LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT LITERACY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS AT THE PAKISTANI UNIVERSITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR REFORMS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRACTICES IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This study examines the level of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) of English language teachers at the university level in Pakistan by adopting a mixed-methods explanatory approach. The study offers a comprehensive analysis of language assessment awareness among English language teachers in the Pakistani context along with their language teaching-learning experiences. Likewise, English language teachers shared their perspectives regarding the role of LAL in enhancing language teaching and learning processes at the university level. The theoretical framework of the study, which is comprised of three seminal theories, viz. Classical Test Theory, Generalizability Theory and Item Response Theory, has informed the interview protocol used for qualitative data collection. In the same vein, the current study investigates three core areas including the current level of LAL among university English teachers, the challenges they face while assessing their students' language proficiency, and the possible solutions for these challenges for the improvement of language assessment, teaching and research practices. For the said purpose, data is collected from 15 English language teachers who are currently serving at five different public sector universities including Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) Kohat, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM), National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad, FATA University, Kohat, and Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad, through semi-structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Correspondingly, quantitative findings of the study reveal that most of the participants (73.33%) are PhD degree holders but many of them lack professional language assessment trainings both pre-service and post-service. The study highlights that English language teachers have limited exposure to standardized testing frameworks like CEFR, IELTS, and ELLT. Among them, only 13.33% had studied language assessment as a course at the PhD level while 46.66% of language teachers had not attended any training in the last five years of their professional life. Given the gaps between language teaching and assessment practices as the qualitative data highlights, language assessment trainings need to be offered to teachers and students at the university level with a view to enhance their theoretical as well as practical knowledge regarding language assessment which will furnish their language assessment skills. The major findings of the study also have significant implications for English Language Teaching (ELT) and assessment practices and language policies with a view to bridge the gulf between language teaching and assessment practices in multilingual contexts like Pakistan.

Keywords/Phrases: Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), English Language Teachers, University Level, ELT Research practices in Pakistan.

Introduction

Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) encompasses language knowledge, skills, principles, methods, techniques, and procedures, required to language practitioners, policy makers, language teachers and all stakeholders, who intend to design effective language assessment tests, tasks, scales and rubrics in order to make well-informed decisions on the basis of language assessment results or data (Firoozi et al., 2019; Gan & Lam, R., 2022; Giraldo, 2018). It suggests that language assessment literacy provides language teachers motivation and confidence to evaluate their language students' levels of performance (for instance, at

CEFR-Levels: A1, A2, B1, B2 and C1, C2) in the target language and to report the weaknesses students have in their language trainings.

According to (Mansoor, 2005) assessment of language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in English for academic purposes at the university level has social implications in terms of language teaching and learning processes. It means that language assessment literacy guides language teachers to track their students' language development across numerous levels of the standardized scales on language proficiency assessment for instance, Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR), International English Language Tests (IELTs), English Language Level Test (ELLT) among others in order to mould their language teaching methodology, syllabi, and curriculum accordingly.

In the same vein, language assessment literacy is one of the key elements of language teaching across the world as it could be used to 'bridge the gulf between language teaching and learning within the ecology of language classrooms and language assessment practices such as testing, evaluation, examination and measurement' (Leung et al., 2018; Colby-Kelly & Turner, 2007). It implies that language assessment literacy is not merely restricted to language testing as opined by (Fulcher, 2012) but it means many things to many people. For instance, (Crusan et al., 2016; Giraldo, 2021; Levi &Inbar-Lourie, 2020; Tsagari, 2020; Shahzadi & Ducasse, 2022) state that the notion of language assessment literacy goes beyond the concept of language testing as it encompasses language teaching and assessment contexts, practices, perceptions, beliefs, cognitions, attitudes, and theories, all of which shape and contribute teachers' language assessment knowledge, skills and principles in a holistic way.

In the Pakistani context, English language is perceived as a powerful tool being the medium of competitive exams in Pakistan, viz. Central Superior Services (CSS) Provincial Management Services (PMS) and many others (Gul et al., 2023(a); Rahman, 2006; Sehrish et al., 2025). Accordingly, high level of proficiency in English is considered as a passport to success with respect to lucrative jobs, scholarships for studies abroad d, political diplomacy, knowledge, access to the regime of power politics, hegemony of elite class and bureaucracy (Manan et al., 2016; Shahzadi & Ducasse, 2022). It implies that in Pakistan, English decides the future of the candidates in job markets and in arena of business. It is therefore imperative for students in the context of Pakistan to achieve high proficiency in English in order to compete with other students while achieving perks and privileges of certain jobs (Shamim, 2008; Gul et al., 2023(c); Shakeel et al., 2025).

Contrary to the huge significance attached with English language, little attention is paid to the Pakistani English teachers' language assessment literacy, language assessment trainings, uniformity in language assessment scales or rubrics, the dissimilarities and gulf between language assessment practices and teaching methodologies (Manan et al., 2016; Shahzadi & Ducasse, 2022). Further, in Pakistani context, politics is also involved in English language assessment which is still an untouched area with respect to language teaching and assessment (Shamim 2008; Aftab, 2012; Gul et al., 2023(b)).

Therefore, this study intends to assess language assessment literacy of English language teachers, who teach and assess English language at the university level in Pakistan. In addition, the study aims to evaluate that whether English teachers at the university level are equipped with language assessment knowledge, skills, principles, techniques, method, and tools or they need some sort of professional trainings on language assessment literacy for their academic and professional development. Finally, the study also aims to document challenges in language assessment faced by the English teachers during assessment processes in Pakistani context. The main rationale behind this research is that as language assessment is one of the modern trends in the arena of Applied Linguistics research and it is also considered a critical aspect of English language teaching and learning processes (Frank, 2012; Shahzadi

& Ducasse, 2022; Gul et al., 2023). With sound assessment literacy language teachers can motivate and encourage their language students towards the better comprehension of the target language in effective manner (Davison, 2019; Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001; Gul et al., 2022).

Similarly, language assessment literacy is significantly important for motivating and influencing language classroom practices while contributing to assessment for learning (formative assessment). Furthermore, language assessment literacy is crucial for language teaching as by applying effective language assessment methods during assessment for learning, language teachers can expedite and ameliorate language courses' learning outcomes (LCLOs) (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008) in a smooth way. The review of the relevant literature on language assessment and language testing suggests that language assessment literacy, especially in Pakistani context is less investigated area, it is therefore imperative to conduct more research in this field in order to cope with the challenges in language assessment and to align language teaching methodologies with modern ways of assessment applicable across the world. Additionally, being a multilingual country where six major and more than fifty small and indigenous languages are spoken, the linguistic profile of Pakistan is very fertile (Seifi, 2015, Rahman, 2006). Rahman (2006) opines that among all these languages English and Urdu are the languages of power politics, diplomacy, education, corporation, media and bureaucracy of the state Pakistan. This is generally attributed to state's pronounced support for these two languages: English and Urdu.

Consequently, English as an international language has become an epitome of power and prestige, a symbol of elite social class and sophistication. As a result, local and indigenous languages of Pakistan have been attached with less power, lower status, marginalized, culture shame and stigma (Rahman, 2006; Seifi, 2015). Given the scenario drawn above, this research is significant in two ways. Firstly, it attempts to offer a balanced focus on language teaching as well as language assessment literacy. This would help bridging the gulf between language teaching and language assessment practices. Secondly, it contributes to academia and intelligentsia by fostering language trainings, language syllabi and curriculum designing for BS, MS and PhD classes in general and in the Pakistani context in particular. Finally, given the novelty of this research, it is hoped that this research will open new avenues for future research studies in the domain of language assessment, language testing and language studies.

Research Questions

This research is guided by the following research questions emerging from the literature review:

i. What are the perceptions of Pakistani University English language teachers regarding language assessment literacy?
ii. What are the challenges faced by these teachers while assessing students' language proficiency at graduate level?

Research Objectives

The study intents to achieve the following objectives:

i. To understand the perceptions of Pakistani University English language teachers regarding language assessment literacy.
ii. To explore the challenges these teachers face while assessing students' language proficiency at graduate.

Theoretical Framework

Language Assessment as a sub-branch of Applied Linguistics is grounded in the theories of language assessment, Measurement Theory in Language Testing (MTLT), Classical Test Theory (CTT), Generalizability Theory (G-Theory), and Item Response Theory (IRT) (Mao,

2022; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2009). These theories of language assessment and language testing inform us that language assessment is mainly language learning. Following these theories, it is argued that the concepts of language teaching and learning cannot be divorced from the concept of language assessment. Further, it is argued that language testing theories and language teaching approaches are mutually inclusive and inform each other in their implications for teaching-learning situations including the notion of "backwash" i.e. the consequences of the results of the tests on students, institutions, parents, and teachers. It implies that a family of theories in the domain of language assessment and testing suggest that language teachers need to be well aware of the language assessment theories and principles of language assessment while developing tests for language assessment either for summative assessment i.e. assessment of learning or for formative assessment i.e. assessment for learning.

Literature Review

Language assessment literacy has been defined in numerous ways by various scholars, such language assessment literacy as a repertoire of knowledge, skills, competences, abilities, assessment methods, techniques, and the applications of appropriate strategies adopted by the language experts in order to comprehend, assess, design language tests, and to analyze the data taken through the usage of these tests, and tasks (Coombe, et al., 2020; Giraldo, 2018).

Recently, language assessment literacy has received due attention from language stakeholders, owing to the significant importance as it bridges the gulf between language teaching and learning and language assessment (Colby-Kelly & Turner, 2007; Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2020). It implies that language assessment is not merely encompassing language proficiency measurement but it is also used as a tool for language teaching in a particular context.

Despite the great importance of language assessment literacy in language teaching methodologies, language assessment literacy is a neglecting field, approximately across the non-native contexts of language teaching (Cheng et al., 2004; Gul et al., 2024). Therefore, it is imperative to switch authors' attention towards language assessment theories and practices in order to synergize them in a better way and to improve language teaching within peculiar language ecology (Weng & Shen, 2022; Gan & Lam 2022).

Crucially, language teachers devote one third of their time to the development of language assessment activities, tools, process and procedures, because they believe that the 'evidences' taken through language assessment could be utilized to inform their language teaching methodologies and language classroom practices. Thus, one of the purposes of language assessment is that it contributes to language teaching methodologies development in various contexts of language teaching. Therefore, language teachers need to have sound language assessment literacy in the arena of language education and applied linguistics.

It is also pertinent to mention that according to (Gan & Lam 2022) language assessment literacy among language teachers may 'serve as a catalyst for successful language education.' It may be owing to these significant contributions of LAL, language practitioners are concurrently struggling to add courses related to language assessment literacy to language curriculum for the professional development of language teachers across the world.

A study conducted by (Hidr et al., 2024) in Pakistani context, reported that language assessment in its social milieu contributes to a paradigm shift in the domain of language teaching and learning. Language assessment has pedagogical and social implications for policy change and teachers' professional development in the same context i.e. aptly called soft skills development among the teachers (Vandeyar & Killen, 2007). Additionally, language assessment has multifaceted purposes and objectives such as what sort of constructs to be assessed, how to assess, why to assess and when to assess students' proficiency in

language. In the same line, language assessment is carried out mainly at two levels: micro level assessment and macro level assessment. Micro level Language Assessment (MLLA) refers to the assessment for the purpose of accountability of the learners and Macro Level Language Assessment (MLLA) is executed for the purpose of the accountability of the teachers, institutions (Remesal, 2011; Brown 2004).

Despite of the growing interest in the domain of language assessment literacy, in Pakistani context, little of such research conducted on language assessment awareness (Hidr et al., 2024; Shams et al., 2018).Though (Shahzadi & Ducasse, 2022) highlights language assessment literacy as a medium of instructions for university teachers in Pakistani context. Their study provides important implications for language teachers' trainings in Pakistan. In the same vein, language assessment trainings are the possible solutions for the enhancement of language assessment literacy among the teachers as well the students in particular and among the parents, administers, and all the relevant stakeholders in general.

With a view to address this gap, the study in tries to assess language assessment literacy level of the university teachers in Pakistan. Furthermore, the study intents to document trainings, teachers have attended, the challenges teachers face during the process of language, in summative, formative, formal and informal assessment of the language learners in Pakistan. Finally, the study seeks possible solutions for these challenges in order to cope with the modern strategies prevailing in the world in the field of language assessment.

Methodology

The study adopts a mixed-methods explanatory sequential approach as the main objectives of the study are to assess levels of language assessment literacy of English teachers at the university level in Pakistani context and to document the challenges, teachers faced in language assessment processes. Accordingly, the study in hand, aims to find out possible solutions for these challenges faced by the language teachers in assessment of language learning. Previous studies conducted in arena of LAL have taken surveys (e.g. Sultana, 2019) is a main tool for data collection and (Crusan et al., 2016; Malone, 2017; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017; Vogt &Tsagari, 2014) have adopted a mixed-methods approach to delineate teachers' levels of LAL. They assessed teachers' language assessment literacy; especially language assessment practices either at primary or intermediate level within the ecology of language classrooms.

The current study intends to assess language assessment literacy of English teachers at University in order to record teachers' views, beliefs, perceptions and their opinions, regarding the language teaching context, assessment practices, the challenges, they face in the process of language assessment for language learning and language assessment of learning. Therefore, the study opted for a mixed-methods explanatory sequential approach which includes semi-structured questionnaire followed by semi-structured interviews, based on the seven major themes informed by the previous studies as shown in the below table.

Table1 *Shows Major Themes for Semi-structure Interviews*

S.No.	Major Themes	Studies
1	*"Assessment training and qualifications"*	*(Shahzadi & Ducasse, 2022)*
2	*"Teacher Language assessment Awareness"*	*(J Andrews, 2008).*
3	*"Language Teaching Context in Pakistani context"*	*(Shahzadi & Ducasse, 2022)*
4	*"The Role of Experience in Language Assessment"*	*(Trumbull & Solano-Flores, 2011)*

5	*"The Need of Language Assessment Trainings"*	*(Malone, 2017)*
6	*"Challenges in Language Assessment practices"*	*(Bachman, 2024).*
7	"Possible Solutions for these Challenges"	(Gul et al., 2023)

Research Sites

As the study is conducted on English Language Teachers' levels of language assessment literacy at the university level. Therefore, five public sector universities are taken as research sites this study. The names, locations of the universities are shown in the below table.

Table2 *Showcases Names and Locations of the Universities Involved in the Study.*

S.No.	Universities 'Names	Location of the University
1	*The Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST).*	*District Kohat, KP, Pakistan.*
2	*Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM).*	*District Mardan, KP, Pakistan.*
3	*National University of Modern Languages(NUML)*	*District Islamabad, Punjab, Pakistan.*
4	*FATA University*	*District Kohat, KP, Pakistan*
5	*Quaid e Azam University (QAU)*	*District Islamabad, Punjab, Pakistan.*

Participants of Study

In participants of this research includes, all English Departments' Teachers of the above cited five public sector universities.

Sampling and Sample of the Study

From the large population or participants of the study fifteen English language teachers; three English teachers are selected from each university, based on non-probability convenient sampling technique. The rationale for opting convenient sampling is the easy operationalization of data and it provides researchers to utilize a sample which is readily available, easily accessible, and aptly manageable within the due frame of time of the study (Golzar et al., 2022; Alvi, 2016). As the current study adopts a mixed-methods approach in its methodology. In the same line, convenient sampling technique is commonly employed in both qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Acharya et al., 2013; Habib et al., 2025).

Piloting Study

Before collecting data from the actual participants of the study, piloting study is conducted from similar level of participants in order to enhance reliability and validity of the data collection tools.

Data Collection

Firstly, a plain language statement is given to the participants. Then, 'Informed Consent Form (ICF)' is obtained from all the willing-participants of the study. At the first phase of the data collection, semi-structured questionnaires are distributed among the participants in order to elicit their level of Language Assessment Literacy, the trainings, they have received, and to document their levels of academic and professional qualifications. After the successful completion of data collection through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews are conducted from the participants, so that to develop deeper understandings into the phenomenon, under the consideration of the current research study.

Data Analysis

The collected data via questionnaires and interviews is analyzed systematically while following six steps of thematic analysis in order to assess English teachers level of language assessment literacy by establishing a baseline for the identification challenges teachers face in language assessment of their students.

Accordingly, the data collected through questionnaires is coded and entered into SPSS for statistical analysis as in descriptive statistics includes, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations are calculated to elicit language teachers' levels of language assessment literacy. Likewise, data conducted via semi-structured interviews is analyzed while following the six steps of thematic analysis.

Table3: *Demonstrates six steps of Thematic Analysis*

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Familiarization with the Data	*Generate Initial Codes*	*Searching for the themes*	*Reviewing the themes*	*Defining the themes*	*Writing –up*

Note. Thematic Analysis: A process of identifying patterns in the qualitative data to elicit major themes.

Results and Discussion

Results and main findings of the study are organized in accordance with the three research questions; align with questionnaire and interviews interpretations.

The Quantitative Part

Table No4: *The Demographic Information of the Participants*

Features of the Sample	Choices	Frequencies	Percentages
Gender	Male	11	73.33%
	Female	04	26.66%
Age	30-50	03	20.00%
	35-40	04	26.66%
	40-45	02	13.33%
	45-50	05	33.33%
	50-55	01	6.66%
	55-60	00	00%
	60-65	00	00%
	65-70	00	00%
	MPhil/MS English	04	26.66%
Academic Qualifications	PhD English	11	73.33%
	Post Doctorate	00	00%
	TEFL	05	33.33%
Professional Qualifications	ELT	07	46.66%
	TOFEL	0	00%
	CEFR	01	6.66%
	IELTS	02	13.33%

Qualified From	Abroad	09	60%
	Pakistan	06	40%
Needs for Trainings on LAL	Pre-service	02	13.33%
	In –service	09	60%
	Both	04	26.66%
Studied Assessment as a course	BS Level	08	53.33%
	MS/MPhil	05	33.33%
	PhD	02	13.33%
Number of Trainings in last five years	Online	03	20%
	On Campus	05	33.33%
	Not attended	07	46.66%

The Qualitative Part

RQNo.1: What is the current level of language assessment literacy of English teachers at the University level in Pakistani context?

The focus of this research question is on the themes such as *"the current level of assessment literacy rate among the English teachers at the university level"* and *"teachers' over all awareness regarding language assessment their context of language teaching."* Therefore, language teachers' responses through questionnaire and interviews are reported. As revealed in results through questionnaires, most of the English teachers at university in Pakistan are PhD degree holders with specialization in English linguistics and literature, but many of them did not study 'Language Assessment' as a subject either at their BS, Master, MS/MPhil or PhD level, owing to which they did not aware of the technical terms, principles, types and purposes of language assessment. Interestingly, some of them along with degrees in English Linguistics also did professional courses, viz. teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Teaching of English to the Students of other Languages (TESOL), Bachelor in Education (B.ED) Master in Education (M.Ed.) and Certified Teacher course as shown in the below table.

In response to this question language teachers' (participants) responses are recorded as:

P1. "Yes. So for me, I think it's all about skills and knowledge. Like, it may be different."

P2. "I understand that language assessment literacy is very important for language teachers as it encompasses every regarding the teaching and learning processes of language. Simply, it is for me knowledge of language assessment proficiency levels."

P3. "Language assessment literacy means if you know about the language structured knowledge organizations, language usage according to the context, the rules as well as the principles of language assessment that support language learning and acquisition. For example, reliability, validity, authenticity, practicability and wash back of language assessment."

P4. "Language assessment according to my understanding is all about the practices we have during students assessment in classrooms such as, the quizzes we are taking, the mid and final semester exams we have."

P5. "In the domain of Applied Linguistics, language assessment covers all those techniques which are required to the stakeholders who are involved in designing of an effective assessment constructs."

P6. "Language assessment literacy refers to the formal knowledge of language that important for language teachers in order to make decisions regarding the progress of their

students' language skills development.

P7. "Language assessment literacy is very vast field and it is different from the general literacy. For instance, language assessment literacy is competence and abilities of the teachers to gauge the ongoing progress of their students in terms of their language skills improvement with the passage of time."

P8. "I haven't studied language assessment courses on language assessment literacy as I am graduated from foreign universities and schools but on the basis of my understanding and field experiences I am able to define language assessment literacy as language assessment literacy is set of language knowledge, theories, skills, concepts, beliefs, perceptions, and more particularly the pedagogical practices, teachers have in common."

P9. "Language assessment literacy is about measuring properly different skills related to language, like speaking, writing, reading, and listening and then quantifying them according to the established norms and skills. Obviously, teachers' qualification effect teacher assessment literacy. Yes it does, but it depends on what type of qualification and what type of like experience, because if you are not focused on if for example when you are saying that qualification, if you are qualified, if you have degrees but you have not specifically. Work with Language assessment. So maybe then it would not increase. Increase your literacy to that extent, especially when we are talking about experience normally in university what we are doing, we are not teaching language. We are not assessing language. So this type of experience would not give you that kind of literacy. But if your experience is in which you are in the environment of language classroom, if you are. Dealing with language learners, not language, linguistics or literature, not just English the subject, but English as a skill, so that kind of experience would definitely increase your literacy and experience and qualification. Both will increase your assessment."

P10. "It would be difficult for me to define language assessment literacy according to the demand of your research, but as far my knowledge, it refers to the ways, we have language proficiency, fluency and accuracy measurement. Yes, for me assessment functions as a catalyst in the hands of language teachers."

P11. "I think language assessment literacy is like only theoretical things that you are mentioning that there are principles and all these things. So how much you know about them, how much you know about these processes. But practically, I think if you are able to do language assessment according to the theory according to the rules according to the principles and you are able to do it and if your assessment is valid, it's real. So it means that you know how to do it. So this part when you know how to do it, this is your assessment literacy, whether you know these jargons, these technical terms or not, it does not matter, but what matters is that you have the knowledge how to conduct language assessment which is reliable, which is valid, which is practical. So this is the main thing that today."

P12. "In my opinion, language assessment literacy is first of all knowing about how you assess the students. What do you want to assess and how you assess them? So this is important and in my opinion, assessment should also be corrective assessment. There is, you should provide the students an opportunity to learn from you by providing them corrective feedback. So, this is my opinion about assessment literacy.

There is online English course teach English now from Arizona State University. So I have completed 6 certificates including one on assessment and from Arizona State University. Other than this, I've been participating earlier, before the five years limit I've been participating in various excess English micro scholarship teaching training programs. But personally, I have benefited a lot from those courses that I Completed from Arizona State University."

QRNo.2: What are the challenges faced by the English teachers in students' language assessment processes at the University level in Pakistan?

The intention behind this research question is to achieve the second objective of this research i.e. "to explore challenges in students' language assessment faced the English teachers at theUniversity level in Pakistan." In the same line, this question is also implicitly based on theme such as "the role of experience in language assessment of the students at the university level."

In accordance with this question, language teachers' responses are reported such as:

P1. "So the very first challenge is actually the very low educational level of our students because they are actually admitting here in this university without any entry test. So later on if we are actually going to assess them like with full zeal exist. So I am not sure that they are going to clear those tests so."

P2. "I think language assessment is one of the most difficult job, nowadays because language for some extent is both competence and performance and we haven't devised standard for both if there is some competence. definitely there is no standard are limitation for the performance on the other side if performance is there then there are some problem incompetent so I think these are the most challenging area that a teacher should assess."

P3. "As far as my professional experience is concerned, the field of language assessment is versatile because it requires language knowledge, proficiency in assessment skills, principles of language assessment, socio-cultural knowledge of language which is being assessed. Therefore, to assess language is the most difficult and challenging field for me."

P4. "As far as language assessment challenges are concerned. I have not assessed students in terms of language like I am teaching subjects related to literature. I just marked them according to their answer, not any skill related to language like speaking listening, reading and writing."

P5. "Yes, we face challenges, while assessing our students' language proficiency, think it may be due to inappropriate tools of assessment and because of the exam phobia students have during the days of exams."

P6. "In my opinion, assessment is the most challenges task of teaching-learning process even for the most experience teachers as well. Because it requires time, skills and patience."

P7. "Language assessment challenging for us, because we considered it in isolation from teaching, it should be, or it must be taken as an integral part of language teaching. If it is considered, in this way, it becomes less challenging. Yes, obviously it is difficult."

P8. "While assessing language, I feel comfortable. I am enjoying the whole process of language assessment. I teach students from the perspective of assessment. Because I believe, assessment nothing else but it is all about trainings. So, train your students and assess them accordingly."

P9. "I am well aware of the different scales, designed for language assessment. For instance, CEFR, IELTS, and The Oxford English Language Level TEST (ELLT). So, for me, language assessment is the easy one."

P10. "Yes, I see, language assessment is difficult. It may be for me, not for others, because I haven't studied, the rules and regulations for it. In our courses, it was also not included."

P11. "I'm not facing. I'm not facing any challenge because the reason is that I am not in the language classroom. I don't have to assess language learners. I am not dealing with language learners. So I think those people who are more mostly like these institutes that are offering IELTS or these type of courses, they would they might be facing some challenges and

our contexts what we are teaching we are teaching linguistics, we are teaching literature and we are not actually working as language teachers. So that's why we cannot say that I am facing any challenges in assessment because the assessment that we are doing, it's not language assessment, it's assessment of knowledge, it's not assessment of skills. So that's why I cannot say that I am facing initially this. Again, then I think I would not face that many challenges because it was one of my interest. I have thought language assessment a subject in my research work. I have done research work on this, so maybe I was. Maybe I am among the little ones who are literate in this regard, so maybe I would not change as many challenges as some others, but it is an area in which we need a lot of focus and a lot of training for our teachers."

P12. "Well, I believe. The challenges are primarily related to the students' level and their practices. Because you know in our exam system, some students are prone to cheating. OK, this one thing they are not much interested in class and they try to get pass by using other means. One of the most terrible ones is cheating in the exam hall. So naturally, this affects the assessment process. Another important problem is that here I believe we need to rationalize the workload given to the teachers. So on one hand you are busy with supervising the research children's, on the other hand you are busy with teaching you are also further busy in administrative matters and then you don't have time to check the papers. Thoroughly, sometimes there is delay because of lack of time in checking the papers. So we do have challenges in assessment."

QRNo.3: How do these challenges in language assessment in Pakistani context be overcome?

This research question focuses on themes such as *"to find out possible solutions for the challenges faced by the language teachers, in both forms of assessment, viz. assessment of learning (summative assessment) and assessment for learning (formative assessment)"* and *"the needs of language assessment trainings for language teachers at the university level."*

P1. "Yes, exactly, Assessment should be the part of the game. I mean Formative Assessment. Exactly, not the summative. The possible solution is that. Like the way we have some extra marks for presentation, not extra marks, but internal evaluation. So I think we must keep 10-20 marks for the assessment apart from those presentations and assignments and classes. First of all, there should be like an entry test for the BS and MS levels. And then later on assessment is the second part. I recommend that like the people well-educated from the Education Department, they must take part in it."

P2. "Actually I have post graduate diploma in my professional profile and master in teaching English as a foreign language in that scenario I have come to know that language teaching language are assessing the ability of the language quite different from assessing any other knowledge so due to that teaching English as a foreign language I came to know a little bit. So, for me too, it is the challenge one. So, we need trainings in language in order advance our language assessment knowledge or literacy."

P3. "I think the language teacher should be trained in a different way language teacher in advance is an knowledge sharer he is not just to check the paper and give mark at least he should check the four skills at least the four and the fifth one is communication skill this way a little bit inelegant suspect as possible language is as big as possible I think proper training is the main solution."

P4. "Possible solutions could be proper trainings, courses related to language assessment. Teachers should be given knowledge and information. Like what actually is language assessment? How language assessment can be carried out? Different principles, except related to language assessment."

P5. "Trainings and courses for teachers, for their professional growth on language would be enough to train language teachers in language assessment processes."

P6. "I think to tackle with such challenges in language assessment professional training for pre-service and in-service teachers made be mandatory. After the successful completion of these trainings teachers may be assessed for their knowledge, they have development during these trainings."

P7. "As I did my PhD from UK, during my stay over there, I observed that students are not merely assessed through paper, pencil tests rather they have alternative assessment tools such as assignments, projects, article publications etc."

P8. "To train language teachers in the ways, language is taught in contexts, teachers will become painters, holding various colours. So, teachers will be able to paint what they want for students. Language assessment is all about training the minds of students, which is the ultimate product of the process of language assessment."

P9. "As I mentioned earlier, a lot of training, because when you are talking about, there is lack of literacy, so we need to prepare these teachers, both mentally and skill wise that when we are and first of all they need to know what the language classroom what is. Because when you don't know language assessment and you are claiming to be teaching Language it is not like because of different levels, because if you don't know what's the level of your learners, if you cannot assess them for teaching would not be effective in that regard. So I think first and foremost thing is to provide them this understanding this literacy that why is assessment important? Why is language assessment important? How is it different than general assessment as a subject? So this is why I think it is important."

P10. "See in my opinion and this is generally true, not only to assessment in universities but to many more things that are related to university processes, Teaching processes, learning processes you see, in my opinion. Unfortunately, the policies are set on the higher level on the operational level, there are many challenges that the high ups are, the higher authorities are not aware of. So, for instance they send you 200 students as new intake. Yes, this nature and sometimes they lower the merit for admission. It means they send you students who are not only more in number but low in quality, low in their capabilities and abilities now, yes. So they are, for instance, these days they are not taking test. They have removed this condition. What is the impact? The impact is that they give admission to let's say 200 people instead of 50 with the result that you receive the lot that is not really qualified for the degree. Now these people who do not have any intelligence or abilities that are prone to cheating and to using other means for getting pass. So what I mean to say is that this is one example of how the policy is made on high level can create problems on operational level on the lower level."

P11. "Of Course 1 is training. But another important thing, training is very important. As I told you that for me qualification, yes, these qualifications are very important and experience also helps them grow in their assessment practices. Yes, true all these things. But one thing more you see at Some, I believe, also negatively impacts our assessment because if a teacher is given a contract with lesser pay that he or she receives. As compared with the regular teachers. Now what happens is that that teacher is naturally bent upon teaching more credit hours like instead of 12 credit hours here she will be teaching a team and also there is a lot of administrative work that they have to do. With the result that they are not having a lot of time to spare for their assessments. So this also impacts their assessment."

Table No 5:

Seeking themes through Deductive Thematic Analysis

S.No.	Statements/Quotations	Key phrases	Codes	Deductive Theme-

				1
1	"I think language assessment literacy is like only theoretical things…such principles and techniques" "Yes. So for me, I think it's all about skills and knowledge." "In my opinion, language assessment literacy first of all knows about how you assess the students."	Theoretical things such as language assessment principles, techniques, knowledge and skills.	Knowledge, Principles, Skills and techniques.	Theoretical knowledge
2	"...to assess language is the most difficult and challenging field for me." "Well, I believe. The challenges are primarily related to the students' level and their practices." "Yes, I see, language assessment is difficult." "In my opinion, assessment is most challenges task of teaching-learning process even for the most experience teachers as well." "So the very first challenge is actually the very low educational level of our students…"	The most difficult and challenging task. Students' level and practices, Teachers' experience.	Difficult and challenging task. Students' low background. Students' proficiency level	Students hailing from low background and their language learning practices
3	"Yes, exactly, Language Assessment should be the part of the game." "I mean Formative Assessment." "Unfortunately, the policies are set on the higher level on the	Language assessment is integral part of the process. Formative assessment. Language assessment policy	Policy is top driven.	Dichotomy between the language assessment policy and English language teaching.

	operational level, there are many challenges that the high ups are, the higher authorities are not aware of. So, for instance they send you 200 students as new intake."	*is in hands of the high ups.*	
4	*"Of Course 1 is training. But another important thing, training is very important."* *"As I mentioned earlier, a lot of training. Because when you are talking about, there is lack of literacy, so we need to prepare these teachers, both mentally and skill."* *"To train language teachers in the ways, language is taught in contexts, teachers will become painters, holding various colours."* *"Language assessment is all about training the minds of students, which is the ultimate product of the process of language assessment."* *"I think to tackle with such challenges in language assessment professional training for pre-service and in-service teachers made be mandatory. After the successful completion of these trainings teachers may be assessed for*	*Language assessment is all about trainings.* *To tackle such challenges in language assessment professional training is mandatory.*	*Professional trainings,* *Training is solution*	*Language assessment is all about trainings*

their knowledge, they have development during these trainings."

"Trainings and courses for teachers, for their professional growth on language would be enough to train language teachers in language assessment processes."

"Possible solutions could be proper trainings, courses related to language assessment."

"I think the language teacher should be trained in a different way language teacher in advance."

Findings and Discussions

In the response to the questionnaire items, the statistical data taken from the participants revealed that the majority of the university teachers are PhD English degree holders PN=11=73.33% and accordingly PN=09 =60% have received their degrees from English speaking countries and they possess a high academic profiles in terms of teaching, administrative and MPhil/MS and PhD supervision. Likewise, only PN=2=13.33% have studied language assessment a course at PhD level and PN=08=53.33% have studied language assessment a course at their BS level. Furthermore, unfortunately, a significant number of participants i.e. PN=07=46.66% did not participate or attend professional trainings on language assessment literacy in the last five years on the contrary only PN=05= 33.33% have attended on campus and PN=03=20% have attended online mode trainings on language assessment awareness. It implies that language assessment literacy is not up to mark in the context of the study, for which one the main responsible factors is lack of professional frequent trainings on language assessment literacy.

From the participants' responses to the semi-structured interview, the themes taken from literature review are affirmed. English language teachers at the university level in Pakistan possess knowledge of language assessment but they have deficiency in language assessment trainings. As one of the main themes revealed in qualitative data is need of the trainings of the language teachers. Most of participants of the study defined language assessment literacy as language assessment literacy refer to the theoretical knowledge of language theories, knowledge of language assessment principles, skills, processes and procedures. According to some other participants of the study language assessment literacy encompasses both theoretical and practical knowledge of language. The practical knowledge of language assessment means that the skills and abilities demonstrated by language teachers in order to

assess their students language performance through quizzes, tests, exams within the ecology of language classrooms.

Additionally, majority of the teachers opined that English language teachers in the context of the study face challenges in assessing students' language proficiency due to the students' low academic background, crowded classes, enrollment without entrance or aptitude tests required for specific field of study, cheating during exams, recruitment of the teachers on visiting and contract basis for the period of six months or one year, language teachers involvement in administrative activities and supervision. Correspondingly, due to high pressure and shortage of the time, language teachers have less time for the fair process of language assessment of their students.

Implications for Reforms in English language Teaching and Research practices in Pakistani Context

Based on the major findings and discussion the current study suggests the following implications for Reforms in English language Teaching and Research practices in the Pakistani Context:

i. Pre-Service and in-service professional mandatory trainings for language teachers could be made the integrative part of language teachers' education and professional development. programs,

ii. It is imperative to bring reforms in the entire English language curriculum in order to integrate Language assessment literacy in BS, MPhil/MS and PhD degree programs.

iii. Numerous types of assessments for instance, formative, summative, diagnostic, alternative, discrete assessment may be included in BS, MPhil/MS and PhD curricula to introduce students with modern modules in language assessment literacy.

iv. It is very crucially to strictly adhere and align the top-driven regime and policy of language assessment with classroom dynamics and realities in Pakistan.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings of the study, numerous recommendations are suggested to enhance the Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) of English language teachers at the university level in the context of Pakistan. The recommendations will be culminated in improving language teaching, assessment, and research practices cross universities in Pakistan.

Firstly, it is strongly recommended that language assessment courses be formally incorporated into undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs in the domain of English and Applied Linguistics. As the findings indicate that many university English teachers have not studied language assessment as a course, which has resulted in limited theoretical and practical understanding of assessment principles.

Secondly, regular in-service professional development programs and workshops on language assessment may be organized by universities, Higher Education Commission (HEC), and relevant academic bodies. These training programs should focus on both theoretical and practical aspects of LAL, for instance, test construction, rubric development, formative and summative assessment, feedback strategies, and ethical assessment practices. Similarly, Continuous Professional Training (CPT) would help teachers to update their assessment knowledge and align their practices with international standards.

Thirdly, the study recommends increased exposure to international and standardized assessment frameworks, for instance, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and other proficiency scales. University English teachers may be well trained to use these frameworks for benchmarking students' language proficiency and for designing valid and reliable assessment tools that ensure consistency and transparency across institutions.

Likewise, alignment between language teaching objectives, curriculum, and assessment practices should be strengthened. As in the findings reveal a noticeable disconnect between what is taught in classrooms and how students' language proficiency is assessed. Curriculum designers and teachers may collaboratively, design assessment tasks that reflect learning outcomes and communicative language use, thereby promoting a more integrated approach to teaching and assessment.

Finally, educational authorities and policymakers may recognize language assessment literacy as one of the core components of teacher professionalism. For this purpose, strategic investment in assessment trainings, curriculum reforms, and policy development are essential to bridge the gap between language teaching and assessment practices. Because improving teachers' LAL will ultimately enhance the quality of English language education and learners' academic and professional outcomes in Pakistan.

Conclusion

The study affirms that numerous English language teachers at the university level in Pakistan lack language assessment literacy; though they possess highest academic degrees in English i.e. MPhil/MS and PhD owing to less professional trainings on language assessment awareness.

English, being a co-official language of Pakistan along with Urdu and medium of instructions at the university level encourages language teachers to design standardized language assessment scales, parameters for language students' proficiency assessment in English. Therefore, they need language assessment trainings, workshops, seminars, symposiums, experts' opinions and talks in order to enhance teachers' language assessment literacy.

It is important that attention be paid to language assessment literacy at the university level. Furthermore, this goal may be achieved through pre-service and in-service language trainings for language teachers who are engaged in language teaching at various levels, viz. at school, college and university level.

List of Abbreviations:

i.   *B.ED. Bachelor in Education*
ii.   *CEFR Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*
iii.   *ELLT   English Language Level Testing*
iv.   *ICF   Informed Consent Form*
v.   *IELTs   International English Language Tests*
vi.   *KUST   Kohat University of Science and Technology*
vii. *LAL   Language Assessment Literacy*
viii. *LCLOs Language Courses Learning Outcomes*
ix.   *M.ED   Master in Education*
x.   *MLLA Macro Level Language Assessment*
xi.   *MLLA Micro Level Language Assessment*
xii.   *TEFL   English as a Foreign Language*
xiii. *TESOL   Teaching of English to the Students of other Languages*

Acknowledgements

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