing the students' achievements. The findings also show that teachers suffer from a lack of knowledge about writing assessments. They stated the need for formal training and direction in many aspects of writing assessment, such as grading, scoring, giving useful feedback, and using alternative assessments.

Kvasova et al. (2019) conducted a study under the title "Investigation of Writing Assessment Literacy of Ukrainian University Teachers" to examine the issues Ukrainian university teachers face when practising writing assessments. The study also wanted to determine how teachers approached rating scales and criteria and culturally specific challenges of teachers' writing assessments in Ukraine. The data is collected from 104 university English teachers via a survey. Current writing assessment practices, such as the use of rating scales, frequency of assessment, criteria of assessment, rater's profile, feedback and rewriting, and training in assessment of writing, were the most frequently questioned aspects in the survey. The main findings show that the common standards do not structure assessment in Ukraine; thus, students' writing assessment approach is often instinctive. Teachers frequently use errors – as visible characteristics of the text – to explain their rating judgments. As a result, teachers undervalue criteria like "register," "conformity with textual features," and "layout" by focusing on the surface features of writing, particularly grammar problems. Even though most teachers profess to use scales while rating, many admit to not knowing the distinction between holistic and analytic

scales. Furthermore, the findings suggest that feedback between a Ukrainian teacher and a learner is not yet a meaningful relationship. As a result, the study's findings highlight the need for improved writing assessment techniques, which may be accomplished by offering training and reorientation to assist Ukrainian teachers in developing a shared understanding and interpretation of task criteria and scale features.

Akbar (2019) investigated teachers' assessment literacy in the second language writing assessment scope through his thesis entitled "Exploring Teachers' Second Language Writing Assessment Literacy." The study wanted to show the teachers' knowledge and practice in writing assessments. A five-Likert-type scale questionnaire is used to investigate the teachers' knowledge and practices. The research participants were 20 novice teachers who teach English Writing classes at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang. The key findings reveal that the majority of instructors have an appropriate understanding of rubrics, formative and summative assessments, alternative assessments, integrated writing assignments, and task design. Meanwhile, most of them lacked alternate assessment concepts, leading to 55 per cent of instructors admitting they did not fully understand the notion. Teachers also stated that they engaged in inadequate assessment procedures, such as employing scoring rubrics, and portfolio assessments, integrating writing projects, and allowing students to self-assess. However, a small sample of practices revealed that 75 per cent of teachers failed to provide rater instruction to their students in the classroom.

The literature shows insights on WAL among EFL teachers from various countries. The studies reveal that although some teachers have received formal training in writing assessment, they still require additional training in various areas of WAL, including

designing good writing tasks, using and designing scoring rubrics, and providing useful feedback. Teachers have some insufficiency in the knowledge of writing assessment's key principles and concepts, including statistics, validity theory, and portfolio assessment. The studies emphasize the need for improved writing assessment techniques, which may be accomplished by offering training and reorientation to help teachers develop a shared understanding and interpretation of task criteria and scale features. The current study works to examine WAL among EFL teachers at KRI universities. The study has designed an integrated questionnaire from a variety of studies to investigate WAL thoroughly.

3. Methodology

A questionnaire consisting of three parts, each with several items is mainly designed to uncover EFL teachers' writing assessment literacy. The first step is to determine the reliability and normality of the data to prove that the data is statistically normal and can be analyzed. The results of the 56-item questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS software. Before starting to analyze the results, certain tests were conducted to detect the reliability and descriptive statistics. The internal consistency analysis of the items revealed a high degree of reliability. The results show that the questionnaire is highly reliable.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient, the most effective statistic for measuring internal consistency, is used in this study to evaluate the internal consistency of the multi-item quantitative data. It is usually suggested that a scale's Cronbach Alpha should be greater than 0.70. However, obtaining 0.70 on a short scale is challenging. Thus, scholars suggest that reaching 0.60 is sufficient. Thus, the Alpha model plays a key role in the computation of tests and

questionnaires. Alpha Cronbach is a statistical measure of the internal consistency or reliability of a test or questionnaire. It is a coefficient that ranges from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating higher reliability. It is a commonly used measure in the field of psychology and education research. (Tavakol and Dennick 2011). For this study, the reliability test based on Cronbach is presented for the questionnaire in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Reliability of item responses

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.886	56

The results show that Cronbach Alpha of the current questionnaire is 0.886 which is a high rate based on the standard acceptable rates. Furthermore, the reliability test of the questionnaire has been drawn on the Guttman Split-Half Coefficient which was 0.717. Again this is also considerable and proves the statistical reliability of the questionnaire for analysis.

Additionally, a normality test is required to detect the normality of the data distribution. The consideration of the skewness and kurtosis values, histograms, and QQ plots examines the normality of the quantitative data. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk are the two major tests used to determine data normal distribution of the current data. Based on these two tests, the data

should not be significant which at 0.05. When the significance, in other words, the p-value is above this number, it means the data is not significant and reveals that the data is normally distributed. The following table illustrates these tests.

Table 2. The test of normality of the questionnaire

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Total items of the questionnaire	0.0497	119	.200*	0.9942	119	0.9037

The above table illustrates that the questionnaire due to the standards is normally distributed, because, based on both tests of Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk, the data is not significant and is more than 0.05.

3.1 Tools

A questionnaire has been developed based on several known assessment tools. The questionnaire consisted of 56 statements and was used to assess EFL teachers' writing assessment literacy. The statements are divided into knowledge, skill, and practice. Two parts contain eighteen statements, while the other part takes twenty statements. The answers to statements are coded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' for the Knowledge and Skill parts. The second scale ranges from 'Always' to 'Never' for the practice part. This is because the practice part can be determined by the frequency rather than agreement concerns. Most items of the questionnaire are taken from various

sources based on the needs of the current study, including (Teachers, 1990), (Akbar, 2019), and (Al-bahlani & Sara, 2019).

To know the validity of the questionnaire items, eleven English teacher jury members who have prestigious knowledge and experience in this area were requested to investigate the tools and give their professional opinion about the extent of the appropriateness of each item for measuring the needs of the English language. The items were modified as per the suggestions of the jury members.

The questionnaire was distributed to EFL teachers at four universities (Salajaddin, Sulaimani, Duhok and Soran universities) in two ways: through an online form and hard copies. The online form was created using New Google Forms and included all the necessary explanations for EFL teachers. The hard copy was also designed to include all the necessary explanations. The distribution of the questionnaire was carried out after obtaining formal permission to conduct the study at the selected universities. The online form was sent to all the heads of the English departments at the selected universities multiple times to ensure the highest response rate. At Soran University, the online form was sent to teachers via email and social networks. At other universities, the online form was shared with the head of the department, and then the researcher visited the university to distribute the hard copies. All responses were collected and saved in a format that can be analyzed quantitatively.

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

The study's population consisted of EFL teachers who taught at English departments across different universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Due to the difficulty of gathering data from such a

large population, four universities were selected to conduct the study. These universities included Soran University, Salahaddin University, Sulaimani University, and Duhok University. All English departments were included in each university, which were from various colleges/faculties. The faculties were divided into four different categories: Arts, Languages, Education, and Basic Education. Since some EFL teachers teach in the Translation department, this department was added to Sulaimani University and Duhok University samples.

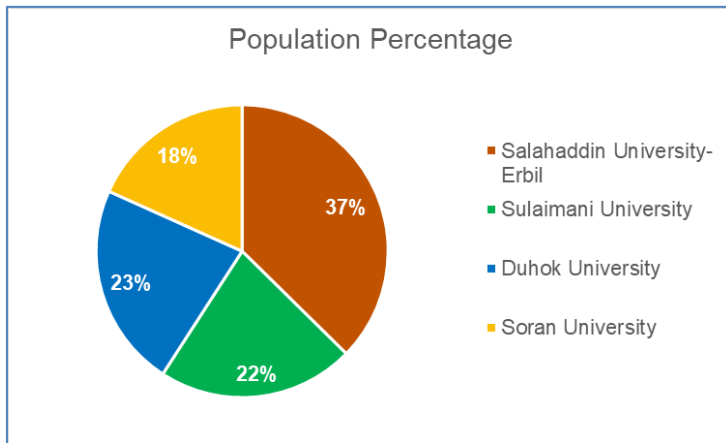


Chart 1. The Percentage of the Population

The above chart shows the percentage of the EFL teachers' division based on their parent universities. The data shows that Salahaddin University-Erbil shares the largest number of teachers, followed by Duhok, Sulaimani, and Soran Universities.

The real sample of this study includes all the participants who have successfully participated in the study among the selected population. Due to several limitations and challenges, a specific number of EFL teachers participated in the study. The following

table shows the distribution of participants across the sample universities.

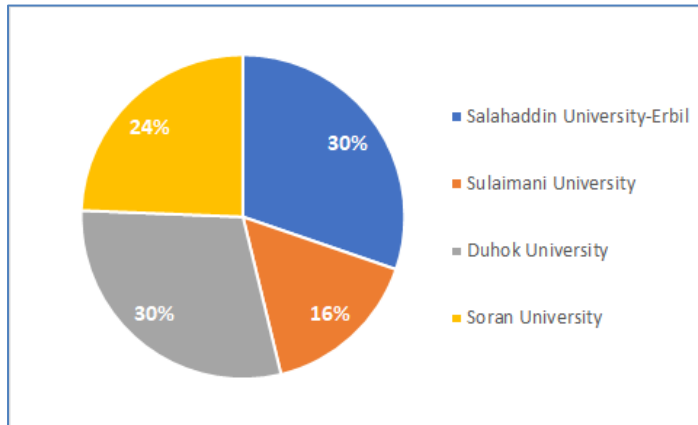


Chart 2. Total Number of Questionnaire Results per Universities

The above chart shows that the majority of participants from Salahaddin and Duhok Universities have filled out the questionnaire. Soran University comes after that, and the least number of EFL teachers comes from Sulaimani University.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with strict ethical considerations. Since the study had direct contact with EFL teachers through a questionnaire, official documentation and academic permissions were obtained from the hosting academic bodies. An official letter was requested from Soran University, which was presented to the other three universities of Salahaddin, Sulaimani, and Duhok, kindly requesting to conduct a questionnaire with EFL teachers. The three universities then approved the letter before the start of data collection. The study also did not mention any kind of names

or state in any way who had participated in the questionnaire by any means. The online form was designed in a way that even the researcher could not know who answered it. Also, no pressure was presented on any teacher to participate.

Such ethics make the study compatible with the academic integrations needed for conducting research. The study will keep these ethics confidential even after completing the whole part of the study.

4. Discussion

Each part of the questionnaire includes some items related to the part that they represent. Part one, which is about the knowledge of writing assessment by EFL teachers includes eighteen different statements. All the items are about knowledge. The EFL teachers were given options to choose among the 5 Likert Scale for each statement in part one. The scales then were given values as follows: Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Not sure = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1. Regarding the negative statements, the Values will be reversed. This type of mixed values is useful to reach better results among EFL teachers.

The first part is about knowledge. Table 3. shows the results of values for statements of part one.

Table 3. Questionnaire results for part one: Knowledge

No	Statements (Part 1)	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
1	Assessment is as important as teaching methods.	4.495798	5	0.779765
2	EFL teachers should be aware of writing assessment methods theoretically and practically.	4.512605	5	0.674795
3	Writing can be assessed indirectly through multiple-choice items.	2.94958	3	1.064439
4	Scoring students' writing is subjective.	2.857143	3	1.137092
5	Writing is best assessed when integrated with other skills.	3.773109	4	0.915377
6	All assessment methods are applicable to be implemented on writing tasks.	2.781513	3	0.98428
7	One writing assessment method fits all types of students.	3.731092	4	1.005893
8	One assessment method does not fit all types of writing.	4.033613	4	0.919956
9	There is a broad range of writing assessment alternatives for language teachers to utilize.	3.941176	4	0.728292
10	Students' inefficient writing skill reflects the wrong assessment method choice.	3.084034	3	0.961812
11	Students' inefficient writing skills reflect the wrong implementation of assessment methods.	3.243697	3	1.016528

12	Multiple assessment techniques can be applied to the same writing at a time.	2.403361	2	0.876427
13	Using computer technology in writing assessments is not helpful.	3.378151	4	1.033274
14	Language teachers should know the differences between formative and summative writing assessments.	4.277311	4	0.842961
15	A practical and productive writing assessment needs to be the teacher's priority.	4.12605	4	0.808374
16	Writing assessment can be an assessment for learning.	4.117647	4	0.825201
17	Writing assessment can be an assessment of learning.	3.890756	4	0.963661
18	Writing assessment can be an assessment of learning.	3.907563	4	0.965433
	totalpart1	3.639122	3.611111	0.303763

Based on the displayed results in the table above, item number two, ' EFL teachers should be aware of writing assessment methods theoretically and practically', is ranked at the top with a high mean score of '4.51'. The second rank with a mean score of '4.495' goes to item number one, ' Assessment is as important as teaching methods. Items numbered 14,15,16 and 8 follow them respectively with the mean above 4. On the other side, items 3,4,6 and 12 come at the bottom of the results with a mean below 3. Item number twelve which is 'Multiple assessment techniques can be applied to the same writing at a time' is ranked the lowest with the mean '2.40'. Regarding the overall score of this part which is '3.63' is close to a value of 4 and indicates that EFL teachers share enough knowledge of assessment writing.

Table 4. Questionnaire results for part two: Skill

No	Statements (Part 2)	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
1	I can choose the appropriate writing assessment method.	4.168067	4	0.6679
2	I can use the notions of assessment error and validity when I choose classroom writing assessment procedures.	3.882353	4	0.666085
3	I understand how valid writing assessment data can support instructional activities.	4.05042	4	0.622308
4	I understand how invalid textual information can affect writing assessment outcomes.	3.966387	4	0.712275
5	I can detect that different writing assessment types can be incompatible with specific instructional goals.	3.815126	4	0.736073
6	Different assessment types may impact differently on teaching of writing classes differently.	4.05042	4	0.711274
7	I cannot use alternative writing assessment methods.	3.529412	4	1.031894
8	I can shift from one writing assessment method into another during an ongoing assessment writing class/ process.	3.689076	4	0.870884

9	I can implement writing assessment methods fairly.	3.815126	4	0.802183
10	I am skilled enough in administering results from various writing assessment methods.	3.781513	4	0.825029
11	I am skilled in scoring results from various writing assessment methods.	3.865546	4	0.8726
12	I am skilled enough in interpreting results from various writing assessment methods.	3.747899	4	0.815304
13	I can appropriately communicate the writing assessment results to students and their parents or guardians.	3.714286	4	0.855123
14	I can explain the limitations of different informal and formal writing assessment methods.	3.865546	4	0.822608
15	I can successfully manage unexpected challenges during the writing assessment process.	3.857143	4	0.728194
16	I am skilled enough to quickly and effectively shift from one writing assessment method to another if required by the college/university.	3.840336	4	0.843552
17	I cannot make use of writing assessments as a tool for learning.	3.579832	4	1.108487
18	I can avoid being affected by	3.739496	4	0.868099

	external factors during the writing assessment.			
19	I can apply the five language assessment principles to writing assessment.	3.621849	4	0.700987
20	I can design rubrics for scoring students' writing.	4.10084	4	0.827442
	Totalpart2	3.834034	3.85	0.445169

Based on the results shown in the table above, the first statement that is 'I can choose the appropriate writing assessment method' has the highest mean score of '4.16' followed by the twentieth statement 'I can design rubrics for scoring students' writing' with the mean of '4.10'. After this comes the third statement, 'I understand how valid writing assessment data can support instructional activities' and the sixth statement, 'Different assessment types may impact differently on the teaching of writing classes that have the same mean score of '4.05'. The seventh statement which is 'I cannot use alternative writing assessment methods' has the lowest mean score '3.52' preceded by the seventeenth statement that is 'I cannot make use of writing assessment as a tool for learning' with the mean of '3.57' and the nineteenth statement which is 'I can apply the five language assessment principles to writing assessment' with the mean of '3.62'. in general, it can be seen that statistically EFL teachers show good literacy in the skills of writing assessment.

Table 5. Questionnaire results for part three: Practice

No	Statements (Part 3)	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
1	I use rubrics when assessing students' writing.	4.10084	4	0.924203
2	I make changes in the style of my writing assessment based on the assessment results.	3.848739	4	0.860022
3	I make changes in the material of my writing assessment based on the assessment results.	3.92437	4	0.804223
4	I improve the writing assessment method according to my students' needs.	4.05042	4	0.900553
5	I use alternative writing assessments.	3.823529	4	0.889173
6	I use extra materials to perform a highly successful assessment of students' writing.	3.815126	4	0.947489
7	I employ various writing assessments appropriate for the students and learning objectives.	3.915966	4	0.849525
8	I cannot develop a suitable writing assessment method.	3.613445	4	1.16524
9	I apply the writing assessment method properly.	4.02521	4	0.630606
10	I use writing assessment insights to improve students' performance.	3.966387	4	0.780404
11	I am not biased when scoring my	4.142857	4	0.985365

	students' writing.			
12	I do not use assessment as a tool for punishment.	3.915966	5	1.381352
13	I always provide my students with feedback on their writing performance.	4.302521	4	0.829076
14	I use assessment for learning in writing assessment.	4.176471	4	0.798803
15	I use assessment of learning in writing assessment.	4.12605	4	0.829076
16	I use assessment as learning in writing assessment.	3.915966	4	0.979275
17	I pilot the writing tests before giving them to my students.	3.478992	4	1.103529
18	I use the correcting codes when assessing students' writing.	3.773109	4	1.012104
	Totalpart3	3.939776	4	0.471991

According to the scores shown in the above table, the thirteenth statement 'I always provide my students with feedback on their writing performance' has the highest mean score of '4.30' followed by the fourteenth statement 'I use assessment for learning in writing assessment' which the mean '4.17'. After this, comes the eleventh statement 'I am not biased when scoring my students' writing' with a mean of '4.14'. Concerning the lowest value, the seventeenth statement which is 'I pilot the writing tests before giving them to my students' holds the lowest mean score of '3.47' preceded by the eighth statement 'I cannot develop a suitable writing assessment method' with the mean of '3.61' and the eighteenth statement 'I use the correcting codes when assessing students' writings' with the mean of '3.77'. Based on the results

displayed in Table 5, except for the seventeenth statement that teachers have a neutral perspective about, teachers agree with all other statements of part three.

After considering all the items of each part together, it is significant to draw considerations between the totality of parts with each other. The following parts the average total for each part separately.

Table 6. Totals of each part

No	Parts	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
1	Knowledge (total)	3.639	3.61	0.303
2	Skill (total)	3.834	3.85	0.445
3	Practice (total)	3.939	4	0.471

The table shows the total values for each part separately. The results show that EFL teachers share the highest rate of literacy in the practice of writing assessment with an average mean of '3.93'. This is followed by the skill part with an average of '3.83'. the knowledge part comes at the lowest score with a mean of '3.63'.

Furthermore, the statistics for the whole data show some insightful results as presented in Table 7. The table represents the accumulated and average scores of all the data.

Table 7. The accumulative results of all parts and items together

General averages	
Mean average	3.805372
Median average	3.821429
Minimum rate per item	2.964286
Maximum rate per item	4.642857

As shown in the table above, the mean of the data as a whole is '3.80' which is statistically close to value 4 and this is a good result in terms of literacy rate based on the values represented in this study. Also, the results show the average of the highest rate per item 'is 4.64' which is almost close to the highest value, while the lowest rate is '2.96' which is close to 3. These statistics clearly show that EFL teachers present good levels of writing assessment literacy based on the questionnaire results.

Another aspect of statistics of the quantitative data is the correlation between parts of the questionnaire especially if there are multiple different parts. The current questionnaire is divided into three parts. The correlation of the data is not only presented to single parts with each other but also with the total of the whole data. Correlation indicates the relationship of the parts together. For this purpose, the SPSS program has been used and applied on all parts together and the results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Correlation between parts of the questionnaire

Correlations					
		Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Grand
Part 1 (total)	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	119			
Part 2 (total)	Pearson Correlation	.419**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000			
	N	119	119		
Part 3 (total)	Pearson Correlation	.307**	.610**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.000		
	N	119	119	119	
Total	Pearson Correlation	.637**	.884**	.843**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	119	119	119	119
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

The above table illustrates that there is a strong correlation among the parts of the questionnaire. The table indicates that the correlation of part one with all other parts does not show significance except with part three. A correlation of 0.001 indicates a minimal linear relationship between the two variables, meaning that changes in one variable are not likely to have a noticeable effect on the other. The smaller the correlation coefficient value, the weaker the relationship between the variables. This provides significant evidence of the efficacy of the results.

Finally, writing assessment literacy is an essential set of skills for teachers, educators, and assessment professionals. It involves understanding the different types of writing assessments available, the criteria for evaluating writing, how to interpret and use assessment results, and how to communicate assessment results effectively. By developing these skills, educators can provide better support for student learning and growth, and improve the quality of writing instruction.

Conclusions

Writing assessment literacy is essential for anyone involved in the education system; teachers, administrators, and students alike need to be knowledgeable about various types of writing assessments and how to use them. EFL teachers are the most related people to have the greatest writing assessment literacy. Educators can create a more meaningful, equitable, and efficient assessment process that promotes student learning and growth. Additionally, writing assessment literacy is an ongoing process that requires continuous learning, reflection, and collaboration.

The current study has investigated the insights from EFL teachers at KRI universities on writing assessment literacy through a quantitative method. The results indicated that EFL teachers are literate enough based on the questionnaire and share good insights. Although some points have some weak aspects, the average and sum of results are positive. The EFL teachers, still, need more time and effort to improve since the case is significant. The results also indicate that EFL teachers are less literate in knowledge compared to skill and practice. The results, thus, provide a quantitative answer to the study's main question to confirm that EFL teachers are insightful about writing assessment literacy. They are skilful

enough in writing assessments and can practice their shared literacy.

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شارهزایی هه‌سه‌نگاندنی نووسین بریتیه له توانای تیگه‌یشتن و به‌کاره‌ینانی شیواز و ئامرازی هه‌مه‌جۆر له هه‌سه‌نگاندنی کاریگه‌رانه‌ی نووسین. هه‌روه‌ها بریتیه له هه‌بوونی زانیاری له‌سه‌ر بئه‌ماکانی هه‌سه‌نگاندنی نووسین و کارامه‌یه‌کانی هه‌سه‌نگاندن و به‌کاره‌ینانی کرداریی ئه‌و بئه‌ما و کارامه‌یه‌یه‌ له هه‌سه‌نگاندنی نووسین. به‌په‌ره‌پێدانی شاره‌زایی هه‌سه‌نگاندنی نووسین، مامۆستایان ده‌توانن باشت‌ر پشتیوانی له‌ فێر‌بوونی قوتابیان و به‌ره‌وپێش‌چوون له‌ نووسیندا بکه‌ن و یه‌کسانی و داد‌په‌روه‌ری زیات‌ر له‌ هه‌سه‌نگاندنی نووسیندا فه‌رهم بکه‌ن. ئه‌م لیکۆلینه‌وه‌یه به‌دواداچوون بۆ ئاستی مامۆستایانی به‌شی ئینگلیزی ده‌کات له‌ زانکۆکانی هه‌ری‌می کوردستانی عێراق له‌سه‌ر شاره‌زایی هه‌سه‌نگاندنی نووسین. شیوازی چه‌ندیتی جیه‌جی ده‌کریت بۆ کۆکردنه‌وه‌ی داتا و شیکردنه‌وه‌ی ئه‌نجامه‌کان. راپرسیه‌ک بۆ کۆکردنه‌وه‌ی داتا بۆ مامۆستایانی به‌شی ئینگلیزی له‌ چوار زانکۆی هه‌ری‌می کوردستانی عێراق ئه‌نجام دراوه. ئه‌نجامه‌کان ئه‌وه‌ نیشان ده‌ده‌ن که مامۆستایانی به‌شی ئینگلیزی به‌ پێی پرسیاره‌کان شاره‌زان و تیگه‌یشتنی باشیان له‌ باب‌ته‌که هه‌یه. ئه‌نجامه‌کان به‌ گشتی ده‌ریده‌خه‌ن که مامۆستایانی به‌شه‌کانی ئینگلیزی له‌و زانکۆیه‌ پێویستیان به‌ کات و هه‌ولی زیات‌ر هه‌یه بۆ باشت‌ربوون چونکه که‌یسه‌که زۆر جێی بایه‌خه. ئه‌نجامه‌کان ئاماژه به‌وه‌ش ده‌که‌ن که مامۆستایانی به‌شی ئینگلیزی که‌م‌تر شاره‌زان له‌ ڕووی زانیارییه‌وه به‌ به‌راورد له‌گه‌ڵ کارامه‌یی و لایه‌نی کرداریی.

وشه‌ی سه‌ره‌کی:هه‌سه‌نگاندن ، شاره‌زابوون له هه‌سه‌نگاندنی نووسین ، مامۆستایانی ئینگلیزی وه‌ک زمانی بێگانه

