EFL Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practices: The Case of Three Government Secondary Schools in Addis Ababa

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to describe and portray EFL teachers' classroom assessment practices in three government secondary schools in Addis Ababa. A total of 29 EFL teachers and 330 students participated in this case study. The study adopted a range of data collection methods including: classroom observation, teacher interview, document analysis, student focus group discussion and questionnaire. The research has addressed three main questions: How do EFL teachers assess their students informally? How do they assess their students formally? What kinds of feedback do they provide to their students in these assessments? Thus, the study found that sample EFL teachers frequently assess their students through less beneficial informal assessment actions such as, asking display oral questions, correcting and judging rather than more beneficial ones like observing process and metacognitive questioning. Their informal assessments also lacked student engagement. Moreover, formal assessments were not frequently administered in the sample schools and such assessments lacked to reflect an integral part of the material being taught. Both formal and informal classroom assessments also lacked to provide various feedback possibilities to students.

1. Introduction

Within the last few decades, the field of TEFL has witnessed a paradigm shift both in teaching and in assessment. The change in teaching has involved a shift of emphasis from a teacher-centered approach to teaching to a more student-centered approach. This major methodological change in EFL teaching has also shifted the focus of assessment from a traditional testing system to an alternative assessment system (Alderson, 2002; Bachman, 2002). Moreover, the focus of assessment has become assessing what students can do rather than what they cannot do (Gipps, 1994). Thus, in the new paradigm, EFL learners' success is gauged not only on the basis of once and for all tests at the end of a semester or year but also on the basis of multiple and continuous classroom assessment results.

Effective EFL teaching requires understanding about students' knowledge, skills, interests, attitudes and behaviors (Anderson, 1989). Any decisions that the teacher makes about his/her students should be based on solid foundations. However, teachers can only do this if they are able to assess their students through multiple assessment methods (Chan, 2008). A fairly reliable picture of a student's ability is built up when the teacher uses various kinds of assessments as no single assessment method is capable of fully describing students' ability or learning (Ibid).

Regarding this, many educators have also claimed that teachers who implement multiple and continuous classroom assessments can provide successful instructions (Chan, 2008; Guskey, 2003; Brown, 2004).

In addition, variety in assessment techniques is a desirable quality, not just because different learning goals are amenable to assessment by different devices, but because the mode of assessment interacts in complex ways with the very nature of what is being assessed (Shepard, 2000). Shepard elaborates this by using the following example:

> *The ability to retell a story after reading it might be fundamentally a different learning construct than being able to answer comprehension questions about the story; both might be important instructionally. Therefore, even for the same learning objective, there are compelling reasons to assess in more than one way, both to ensure sound measurement and to support development of flexible and robust understandings.* (Shepard, 2000:48)

On the other hand, it has been repeatedly demonstrated that assessment influences both what students learn and what teachers teach. Some earlier scholars even go further by saying that what influenced students most is not the teaching but the assessment (Snyder, 1971; Miller and Parlett, 1974). Assessment-related activities used in the classroom convey important information about what is valued there, and hence have an influence on students' learning (Ames, 1992; Harlen & Crick, 2003). Accordingly, teachers assign a large amount of their classroom time to assessment-related activities (Harlen & Crick, 2003). Thus, when teachers' classroom assessments become an integral part of the instructional process and a central ingredient in their efforts to help students learn, the benefits of assessment for both students and teachers will be boundless.

Therefore, due to its important role in the teaching and learning process, researchers in the field have focused greater attention on classroom assessment (McMillan, Myran & Workman, 2002; Stiggins, 2002). In this regard, Rowntree (1987:1) suggests, "If we wish to discover the truth about an educational system, we must first look to its assessment procedures". Taking the above suggestions into consideration, in the current study, there is also a move to further understand EFL teachers' classroom assessment practices in order to improve EFL teaching and learning.

1.1 *EFL Assessment in General Secondary Schools (as prescribed in the National syllabus)*

The current English language syllabus for general secondary schools urges teachers to assess their students on a continuous basis by using assessment activities and revision units in the textbook. It also urges teachers to use unit end, semester end and end-of-year examinations in order to fully assess their students.

Regarding continuous assessment, Grade 9 English Teacher's Guide states that teachers may assess their students informally (such as, informally monitoring the development of students' oral skills) during pair or group works. In doing so, teachers should decide which exercises they wish to collect for marking. At the end of every unit in the teacher's Guide, there are assessment exercises which are designed for this purpose.

Concerning formal assessment methods, tests appear after every third unit in the Student Book and take the format of a mini exam. The guide recommends teachers to keep a record of each student's score and use it as a part of the final term/ year mark. In addition to these four tests, an end-of-year examination is included in the Teacher's Guide. The end-of-year examination consists of two papers: Paper 1 examines students' writing skill and consists of two sections, A and B. Paper 2 examines students' reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and spelling.

The syllabus also suggests self- and peer-assessments to be included into the assessment process. Particularly in assessing students' writing, the Teacher's Guide repeatedly suggests 'Students should check their answers with their partners'.

Generally, in principle, the English language classroom assessment in general secondary schools should be on-going (continuous) and should incorporate various methods like self-assessment, peer-assessment and formal assessments (i.e., quizzes, tests and examinations). Therefore, secondary school EFL teachers are expected to use multiple assessment procedures in their classroom.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As briefly described above, the new English language syllabus for general secondary schools advocates the use of multiple classroom assessment procedures. Moreover, many scholars in the field recommend that EFL teaching and learning should be supported by multiple classroom assessment procedures (Nitko, 2001; Stiggins et al., 1989; Chan, 2008; Brown, 2004; Brindley, 2001; Hsu, 2003). Hence, both the syllabus and the literature strongly suggest that EFL teachers should employ multiple and continuous classroom assessment procedures in order to make the teaching and learning process more effective.

However, unless EFL teachers' actual classroom assessment practices are studied and confirmed, there is no guaranty that teachers make use of such assessments properly only because it is mentioned in the syllabus or in any literature. On the contrary, the purpose of classroom assessment in most schools seems to be confused and, therefore, not supporting learning (Swan, 1993; Stiggins, 2002). In the case of Ethiopian secondary schools (where most of EFL teachers do not take any language testing or assessment courses while they were in universities), the situation could be worse. Hence, the researcher is concerned about EFL teachers' actual classroom assessment practices in general secondary schools since it is almost unknown what is going on in the classrooms.

Thus, this study tried to investigate what assessment practices have been employed in reality in the general secondary school EFL classrooms as compared with what has been prescribed in the syllabus and what is recommended in the review literature.

In doing this, the researcher used the following basic research questions as a guide for his investigation.

Research Questions:

a. How do secondary school EFL teachers assess their students informally?
b. How do they assess their students formally?
c. What kinds of feedback do they provide to their students in these assessments?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study has aimed to describe and portray the overall classroom assessment practices of general secondary school EFL teachers by deeply looking into the cases of three government secondary schools in Addis Ababa. Thus, the main objective was to better understand their actual classroom assessment practices since this is an area where interventions should be made to improve EFL learning.

1.4 *Conceptual and Theoretical Basis*

In conducting this study, earlier theories of learning and assessment were consulted and used. Among the theories of learning, constructivism is a prominent theory which guided the present study.

Constructivism rejects the behaviorists' theory of learning which claims that students learn by passively "soaking up" knowledge that is transmitted to them by teachers or others (Vye, 2002: 1152). Instead, constructivists assume students as active participants in the acquisition of knowledge, building their own understandings, drawing on prior knowledge and formulating mental concepts (Perkins, 1992).

Therefore, in a constructivist paradigm, assessment has to serve and foster learning processes, enhance learners' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, provide descriptive feedback, modify teaching and learning acts and address affective considerations in language learning (Mantero, 2002). This will happen only when teachers are fully informed about their students and when they are better prepared to make appropriate instructional and curriculum decisions (Chan, 2004). The assessment data must also provide information about students' current ability and knowledge within the subject matter as well as information about students' interests, learning styles, and pace. Thus, to know all about their students, teachers must rely on data collected through a variety of methods. In identifying the various methods employed by EFL teachers', the researcher has adapted the assessment framework developed by Torrance and Pryor (1998). These scholars identified fourteen informal assessment actions which are typical in a constructivist foreign language classroom. These are questioning, clarifying, metacognitive questioning, observing process, checking product, judging, rewarding, setting task criteria,

setting quality criteria, correcting, criticizing work, planning next teaching and planning next time lesson.

In general, this study has intended to investigate EFL teachers' multiple assessment practices mainly from constructivists' point of view. Theorists in the constructive paradigm recommend teacher efforts that center on examining the process (as well as the products) of performing complex tasks in typical learning and application contexts (Johnston, 1992; Moore, 2000; Wilson, 1996). Therefore, the current researcher started his investigation from this constructivists' theory of learning and assessment.

2. *Methodology*

This study has employed a multiple case study design. It has encompassed three government secondary schools as case units. These are: Yekatit 23 Secondary School, Bole Community School and Dil Ber Secondary School. The reasons behind using three cases rather than one are, first, a three-case design is stronger in external validity as compared to one-case study. It enables the research to make cross-case analysis so that a relatively comprehensive result could be gained. The second reason in using three cases is to address concerns of variations in local settings. Using designs which include more than one-case is advisable to address concerns of variations in local settings (Rogoff, 2003).

Thus, the three schools (Dil Ber, Yekatit 23 and Bole Community secondary schools) were selected out of all government general secondary schools of Addis Ababa through multistage sampling technique. First, three sub-cities (Bole, Addis Ketema and Gullele sub-cities) were selected randomly out of ten sub-cities. Then, from each sub-city, one secondary school was selected by the same sampling technique. Therefore, by using multistage sampling strategy, an attempt was made to reduce concerns of variations in local settings.

Regarding the grade level, this study has focused particularly on Grade 9. This was due to the fact that: (a) the English language syllabus for Grade 9 demands teachers to implement multiple classroom assessments; (b) all the assessment methods at this grade level depend entirely on classroom assessment; and (c) it is at Grade 9 that most of Ethiopian school children find English as a medium of instruction for the first time. As a result, EFL teachers' classroom assessment practice at this grade level is expected to play vital roles in the teaching-learning process.

After selecting the three sample schools and the grade level to be studied, the next step was selecting the subjects of the study (the English teachers and their students). Accordingly, all Grade 9 English teachers in each sample schools were selected as samples of the study. All of them participated in filling the questionnaire. However, out of these teachers, only two focal participants were selected from each school for the more detailed data collecting processes (classroom observation and interviews). These two focal participants were selected by convenience sampling technique.

Focal participating teachers were teaching averagely three classes. All of the teachers were teaching both Grades 9 and 10 students. As a result, among the three classes, only one or two were Grade 9 students and the rest were Grade 10. Therefore, from the teachers who have been teaching two classes of Grade 9 students, one class was selected randomly but from the teachers who have been teaching only one class of Grade 9, the class was selected without any further sampling strategy. Moreover, from each sample class, a group of 6 students were selected randomly as focal subjects of the study. These students were selected to serve as participants of the focus group discussion and as a source of documents (particularly exercise books).

Thus, this study has encompassed three schools or cases, 29 sample teachers (among these, 6 were focal participating teachers) and 330 sample students (among these, 36 were focal participating students).

Regarding data collecting methods, this study has employed a number of instruments including observation, interview, documents, questionnaire and focus group discussion. The emphasis of the observation was on two main classroom assessment practices: (i) specific classroom assessment actions which are mentioned in Torrance and Pryor's (1998) classroom assessment framework (e.g. questioning, metacognitive questioning, observing process, observing product, correcting, rewarding and criticizing work); (ii) the kind of assessment feedback provided to the students. Moreover, students' involvement in the assessment practice was also observed.

3. Cross-Case Analysis

As described earlier, the three schools selected as cases for this study were Bole Community School, Dil Ber Secondary School and Yekatit 23 Secondary School. The key themes that has emerged from the cross-case analyses of the three cases are compared, synthesized and

discussed. Hence, this comparative analysis focuses on identifying the methods and procedures of classroom assessments that exist within each particular case and across the three cases.

3.1 Informal Assessments

Regarding teachers' informal assessment, similar methods were practiced in the three sample schools. Comparison of EFL teachers' practices across the three cases revealed that the three teacher groups shared six main informal assessment methods. These were: oral questioning (eliciting), rewarding, correcting, judging, examining product and observing process. These assessments have been arranged from high frequent to low frequent actions. The first three assessment actions (questioning, rewarding and correcting) were consistently and dominantly used in every classroom instruction by all sample EFL teachers and the other three actions (judging, examining product and observing process) were less frequent. The extent to which teachers use judging, examining product and observing process vary based on the skills they teach. For instance, Solomon (Pseudo name) has used judging and observing process more frequently in his vocabulary and reading lessons than in any of his observed instructions. Likewise, in his writing lesson, Tewodros (Pseudo name) has used observing process more frequently than in any of his observed lessons. Yohannes (Pseudo name) has also used observing process and examining product more frequently in his writing class. However, during observing process, sample teachers have focused more on monitoring student behavior and checking their students' engagement on the task rather than focusing on what they are really doing.

Regarding oral questioning, which is identified in this study as the most dominant informal assessment action, sample EFL teachers in all the three schools were similar in that they frequently used display oral questions rather than thoughtful, open-ended referential questions. They did not ask more open questions of their pupils, genuinely seeking to elicit new information. They rather ask for 'right answers'. Moreover, they rarely ask for clarifications about what an individual student has said nor did they encourage students to ask questions of each other. Thus, the questions did not facilitate extended conversations or discussion between the teachers and their students' and among students' themselves.

The display oral questions were not employed similarly by the three teacher groups. There were some questioning strategy variations among them. Teachers at Bole Community School

(particularly Daniel, pseudo name) were observed using comprehension checks where they interrupt their explanation by leaving their sentences incomplete and eliciting evidence of what their students know. Similarly, in Dil Ber Secondary school, Solomon has used this strategy. On the other hand, in Yekatit 23 Secondary School, Yohannes has frequently used complete display oral questions as a strategy to elicit evidence from his students. Yet, there was no evidence to attribute this difference to the difference in the school contexts. Instead, it could be related to the difference in the teachers' own experiences and personal behaviors.

On the other hand, the collected data from all the three schools indicated that sample EFL teachers rarely employed metacongnitive questioning; critiquing; setting quality criteria; setting task criteria; influencing attribute and planning next time lesson.

Moreover, the collected data indicated that EFL teachers at Bole Community School and Dil Ber Secondary School rarely employed peer-assessments and self-assessments in their classrooms. However, sample teachers at Yekatit 23 Secondary School described that they employed peer-assessments and self-assessments to some extent. Even though they stated this, their students explained otherwise. Therefore, it can be stated that such assessments were absent in all the sample school classrooms.

The other similarity in all the three teacher groups is that their informal assessment actions were not systematic and planned. Students were assessed based on rough impressions. Teachers did not precisely define the abilities to be assessed. Yet, Harris and McCann (1994) suggest that unplanned and unsystematic informal assessment cannot be effective. Hence, according to them, daily observation which is not systematic will result in a pile of useless information.

3.2 Formal Assessments

Similar findings were revealed in the three cases regarding EFL teachers' formal assessment practices. EFL teachers in the three sample schools have commonly employed only two types of formal assessments: mid-semester and semester final examinations. The exams in all the schools have contained mainly close-ended items.

In Bole Community School, the exams were dominated by multiple-choice items. All of the twenty items of the mid-semester exam and most of the items in the semester final exam (thirty out of forty items) were multiple choice items. The remaining ten items of the semester final

exam include fill-in and short answer types. Similarly, the formats of the two tests administered in Dil Ber Secondary School were mainly multiple choice and matching items. To some extent, the tests included fill-in the blanks. The same is true for Yekatit 23 Secondary School. The mid-semester and semester final English exams in this school were dominated by multiple-choice items. To some extent, there were matching items. Among the thirty items in the mid-semester exam paper, only four were matching items and the rest twenty-six were multiple choice. Similarly, the final exam paper included forty items, of which, six were matching and thirty-four were multiple choice. Therefore, in the three cases, the tests included only close-ended items which were dominated by multiple-choice format.

The other similarity among the three school formal assessments was the skills assessed in their tests. EFL teachers in all the sample schools have mainly focused on assessing three language skills in their formal assessments (i.e. grammar, reading and vocabulary). In two of the schools (Dil Ber and Yekatit 23 secondary schools), students' writing skills were tested to some extent through controlled writing tasks which were part of the final exams. However, in Bole Community School, students' writing skills were not tested at all. This could be due to the relatively large class size in the school. As stated previously in the case description sections of chapters four, five and six, Bole Community School had the largest class size of all the three schools. This could have impacted the teachers to remove writing skills test items from their mid-semester and semester final examinations since such items demand more time in marking than close-ended items. On the other hand, sample EFL teachers in all the three school were similar in that they never formally assessed their students' speaking and listening skills. Thus, although they are supposed to teach all language skills in the classrooms, they prioritize only three language skills in their formal assessments.

3.3 Assessment Feedback

The comparative analysis of the three teacher groups' assessment practices did not show significant differences in terms of assessment feedback. Sample EFL teachers in all the three schools were observed using four main oral feedback strategies. These were: explicit oral feedback, elicitation of completion, metalinguistic feedback and repetition of error. Among these, explicit oral feedback and elicitation of completion were the most frequent feedback strategies observed in all sample teachers' classrooms. These two commonly used feedback

strategies are types of direct and indirect feedbacks. Explicit oral feedback is a type of direct feedback where teachers provide feedbacks to students to help them correct their errors by providing the correct linguistic form (Ferris, 2006); whereas, elicitation of completion is an indirect feedback strategy where teachers provide only indications which in some way make students aware that an error exists but they do not provide the students with the correction (Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

The EFL teachers in the three sample schools were also similar in that they rarely employed two oral feedback strategies: recast (reformulation of a student's utterance minus the error) and clarification request.

In addition, the three teacher groups have used nearly the same written feedback strategies. The sample teachers in the three schools commonly provide their students three kinds of written feedbacks. These were: (i) big '√' and 'X' marks indicating students' works as right or wrong respectively; (ii) compliments like 'good', 'very good' and 'excellent'; and (iii) teacher's signatures to show that their homework or class work is checked.

Moreover, in Dil Ber and Yekatit 23 secondary schools, additional written feedback strategies were observed in students' exercise books. Sample EFL teachers in these two schools have somewhat used written corrective feedbacks and symbols. There was some evidence that EFL teachers in Dil Ber Secondary School (particularly Solomon) have used written corrective feedbacks on students' written works. For instance, Solomon has written correct utterances on top of problematic words or phrases and added punctuation marks in sentences. Hence, his written feedbacks had the nature of editing or proofreading. On the other hand, during focus group discussions, Yohannes' students described that their teacher sometimes put symbols (like one star, two stars and three stars) on their exercise books and test papers. However, discussants were unaware of what exactly those symbols stand for.

Regarding non-verbal feedbacks, mixed findings were revealed in the three cases. The only visible non-verbal feedback which was commonly employed by all sample EFL teachers was head-shaking (nodding). Other than this feedback, the other non-verbal feedbacks identified in this study were teacher specific. For instance, in Bole Community School, Daniel was frequently observed staring at students who seemed non-attentive to his lessons. On the other hand,

Solomon (from Dil Ber Secondary School) was frequently observed staring at students who seemed clever and attentive. Tilahun was also often leaning forward to students when they respond to his questions. Moreover, Tewodros was repeatedly observed staring at and moving towards students who were whispering and doing non-academic matters. In Yekatit 23 Secondary School, Yohannes was observed using special hand movements to stress the main concepts of the lesson and to warn students who have attempted to disturb the class. Therefore, the comparative analysis of these findings could not yield any specific and commonly used non-verbal feedback strategy.

4. Summary

- It was found that sample EFL teachers practiced such informal assessment actions as questioning, correcting and judging more frequently than others like observing process, examining product, metacognitive questioning which could be considered more beneficial for learning. The degree of practice among these informal assessment actions has also varied depending on the type of skills taught. Within the same EFL teacher, the practice of observing process, rewarding, correcting, observing product and judging has greatly varied from lesson to lesson.

  During oral questioning, sample EFL teachers frequently used display oral questions rather than thoughtful, open-ended referential questions. They rarely ask more open questions genuinely seeking to elicit new information.
- During classroom observations, sample EFL teachers have focused more on monitoring student behavior and checking their engagement on the task rather than focusing on what they were really doing. They did not precisely define the abilities to be observed. Their oral questioning did not also engage all students. They ask questions only volunteer students. They rarely used any questioning strategy which involves reticent students.
- It was also found that sample EFL teachers rarely used peer-assessments and self-assessments.
- Only two types of formal assessments (i.e. mid-semester and semester final examinations) were used in the sample schools. In addition, among the four major and two minor language skills, teachers prioritize in testing grammar, reading and vocabulary skills. The other language skills were rarely assessed in their examinations.

- Sample EFL teachers used four oral feedback strategies. These were: explicit oral feedback, elicitation of completion, metalinguistic feedback and repetition of error. Among these, explicit oral feedback (direct) and elicitation of completion (indirect feedback) were the most frequent feedback strategies observed in all sample teachers' classrooms. The other feedback strategies were used only to some extent. They also employed written feedbacks which were only approval and disapproval of students' works. Furthermore, various non-verbal feedback strategies were identified in this study and these strategies were mostly teacher specific.

5. Conclusions

Classroom teaching is a dynamic and complex social process (Clark & Peterson, 1986) where teachers have to continuously assess the process and make appropriate decisions and change their teaching accordingly (Parker, 1984). Likewise, classroom assessment is more complicated than is often assumed. This is the case that the researcher observed in this study.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made:

- EFL teachers mainly used informal assessments which rarely facilitate interactive classroom context.

As described in the previous section, some informal assessment actions (such as display oral questions) were more commonly practiced than others (like referential and metacognitve questions). Sample EFL teachers rarely asked their students more open-ended questions, genuinely seeking to elicit new information. Instead, they focused more on comprehension and confirmation checks. They mainly employed questions which demand a single or short response of low-level thinking. In their other major informal assessment action, correction, there was also less negotiation. Although correction includes providing information to students or making counter suggestions in order to correct what a student has said or done, sample teachers were frequently observed reacting to students' responses by saying only 'Yes', 'No', 'Good', 'Very good' and so on. Hence, there was lack of extended elaborations to students' responses during corrections and this result clearly points to a conclusion that EFL teachers' informal assessments did not provide sufficient interaction in the classroom.

- EFL teachers' informal assessments were unsystematic and unplanned.

Sample EFL teachers were not systematic in noting individual students while moving or looking around the classroom. They focused more on monitoring student behaviors and checking their engagement on the task rather than focusing on what they were really doing. They did not precisely define the abilities to be observed. Hence, their classroom observations were impressionistic and unplanned. Moreover, during oral questioning, they addressed only volunteer students frequently, leaving the reticent ones out of the classroom scene and making them unaccountable for their own learning. They rarely used any questioning strategy which involves reticent students. Thus, it is fair to conclude that EFL teachers did not employ systematic and carefully planned informal assessments.

- ❖ EFL teachers' informal assessments lacked student engagement.

Sample EFL teachers rarely employed self-assessments and peer-assessments. They rarely involved their students to evaluate their own performance or accomplishments. Neither did they involve their students to identify their learning needs, their strengths and weakness and set their learning goals. This makes both the teacher and the students to become less effective users of assessment information.

- ❖ EFL teachers did not administer formal assessments or tests regularly and frequently.

Within a semester, they only used two types of formal assessments: mid-semester and semester final examinations. Quizzes, Unit-end tests or monthly tests were absent in the sample teachers' classrooms. Thus, it is possible to conclude that sample teachers administer tests occasionally.

- ❖ EFL teachers' formal assessments were not well-aligned with the material being taught.

As described earlier in the summary section, among the four major and two minor language skills, teachers prioritize in testing grammar, reading and vocabulary skills. The other language skills (i.e. writing, speaking and listening) were rarely assessed formally though these skills are there in the text book and teachers are supposed to teach these skills in the classroom. Therefore, their formal assessments did not reflect an integral part of the instructional approach or the contents in the teaching material.

- ❖ EFL teachers have used only a small portion of the feedback possibilities that classroom assessment has to offer.

Sample EFL teachers mainly used explicit oral feedbacks and elicitation of completion. The other feedback strategies (e.g. metalinguistic feedback, repetition of error, recast and clarification request) were employed only to a little extent. Their written feedback strategies were also limited only to approval and disapproval of students' works. Therefore, though sample teachers tried to use both direct and indirect feedback strategies in their classrooms, their feedbacks were not diverse and frequently occurred in the classroom.

6. Recommendations

The findings of this study have highlighted several suggestions for practicing EFL teachers, school administrators and curriculum developers or policy makers.

First, EFL teachers should revisit their practices based on the following specific recommendations:

- Due to the absence of interactive informal assessments, EFL teachers are in a difficultly of creating classroom situations which facilitate effective EFL learning. In order to be more effective in their teaching and benefit their students more, during instruction, EFL teachers need to employ interactive informal assessments, including referential and metacognitive questions.
- EFL teachers need to carefully plan what to assess, when to assess and who to assess. Without such planning, their informal assessments could not effectively support EFL learning.
- They should engage students in the assessment process (through self-assessments and peer-assessments) and make them responsible for their own learning.
- They should frequently employ short quizzes and progress tests rather than year-end or semester-end examinations. In addition, the quizzes and tests should fully reflect the contents in the text book.
- They should practice a lot of descriptive, indirect feedback strategies (including recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback and repetition of error) rather than direct and explicit feedbacks.
- Many of the sample EFL teachers have started their instruction without assessing their students' prior knowledge. This makes them less aware of their students' experiences and

prior knowledge and inhibits instruction. Thus, they should try to assess their students' knowledge and experiences before any new lesson starts.

- They should also assess their students' non-cognitive behaviors including their learning styles, learning needs and learning strategies.

Second, school administrators should implement quality supervision and provide support and basic resources for teachers. The English language syllabus for general secondary schools clearly requires teachers to implement multiple assessments. Despite this requirement, traditional assessment remains the main assessment practices in the sample schools and it seems that there was no pressure from any one to push teachers to implement multiple assessments. As a result, they continue to rely on traditional assessments in their classes. Therefore, teachers need quality supervision, monitoring and support from school administrators.

Moreover, teachers discuss a lot of things and share ideas about their students' behaviors in teachers' rooms. However, based on the researchers' observation, teachers' rooms in the three schools have not given due attention and furnished in such a way. Therefore, school administrators or managing bodies should be aware of this and furnish and arrange teachers' rooms in such a way to facilitate discussion among teachers since this is the best place where teachers make informal panel discussions about a lot of academic issues every day.

Third, EFL teachers in a training program should be provided with courses which focus on multiple classroom assessments. Before becoming teachers (i.e. at universities), EFL teachers should gain a better understanding of the benefits of employing multiple assessments for teaching and learning. University courses which aim at enabling EFL teacher trainees to effectively use both formal and informal classroom assessments should be designed and provided. It is important, therefore, that assessment of students be covered in detail when teachers are in training and should not be confused with testing, which is only one component of assessment.

Finally, building capacity of in-service EFL teachers to improve their assessment skills should be a priority if learning English has to be meaningful and effective.

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Questions asked during the presentation

1. In your study, you have found that teachers did not include some of the language skills in their formal assessments and you have recommended them to include those skills like listening and speaking. What mechanisms should be used to include these skills in their tests?

Answer provided at presentation:

Testing speaking and listening skills is difficult and time consuming for teachers. However, if the school management is helpful, teachers can do it at an arranged testing time and preplanned test tasks (commercial or locally made).

2. How can school directors provide such support?

Answer provided at presentation:

The support teachers get from school directors in administering tests and using various informal assessments is enormous. It ranges from a simple moral encouragement which does not require any financial cost up to stationary and other material supports which demand financial budgeting. Arranging testing rooms, scheduling test administering time and assigning invigilators all demand the good will and cooperation of the directors. Thus, there is nothing teachers can do without the immediate support from their principals.

3. In your study, you have focused only on three schools. Why?

Answer provided at presentation:

As it is mention earlier, in this study, multistage sampling strategy was employed. First, three sub-cities were selected randomly and from the three sub-cities three schools are also selected randomly. Therefore, the three sample schools were selected through this process.

Appendix 1

Teacher Interview Guide

School name…….. Date of interview ……..

Code name of the person interviewed …… Gender……

Part One – Background Information

1. Would you please tell me your academic qualification and field of specialization?
   ……
2. How many years have you been teaching English at secondary schools?

   ……

3. Have you received any EFL classroom assessment training before?
   a. **(If yes)** please describe the focus of the training?

   .....

   b. **(If no)** where do you think the knowledge and skills that you currently use to assess your students come from?

   ……

Part Two – EFL Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practice

I. Methods and Procedures of Classroom Assessment

4. What types of formal assessments or tests do you usually use in your teaching? (**Prompts**: reading tests, oral tests; tests including objective items or subjective items)

   ……

   ……

5. What informal assessment methods do you frequently use in your teaching? (**Prompts**: observation, oral questioning, self-assessments, peer-assessments, presentations, games, portfolios, projects, etc.)

   ……

   ……

6. Think about your observation and oral questioning practices in your classroom and answer the following questions.

6.1. When you are observing your students:

a. Who do you frequently observe (high-achievers, low-achievers or average achievers)? And why?

……

……

b. What do you frequently observe? (**Prompts**: students' classroom behaviors, process of work or product of work)

……

……

c. What kind of feedback do you usually give to your students during such observations?

……

……

d. What decisions do you usually make as a result of your observation? (**Prompts**: individual student or the whole class decisions; instructional or managerial decisions)

……

……

6.2. When you are asking your students oral questions:

a. Who do you frequently ask? And why? (**Prompts**: (high-achievers, low-achievers average achievers, volunteers, non-volunteers)

……

……

b. What kind of feedback do you usually provide to your students while they respond to these questions? Could you give me some examples of such feedback?

……

……

c. What kind of decisions do you make as a result of your oral questioning?

……

……

7. Think about each of the formal assessments or classroom tests that you employ in your teaching and answer the following questions.
    a. How do you develop each test? (**Prompts**: the source of the test tasks or items, the format of the tests)

    ……
    ……

    b. How often do you administer the tests? (**Prompts**: weekly, monthly, at the end of a term; arranged by the school or by yourself)

    ……
    ……

    c. What kind of feedback do you usually give to your students in these tests? (**Prompts**: marks only, marks and oral comments, marks and written comments)

    ……
    ……

    d. What kind of decisions do you make as a result of these tests?

    ……
    ……

II. EFL Teachers' Overall Classroom Assessment Practices

(Lastly, I am going to ask you about your overall assessment practice that you apply in your classroom)

8. What counts towards students' final grades? Do home works, participations, behaviors etc. count? (If yes, how do you measure or rate participation, behavior, etc?)

    ……
    ……
    ……

9. Do you have any grade book or students' progress file other than the mark list? (If yes, what kind? And what is recorded in it?)

    ……

10. Do students get a chance for self-assessment or peer assessment? (If yes, how often? Could you give me some example?)

    ……

11. Any final comments, questions, or concerns about classroom assessment that you think the school or the government needs to address?

    ……
    ……
    ……

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 2

Lesson Observation Schedule

Name of the school …… Date …… Visit number…….

Grade level……. Section ……

Number of students present …….. Teachers' gender……

Time of observation: Start …… End ……

Part One – Background Information

I. Classroom Context

1. Classroom **resources** (e.g. sparsely equipped, well quipped or rich in resources)

Comments
……
……
……

2. Classroom **space** (e.g. crowded or adequate space)

Comments……..
……
……

3. Room **arrangement** (e.g. inhibits interaction among students, allows facilitated interaction)

Comments……..
……..
……

II. Description of the Lesson Observed (e.g. skills being taught, lesson objectives)

4. The lesson observed:

……
……
……
……
……
……

Part Two – EFL Teacher's Classroom Assessment Practice

5. To what extent were the following specific assessment actions evident in the lesson? Circle a number that best describes the teacher's practice.

Scale: 1- Not at all 2- A small extent 3- Some extent 4- A great extent 5- A very great extent

No	In this lesson, there was:					
A	**Questioning** (asking students principled questions to elicit evidence of what they know, understand or can do)	1	2	3	4	5
B	**Clarifying (** asking for clarifications about what has been done, is being done or will be done**)**	1	2	3	4	5
C	**Metacognitive questioning** (questioning students about how and why specific action has been taken)	1	2	3	4	5
D	**Observing students at work** (formal or/and informal)	1	2	3	4	5
E	**Checking students' works** (examining work done, e.g. their class works and home works)	1	2	3	4	5
F	**Judging** (assigning mark, grade or summary judgment on the quality of this piece of work)	1	2	3	4	5
G	**Rewarding** (rewarding or punishing the pupil or demonstrating approval or disapproval)	1	2	3	4	5
H	**Setting Task criteria** (communicating what has to be done in order to complete the task)	1	2	3	4	5
I	**Setting Quality criteria** (communicating about the quality of the work)	1	2	3	4	5
J	**Correcting** (Supplying information, correcting and making counter suggestions)	1	2	3	4	5
K	**Criticizing work** (criticizing a particular aspect of the work or inviting students to do so)	1	2	3	4	5
L	**Planning next teaching** (moving forward in a lesson by suggesting or negotiating with students what to do next)	1	2	3	4	5
M	**Planning next time lesson** (suggesting or negotiating with students what to do in the next lesson)	1	2	3	4	5

(Adapted from Torrance and Pryor, 1998)

Additional comments:

……
……
……..

6. Do students have a chance for **self-assessment or peer assessment**?

☐ A. Yes

☐ B. No

Comments……

……

……

……..

7. What kind of **feedback** does the teacher provide to his/her students? Put a tick mark (√) in the table that best describes the teacher's practice.

No.	Feedback Strategies		Not evident	Somewhat evident	clearly evident
1.	**Implicit Oral Feedback (Indirect Feedback)**	**a. Recast** The teacher reformulates all of or part of a student's utterance minus the error.			
		b. Clarification request The teacher asks a student for a repetition or reformulation of his/her ill-formed utterance.			
		c. Metalinguistic feedback The teacher provides general comments or information to the student's utterance			
		d. Elicitation The teacher elicits completion of his/her own utterance by strategically pausing to allow students to 'fill in the blank'			
		e. Repetition of error The teacher repeats, in isolation, the student's erroneous utterance			
2.	**Explicit Oral Feedback (Direct Feedback)**	The teacher provides the correct answers in response to student errors			
3.	**Non-verbal Feedbacks**	The teacher responds to students' replies in the form of actions and body languages			

Comments on Non-verbal feedbacks

……

Appendix 4

Teachers' Questionnaire

Part One - Background Information

Name of your school……

Your academic qualification ……..

Field of specialization: Major……. Minor……..

Average number of students in each class that you are teaching ……..

1. How long have you been teaching English at secondary schools? .....
2. Have you received any EFL classroom assessment training before?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
     c. If yes, please describe the focus of the training?

     ……

     d. If no, where do you think your current knowledge and skills that you use to assess your students come from?

     ……..

Part Two – Multiple Classroom Assessments

I. Methods and procedures of Assessment

3. To what extent do you use the following formal and informal assessment methods or procedures? Please respond to each item in the table below by circling a number that best describes your assessment practice.

Scale: 1- Not at all 2- A small extent 3- Some extent 4- A great extent 5- A very great extent

	Items					
Informal Assessments	- I observe process of work (while students are engaged in a task)	1	2	3	4	5
	- I examine product of work (after students completed a task, as in class work or homework)	1	2	3	4	5
	- I ask students display oral questions to elicit evidence of what they know, understand or can do in the lesson (though I know the answers to my questions)	1	2	3	4	5
	- I ask students referential oral questions to get unknown information such as, their prior experiences and prior knowledge, their interests, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
	- I ask students metacognitive questions (about how and why specific actions have been taken)	1	2	3	4	5
	- I ask for clarification about what has been done, is being done or will be done	1	2	3	4	5
	- I assign mark, grade or summary judgment on the quality of students' work	1	2	3	4	5
	- I provide corrections and make counter suggestions	1	2	3	4	5
	- I ask other teachers and staff members to tell me what they know about my students	1	2	3	4	5
	- I use peer assessments	1	2	3	4	5
	- I use self assessments	1	2	3	4	5
Formal Assessments	**a. I use speaking tests like:**					
	- Word, phrase or sentence repetition tests	1	2	3	4	5
	- Tests asking students to read a text aloud	1	2	3	4	5
	- Oral interview or question-and-answer tests	1	2	3	4	5
	- Tests asking students to *give and follow oral directions*	1	2	3	4	5
	- Tests asking students to *provide oral description of an event, object or picture*	1	2	3	4	5
	- Tests asking students to *respond to questions using information provided*	1	2	3	4	5
	- Tests asking students to express an opinion	1	2	3	4	5
	- Tests asking students to propose a solution	1	2	3	4	5
	- Role play tests	1	2	3	4	5

b. I use listening tests like:						
- Tests asking students to *prepare summaries of what is heard*	1	2	3	4	5
- Tests asking students to *answer multiple-choice test items following a listening passage or conversation*	1	2	3	4	5
- Tests asking students to *take notes* from a listening text	1	2	3	4	5
- Tests asking students to *retell a story after listening to a passage or conversation*	1	2	3	4	5
c. I use reading tests like:					
- Reading aloud tests	1	2	3	4	5
- Reading tests containing *close-ended items (e.g. true-false, matching, and multiple-choice)*	1	2	3	4	5
- Reading tests containing *short answer items*	1	2	3	4	5
- Reading tests containing *sentence completion items*	1	2	3	4	5
- Reading tests containing *summary of what is read*	1	2	3	4	5
d. I use writing tests like:					
- Tests containing *sentence completion items*	1	2	3	4	5
- Tests containing *short answer items*	1	2	3	4	5
- Tests containing *form filling (such as, an application form or an order form of some kind)*	1	2	3	4	5
- Guided writing tests (e.g. Using pictures, notes, diagrams)	1	2	3	4	5
- Note taking tests	1	2	3	4	5
- Punctuation tests	1	2	3	4	5
- Tests containing *editing a piece of writing*	1	2	3	4	5
- Writing *an essay*	1	2	3	4	5
e. I use other skills tests like:					
- Vocabulary tests containing *select type items (e.g. true-false, matching, and multiple-choice)*	1	2	3	4	5
- Vocabulary tests containing *supply type items (e.g. supply spellings, words or phrases)*	1	2	3	4	5
- Grammar tests containing *select type items (e.g. true-false, matching, and multiple-choice)*	1	2	3	4	5
- Grammar tests containing *supply type items (e.g. supply verb forms)*	1	2	3	4	5

If you use other formal or informal assessment methods other than the above ones, please specify……

……

II. EFL Teachers' Overall Classroom Assessment Practices

4. To what extent do the following statements describe your overall classroom assessment practice? Please respond to each item by circling a number that best describes your practice.

   Scale: 1- Not at all 2- A small extent 3- Some extent 4- A great extent 5- A very great extent

	The following statements describe my assessment practice:					
A.	Home works and class works count towards students' final scores	1	2	3	4	5
B.	Class participation counts towards students' final scores	1	2	3	4	5
C.	Observation results (e.g. collected during process of work in a task) count towards students' final scores	1	2	3	4	5
D.	Students' classroom behavior (e.g. being good classroom citizen) counts towards students' final scores	1	2	3	4	5
E.	I mainly use paper-and-pencil test results to determine students' final scores	1	2	3	4	5
F.	I mainly use informal assessment results to determine students' final scores	1	2	3	4	5

(Adapted from Chan, 2003)

5. What kind of written feedback do you provide to your students? (Please give examples.)
   a. During class works and home works?
      ……
   b. On tests and examination papers? …….

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

Appendix 3

Questions for Students' Focus Group Discussion

I. Background Information

Date of Discussion ……..

Name of the School …….. Section……..

Name of Students' English Teacher ……

II. Methods and Procedures of EFL Assessment

(Now I am going to ask you some questions about your English language teacher's classroom assessment practice)

12. What types of formal assessments or tests does your English teacher use to assess your learning? And how often does he/she use such assessment methods? (**Prompts**: reading tests, speaking tests etc; tests including matching, multiple choice, write short answer, etc)

    ……
    ……
    ……

13. What informal assessment methods does your English teacher use to assess your learning? And how often does he/she use such assessment methods? (**Prompts**: observation, oral questioning, self-assessments, peer-assessments, presentations, portfolios, etc.)

    ……
    ……
    ……

14. Regarding your English language classroom, what counts towards your final scores?

    ……
    ……

15. How many tests/exams does your teacher give you with in a semester?

    ……
    ……

16. Does your teacher give you feedback about the work you do in class? (If yes,) What kind? Can you give me examples?

    ……
    ……

17. Do you get a chance for self-assessment or peer assessment in your English classroom? If yes, how often?

    ……
    ……

18. Any final comments, questions, or concerns about your English language classroom assessment that you think the teacher or the school needs to address?

    ……
    ……

Thank you for your time.