

Investigating EFL Teachers' Attitudes toward Alternative Assessment

Gülay ER¹ , Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Education

gulayer@omu.edu.tr

Fatma ÖZCAN² , Ministry of National Education

21280987@stu.omu.edu.tr

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Abstract: Over the last decades, the widespread view that English is now a lingua franca has increased the prominence of English language teaching methodology and has led to the continuous revision and amendment of pedagogical issues such as language teaching and learning along with testing and assessment. To that end, there has been a considerable emphasis on the alignment of assessment practices with language teaching and learning practices. Accordingly, language assessment, more specifically, alternative assessment (AA) has been one of the critical issues that have received much attention in the field of language teaching. This current study, which was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively, has aimed to explore the attitudes of teachers of English as a foreign language towards alternative assessment methods. The participants of the study, 137 teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) who work in the state primary, secondary and high schools in the province of Samsun in Türkiye, responded to the 5-Likert scale with 15 items developed by İzci et al. (2014) in the survey part of the study. For the qualitative phase of the study, 16 teachers voluntarily agreed to be interviewed to answer four open-ended questions. The findings of the study revealed that the EFL teachers held a positive view on alternative assessment methods. Other findings also showed that their attitudes varied significantly in favour of the teachers who received inservice training, and that the participants also held the view that teachers often face the challenges which impede the use of alternative assessment tools and/or that there are factors which prevent them from implementing these methods efficiently.

Keywords: *assessment, language assessment, alternative assessment, teachers' attitudes, EFL context.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the years there have been substantial changes in language pedagogy. In order to provide novelty and diversity for language education and to enhance the support for the learners, new trends continue to emerge along with educational technologies. Naturally, these changes and pedagogical demands in language teaching have propelled teachers, educationalists and policy makers into doing some improvements in evaluating language students' skills and performance. Hamayan (1995) agrees that change in assessment practices is a necessity in accordance with the shift in the underlying beliefs and practices in teaching and learning languages.

It is obvious that the primary role of testing and assessment on the part of the teachers is to obtain informative data about the students' progress, by means of which they can detect learning problems, and can evaluate their instructional materials, which will also lead to program evaluation. However, as Brindley (2001a) also indicates, assessment also has another major function such as motivating the students especially when they are effectively and appropriately implemented. Cheng and Fox (2017), discussing the motivational aspect of assessment, assert that one of the efficient ways to motivate students is to involve them in the assessment process. If students become aware of their

¹ORCID: [0000-0002-9813-4394](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9813-4394)

²ORCID: [0000-0002-0068-5834](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0068-5834)

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own progress, this will sustain their motivation. Thus, it should be noted that the main purpose of assessing learners is to collect evaluative information about students' accomplishment of the course objectives on the one hand, and also in some way to strengthen students' motivation and increase learner autonomy on the other hand, which undeniably leads to their academic success. While the first refers to 'assessment of learning', the latter could be associated with 'assessment for learning', the case, which Green (2018) has likened to the work of a coach, who aims to develop the sporter's potential. Another term referring to an ongoing process which enables the students to be autonomous is 'sustainable assessment' or 'assessment as learning' as opposed to summative and formative assessment (Everhard, 2015). In a nutshell, as also argued by Hamp-Lyons (2016), assessment practices differ in accordance with the purpose for which evaluative information is required. It can also be asserted that assessment/testing, an indispensable part of teaching and learning contexts, has a critical role in making sound choices that will promote teaching and learning procedures.

In the Turkish context of language teaching, the English curriculum was reorganized according to the principles of the constructivist approach by Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in 2004. This has led to some changes in the policies of both teaching and evaluation procedures, especially to a move towards the learner-centered language classrooms. Accordingly, the issues such as individual differences, intelligence types, learning styles, learner autonomy and types of assessment have gained more importance to enhance the quality of language education. As a result, some differences in the teaching process and assessment practices have occurred in a way that language teaching pedagogy and assessment practices should concord with each other. The reformation in the English curriculum by MoNE (2018) also required that testing and assessment principles that should be adopted are related to the use of multiple sources of evaluation techniques in line with process-oriented approach to language assessment. Another important regulation in the language assessment in schools which began to be put into practice in the 2023-2024 academic year has demanded that the students' listening and speaking skills should also be assessed with appropriate assessment tools.

This study has focused on exploring the EFL teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards the practices of AA tools. Although many teachers believe that it is important to implement AA in the language classroom, traditional assessment (TA) is still in great demand in language classrooms. The common perception is that AA is not implemented as widely as TA is. One of the purposes of the present study is to find out whether or not this is the case within the sample of the study. As it is expected that there should be a satisfactory match between curriculum objectives and assessment practices, it has become important to search for the teachers' opinions on AA as there are not many studies in the Turkish context. This study is expected to develop an understanding about AA and raise the teachers' awareness about the importance of AA practices through the obtained findings. For this purpose, the present study has sought to find answers to the following research questions :

RQ 1. Which AA methods do the English teachers use?

RQ 2. What attitudes do the EFL teachers hold towards AA?

RQ 3. Do the teachers' opinions on AA vary according to the variables such as seniority, school type and participation in in-service training?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Testing and Assessment

In the literature of testing and assessment in language teaching, it is possible to encounter diverse terms such as testing, evaluation, measurement or assessment at the conceptual dimension. To begin with , it is essential to note that the terms 'testing' and 'assessment' are considered to be overlapping terms to some extent in terms of usage, at least not to be very incompatible with each other, but that the latter has been more acceptable and preferable as a broader term more recently. Cohen (1994), who prefers the term 'assessment, asserts that, when he uses the term 'testing', he alludes to all the ways of collecting data about the language abilities of the learners. However, the term



‘test’ is mostly associated with paper-and-pencil measurement tools, which are often administered in formal learning settings. In this respect, it is obvious that they are just one type of gathering information about students’ progress. Thus, it is recognized that, as a more global and inclusive term, and as “something more like a kinder, gentler sort of test” in Hamp-Lyons’s terms (2016, p.14), assessment covers other ways of collecting information about learners’ competency, abilities and skills. Purpura (2016) also makes a general remark about the nature of ‘assessments’ and indicates that “the procedures used to elicit information involve varying degrees of systematicity, ranging from very controlled tests to far less controlled assessments as in routinized teacher protocols during instruction” (p.191).

As noted previously, testing and assessment practices carried out systematically to find out whether the behavioural objectives are achieved are integral part of teaching and learning process. Because of this interdependence, methods of testing and assessment are naturally influenced by the underlying approaches of instructional strategies. To put it another way, the use of appropriate assessment techniques for the curriculum objectives has a pivotal role in the teaching process. Admittedly, language testing differs from testing other content subjects. This is due to the nature of learning a foreign language, which requires multifaceted assessing tools to be used in order to gauge language learners’ progress. It is also agreed that the performance of foreign language learners cannot be adequately measured through paper-and-pencil tests, which are called TA methods. As opposed to such an exam practice, there are also some other assessment types, which mostly aims to assess learners to see what they can do with language. Such assessment types are usually called ‘alternative assessment’. However, Brown and Hudson (1998:657) indicate that the term ‘alternative’ in the expression ‘alternative assessments’ implies that they must be new and different from the so-called traditional assessment types. Thus, they prefer to use the term ‘alternatives in assessment’ for the assessment types such as portfolios, conferences, self- and peer assessments. Brown and Hudson’s viewpoint is also favoured by Brown (2004), who questions about why the term ‘alternative’ should be used since the assesment covers a number of assessing techniques along with tests, and by Brown and Abeywickrama (2019), and also by Brown and Lee (2015), who do not usually prefer using the collocated words in question in this sense. Along similar lines, Green (2014) and Hughes and Hughes (2020) also seem to favour a similar expression, refering to the other forms of assessment, which are regarded as less formal types of assessment. Although this perspective suggests that there seems to be a conceptual diversity in terms of use, the term ‘alternative assessment’ is often used in the meaning of alternative forms of assessment (e.g. Chapelle & Brindley, 2002; Coombe et al., 2007; Hamayan, 1995; Herman et al., 1992; Huerta-Macias, 1995). On the other hand, O’Malley and Pierce (1996) indicated that ‘alternative assessment’ is a criterion-referenced assessment and that as it is based on activities that reflect classroom and real-life environments, they preferred to use the term ‘authentic assessment’. In the literature there are also some other conceptualizations such as “learning-oriented assessment” (Turner & Purpura, 2016), and “dynamic assessment” (Poehner, 2016; Poehner & Infante, 2016), which highlight the “assessment for learning” and “assessment as learning” as opposed to assessment of learning. With a holistic perspective, it could be asserted that they all have formative nature as they are embedded in the intstruction process. Throughout the paper, different expressions that refer to AA will sometimes be used where the meaning does not specifically differ, but for practical and purposeful reasons, the acronym AA will often be preferred.

Alternative assessments in ELT

It was not until 1990s that the deficiencies or problems found in standardized testing or TA tools were challenged, after which new concepts emerged under such labels as ‘alternative assessment’, authentic assessment, or performance-based assesment, which are often used synonymously. At this point, it should not be ignored that there are also other concepts related to the issue of language assesment such as dynamic assessment, ongoing assessment or continuous assessment, all of which put emphasis on the integration of assessment process into the instruction with an intervening approach. As Poehner (2016) argues, teaching and assessment are two inseperable processes that should go hand in hand with each other. It must be agreed that this cannot be realized



only through TA tools. Poehner suggests that integrating assessment and instruction could be possible through task-based processes.

Before going any further with the discussion of the properties of most common AA methods such as portfolios, self- and peer assessment and observation, it would be more appropriate to center on the hallmarks of AAs from the TA tools first. Each AA practice may have its own benefits and also drawbacks or challenges from a number of factors. However, in this study the focus would be on discussing AA methods from a holistic perspective because even if they are diverse practices, they have common properties.

Brown and Abeywickrama (2019, p.17), adapting from Armstrong (1994) and Bailey (1998), give a list of the properties pertaining to TAs and AAs comparatively as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Properties of TAs and AAs

"Traditional Tests"	Alternatives in Assessment
One-shot, standardized exams	Continuous, long-term assessment
Timed, multiple-choice format	Untimed, free response format
Decontextualized test items	Contextualized tasks
Scores suffice for feedback	Formative, interactive feedback
Focus on the 'right' answer	Open-ended, creative answers
Summative	Formative
Oriented to product	Oriented to process
Non-interactive process	Interactive performance
Fosters extrinsic motivation	Fosters intrinsic motivation"

As they also indicate, the table appears to be biased against traditional tests as if TA tools were totally defective. It should be kept in mind that both types of assessment are complementary to each other. It is more convenient that depending on the purpose of teaching and learning contexts, they should be used in adequate proportion. In addition, Brown and Hudson (1998) present a list of common characteristics of AAs, outlining the lists given by Aschbacher (1991), Herman et al. (1992) and Huerta-Macias (1995): The AA practices

1. "require students to perform, create, produce or do something
 2. use real-world contexts
 3. are nonintrusive in that they extend the day-to-day classroom activities
 4. allow students to be assessed on what they normally do in class every day
 5. use tasks that represent meaningful instructional activities
 6. focus on processes as well as products
 7. tap into higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills
 8. provide information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students
 9. are multiculturally sensitive when properly administered
 10. ensure that people, not machines, do the scoring, using human judgement
 11. encourage open disclosure of standards and rating criteria; and
 12. call upon teachers to perform new instructional and assessment roles".
- (p.653-654)

At this point, it is convenient to emphasize again that AA methods aim to get more comprehensive information about students' competencies and skills that cannot be obtained properly through TA tools, most of which usually look for accuracy and also far from assessing the student continuously as they are only product-oriented. It is accepted that most exam-oriented assessments hardly give information about the achievement of higher cognitive skills such as problem-solving and about the metacognitive strategies the students use. As underscored by Herman et al. (1992), teachers are urged to implement other forms of assessment beyond tests, which will lead to students' being creative and drawing their own conclusions by striving for more complex problems. Since they mostly include tasks which are meaningful and contextualized, they are more likely to promote students' intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy in comparison to TA. And it is clear that undoubtedly, the



information obtained through AA will provide the teachers with valuable opportunity to reorganize the pedagogical practices for the teaching process. It should be kept in mind that AA practices should not be preferred instead of TA tools, but that they should be used to supplement traditional measurement tools. For a deeper understanding, it would be appropriate to have a bit closer look, even briefly, at some particular AA methods.

Portfolios: Simply, a portfolio refers to a range of samples related to one's work in any domain. In educational settings, portfolios contain instances of student work, from extracts from projects which are documented to assist the teacher to monitor the student's progress. In order to develop learner-centered classrooms, portfolio assessment (PA) is the most known and popular type among the other AA methods. As Barnardt et al. (1998) put it more comprehensively, PA "is the systematic, longitudinal collection of student work created in response to specific, known instructional objectives and evaluated in relation to the same criteria" (p.3). Portfolios generated by the students through the teacher's help and guidance make the students actively involved both in learning and assessment process. Besides, by individualizing learning they encourage student responsibility for their own learning. They also increase teacher-student interaction and also collaboration as peers and parents can also be involved in the process. (Barnadth et al. 1998; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019; Delett et al., 2001; Genesee & Upshur, 1996). As portfolios comprise a variety of student's work which tends to reflect student's performance on different skills, PA allow for the learner's language progress in a multi-dimensional way (Delett et al., 2001). PA, being clearly an ongoing assessment, should be conscientiously organized so that it should achieve its desired goal. As addressed in the review study by Namayan (2022), it has drawbacks as well as benefits. First of all, they are time-consuming for teachers who are not familiar enough with PA. Kim and Yazdian (2014) also points to school administrators' points of view which may inhibit teachers from implementing PA. Last but not least, it is crucial to emphasize that it is a challenging job on the part of the teachers especially when they do not have enough knowledge about its implementation. On the other hand, although Rea-Dickins (2000) suggests that they should be kept in a place where students can easily access, this poses, if not insoluble, a serious problem, considering the crowded classrooms and physical conditions in many state schools in the Turkish educational context. However, bearing its motivational aspect in mind, the teachers should push their limits to integrate PA into the teaching and learning process.

Self- and peer-assessment: Self-assessment, which could be simply defined as 'can-do' assessments, has gained more importance with the shift in language teaching pedagogy from teacher-centered to student-centered. Generally speaking, in self-assessment process, the students are asked to evaluate themselves sometimes after a particular activity or studying a few particular units in the coursebook, and sometimes about their general language competence. However, it is unquestionable that the students cannot do this on her own without any guidance. According to Andrade and Du (2007), self-assessment is a process during which students evaluate their own works and their learning in accordance with the determined criteria, identify the good and bad sides of their works, and edit them. As also indicated by Brown and Abeywickrama (2019), they should be given either a scaled rubric or a checklist about their perceived skills and abilities. It is also argued that self-assessment would be effective providing that the students are trained about self-reflection and self-assessment strategies (Chapella & Brindley, 2002; Tedick & Klee, 1998). Self assessment is highly beneficial as it allows for more student involvement, enhances intrinsic motivation, and encourages the students to become more autonomous and self-directed (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019; Brown & Hudson, 1998; Chapelle & Brindley, 2002; Everhard, 2015; Richards, 2015). It emphasizes the formative assessment as the students can be aware of their weaknesses and strength so that they can direct their own learning process, which makes them more autonomous learners. When the students engage in setting criteria for self-assessment tasks, they can have opportunity to deepen their understanding of learning process, which is remarkably important. On the other hand, self-assessment tasks may have drawbacks, and they are related to subjective judgements of students as it is possible that students may not be fair and accurate in evaluating their progress.

When it comes to peer-assessment, as its name suggests, it refers to tasks in which students evaluate the work of their peers, and could be said to have similar principles with self-assessment. It is



common knowledge that one of the pivotal components of learning process in a learner-centered classroom is, undoubtedly, to establish collaboration. Clearly, peer-assessment tasks, which are often fulfilled in writing classes in which they edit each other's compositions, pave the way to cooperative learning robustly. To put it another way, peer-assessment is viewed as assuming the role of a tutor to assess their peers' performance. From this aspect, it can be assumed that most students may find peer tutoring interesting as well as challenging. It is important that students should be equipped with sufficient knowledge about the strategies of peer assessment. As Falchikov (2001) underlines, certain criteria should be determined in advance so that the students could make reasonable judgements about whether their peers have reached expected goals or not. On the other hand, it is worthwhile to note that in order to boost the effectiveness of peer-assessment a positive and supportive classroom environment is essential.

Observation: It is common that language teachers always observe their students' language performance during the classes at least informally. Even when the observation is realized in this way, its benefit is undoubtedly enormous because the teachers can use this information for significant purposes such as determining the learning problems of particular students. As Chapel and Brindley (2002) underlines, observation is one of the most common ways in order to monitor the students' progress. As Cameron (2001) notes, the observation technique is often used in language classrooms for young learners as it does not distract them. Rea-Dickins (2000) also asserts that in contrast to TA, observation-based assessment necessitates that the teacher's involvement should be substantially qualitative. In a nutshell, it should be born in mind that observation as an ongoing assessment should be planned in a systematic way and should be implemented with a checklist. O'Malley and Pierce (1998) suggest that observations should be recorded systematically in order to determine changes in the student performance.

Conferences: Conference assessments (CA), as one of the "personal response assessments" in Brown and Hudson's term (1998, p.663), are carried out between the teacher and the student in an appropriate place, usually in the teacher's office, or online in order to have an interview based on the student's learning process in general or more specifically the student's work that has been completed recently. As a matter of fact, conferences differ from other ways of AA since the emphasis is to gain deep insights about the learning process and also the strategies the student uses. (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Genesee & Upshur, 1996). It is also stated that CAs could be conducted with small groups or with all students simultaneously. Even though this kind of implementation relatively dilutes their potential impact, both the teacher and the students can get considerable benefits, though. For the students to gain maximum benefit from the CAs, as Hughes and Hughes (2020) indicate, they should be asked to come to the meeting with their questions and comments. Brown and Hudson (1998) also note that their being time-consuming and usually not being scored are considered to be their disadvantages. Considering the school settings in the Turkish educational context, it could also be asserted that another disadvantage is that the teachers do not have their own offices individually, which poses a serious problem for the implementation of CA. However, interview, as a specific type of conference, is said to be one of the direct assessment tools to assess the students' speaking skill, which should not be neglected, and should be administered.

Projects: It is widely believed that, in comparison to the other AA tools, projects are the most widely used method in most educational settings. They are recognized as valuable AA tools especially in language teaching contexts as they provide the students with the opportunity to use the target language in meaningful and real-life contexts. Projects, which could be conducted individually or in groups, comprise the integration of multiple skills such as problem solving and critical thinking (Hughes & Hughes, 2020). Projects could be handed a written report especially when they are carried out cooperatively. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) suggest that when they are delivered through an oral presentation, "projects... can be reviewed by a panel of judges rating the content presented, its organization, and/or the language used" (p.15).

Journals: Simply, journals refer to entries which are written down by students sometimes on a topic of their interest, sometimes in order to reflect their feelings, reactions, perceptions and attitudes



toward particular learning tasks or language learning process in general. These journals, which are usually jotted down by students, not paying much attention to the linguistic accuracy as indicated in Brown (2004), provide the teachers with valuable information related to the students' thoughts of learning process. Baxter (2009) argues that the fundamental goal in writing journals is writing to learn. As he put it (p.22), "writing to learn is based on the assumption that students' thoughts and understanding can grow and clarify through the process of writing". It is also worth noting that they should be viewed as different activities from writing tasks in the classroom in that the teacher and the student establish a genuine communication using the target language. For this reason, they are mostly referred to as 'dialogue journals' (Brown, 2004; Cohen, 1994; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). In order to ensure that students can get maximum benefit from the teacher's feedback, Brown (2004), referring to recommendations given by McNamara (1998), indicates that it is important that, while giving responses, the teacher should be highly generous in praising the student, at the same time not forgetting to provide them with suggestions.

Presentations: Presentations, which mainly require the students to deliver a speech on a particular topic, are considered to be as common as projects in language classrooms. The main purpose is to assess the speaking skill with its various facets. Fundamental to the scoring is the use of a rating scale in presentations which the students can prepare with the supplement of visual aids or multimedia. As an analytic scoring, which is one of the ways of increasing the objectivity of scoring in assessing productive skills, Coombe et al. (2007, p.123) presents a detailed rubric for assessing oral presentations which comprises ten components, such as communicative performance, pronunciation, time management, and so on, being scored from zero to ten. As opposed to holistic scoring, such rubrics enable the students to obtain more specific feedback.

Obviously, AA tools have significant merits for language learners as the proponents emphasize. Considering diverse educational settings, it can also be concluded that there are some factors which may rarify the implementation of AA tools effectively, and that not all AA tools are equally appropriate in all learning contexts, as most research reveals.

Related Studies

When the literature on the field of language assessment is examined, it has been observed that, because of the growing interest on classroom-based assessment, AA methods have been addressed in a great many studies, but each has concentrated on different facets of AA, and also for different purposes. Here only the studies regarding the EFL teachers's opinions on AA have been addressed.

Cheng et al. (2004), in a comparative and comprehensive study conducted in three different ESL/EFL contexts (Canada, Hong Kong and Beijing) at the tertiary level, aimed at exploring the instructors' assessment practices in regard to methods, purposes and procedures. Taking into consideration the results related to the assessment practices based on student-constructed response method only, the study obtained substantially different findings in the Canada, Hong Kong, and Beijing ESL/EFL contexts. According to the study, among the methods of journal, interview, portfolio, self- and peer assessment, student journals were the most used method in Canada and Hong Kong contexts while in Beijing context the interview was the most implemented one. As a matter of fact, the interview method was also preferred in the other contexts in comparison to the other methods. Inbar-Lourie and Donitsa-Schmidt (2009) conducted a well-rounded study with 113 EFL teachers who worked in state schools in order to investigate whether teachers were eager to utilize different types of assessment along with their opinions regarding the use of AAs. For their study, they developed a questionnaire with 65 items based on the model proposed by Hargreaves and his colleagues, which subsumes four perspectives such technological, cultural, political and postmodern. The findings showed that teachers had a positive viewpoint towards the use of a variety of AA methods. Another finding led the authors to underscore that teachers should be provided with necessary training on AA implementation and to enhance their assessment literacy. Another important finding is that teachers who hold a critical view of AA do not implement AA tools as much as teachers who are positive about



them, because they do not rely on AA instruments to reflect students' real knowledge. The research revealed no significant correlations teachers' beliefs and some demographic variables such seniority of teachers, teaching context, and education level. In a Taiwan elementary school EFL context, Chan (2008), conducting a large scale study, concluded that a great majority of teachers had such a strong view that utilizing multiple assessment tools would be best to assess the students. The teachers also indicated that multiple assessment methods including AA tools such as portfolios and observation would also be more effective in determining the students' learning problems. However, another result revealed by the study is related to the restrictions of multiple assessment tools, such as time constraint, the increase in workload, and subjective grading as most research also show. In their study, Al-Nouh et al. (2014) focused on EFL primary school teachers' attitudes toward AA as well as their AA literacy. The results of the study conducted with 342 female teachers showed that although some teachers stated that they need inservice training, in general, they described themselves as they have enough knowledge about AA. Their attitudes were found to be at a medium level; they preferred TA as they thought AA is time-consuming and ignores the students' writing skills. Similarly, another study carried out with 224 teachers of grades 5-8 in the Omani context also addressed the AAs in terms of EFL teachers' perceptions. In relation to the adequacy of AA tools, it was found that most teachers think they are moderately adequate. In particular, projects were perceived to be adequate as they pave the way for students' creativity. Another finding of the study pointed to the result that the implementation of AA tools is not an easy process and also time-consuming and challenging; besides their utilization require that students should be given extra guidance and support (Al-Ruqeishi & Al-Humanidi, 2016). A contrastive study on TAs and AAs conducted by Phongsirikul (2018) aimed to investigate the perceptions of English-majoring students and the instructors towards paper-and-pencil measurement tools and some particular AA tools. The findings of the study, which was carried out with 103 students and five teachers using questionnaires in relation to the English Grammar course, revealed that both students and teachers had a higher tendency for TA tools. Another result is that the participants also held the view that AA tools may have a motivational effect in the skill-based courses. In a Jordanian context, Asassfeh (2019) searched for EFL teachers' tendencies towards language assessment from a number of perspectives such as purposes, techniques or sources and also the practices that have been carried out by the teachers. One of the results point to the fact that paper-and-pencil tests are the most preferred and implemented techniques while AA tools such as portfolios and journals are the ones which are the least used methods. It was also indicated that official reasons made the teachers use TA tools rather than AAs.

The exploration of teachers' views on AA and their AA practices has also been the research issue in some other small-scale studies, some of which were qualitative research. The findings of the study employed by Abbas (2012) with a questionnaire, all of whose items were prepared about the possible difficulties of implementation of AA methods have significantly shown that the instructors faced problems in using AA tools. Some of these problems were mostly related to time constraint and difficulties faced during the implementation of AA tools. Another small scale study which centered on the 20 experienced EFL teachers' conceptions and attitudes toward AA methods concluded that the teachers, who had low level of AA literacy, were in favour with summative evaluation, and that in their context of teaching, AA tools were not used because of various factors (Moradian et al., 2018). In a similar study, Naraghizadeh et al. (2023) have also concentrated on the 30 Iranian EFL teachers' opinions on AA tools. The findings obtained from the participants with MA and Ph.D degrees, who work in different educational settings, showed that most of the teachers have considerably positive views about AAs and that they consider them as effective tools to gauge student learning and to create a more appropriate learning environment which allows for more student engagement. In a qualitative study carried out in the Malaysian context, Singh et al. (2022) investigated 11 ESL teachers' alternative assessment strategies. The data of their study were based on interviews, observations and document analysis. The findings indicated that the teachers exploited a variety of AA tools along with summative assessment. And it was also found that six teachers' tendency was towards TA tools while 4 of them embedded AAs into their assessment process and only one teacher aimed to assess her students more globally, using AA tools. EFL teachers' points of views on AA were also investigated in a Moroccan context by Ghaicha and Omarkaly (2018). The results indicated that, although the participants of the study, 73 public high school teachers, had favourable attitudes toward AA tools,



they were mostly inclined to use TA tools. The study also showed that most teachers agreed that AA methods are effective means in promoting the teaching process along with the learning process, by enhancing students' motivation. The restrictions were related to time-constraint, class size and lack of training as indicated in some other studies. However, it was also found that the teachers that they had a desire to receive additional training on AA. In a similar vein, a study employed with 68 EFL teachers to investigate the teachers' perspectives of AA tools revealed that although the teachers were aware of considerable merits of AA methods such as individualization in assessment, motivating the students, and causing less stress, they were not inclined to use some particular AA tools such as portfolios because of the abovementioned similar negative factors such subjective grading, time-consuming, the workload increase, and also lack of training (Danica, 2020). In the study by Janisch et al. (2007), which aimed to address the benefits and drawbacks of AA through the lens of graduate students, the participants reported that through AA tools, teachers could have the opportunity of creating an authentic learning environment as well as tailoring the teaching process for the students. On the other hand, it was also noted that the main obstacles in implementing AA could be administrative issues and the education system. The authors also emphasized that it is critical that teachers should have AA literacy in order to be able to exploit the AA tools effectively. In another study carried out with 50 secondary school teachers, Nasri et al. (2010) concluded that predominantly, teachers had favourable perceptions on AA. It was specifically found that teachers believed that AA tools would enhance active learning and promote students' creativity and motivation. However, the findings also showed that the main disadvantage of AA was that they increased their workload. In another qualitative study, Troudi et al (2009) explored the views of a group of EFL teachers on language assessment in higher education in terms of the teachers' perspectives and roles. Their study revealed that almost all teachers were in agreement that TA methods were limited in assessing the students' performance and that students should be assessed with multiple sources of assessment as they believed that assessing students using AA methods along with tests would be much fair. Another finding obtained from the research is that some teachers believed that teachers should be trained about the implementation of these different assessment types.

In Turkish EFL contexts, some particular studies were conducted in relation to the EFL teachers' perspectives on AA methods. A mixed-method study conducted with 192 EFL instructors working in schools of foreign languages at different universities concentrated on the investigation of the instructors' views towards AA revealed that most instructors held a favourable manner toward AA. The study results also implicate that teachers find AA tools beneficial on the part of the students' learning process. The study which also explored the effect of 'in-service training' variable showed a result in favour of the teachers who received in-service training (Küçükhayrat, 2024). In a study conducted by Demir (2022) on EFL teachers' practices and perceptions of AA tools, it was found that EFL teachers working at primary schools used TA tools more frequently than AAs. Moreover, the study also explored the effect of participants' variables on their preferences. It was found that more experienced teachers and males preferred TA tools more frequently. Additionally, EFL teachers had a positive attitude toward AA tools although they had some problems related to students, the course, parents and teachers themselves in implementing them. Another study conducted with 152 EFL teachers in the Turkish context investigated whether or not the assessment methods implemented in the language learning context for young learners are in line with the objectives of English Curriculum determined by MoNE (2018). On the contrary to these objectives, the findings showed that most teachers were more inclined towards using TA tools rather than AA tools (Arslan & Üçok-Atasoy, 2020). The quantitative research conducted with 70 EFL teachers working in preparation school at a state university aimed to explore the teachers' assessment literacy and also along with the diverse purposes of assessment practices. Based on the findings obtained, it was indicated that the teachers had the strong belief that assessment should be used for formative purposes and that summative assessment was given the lowest level of importance. According to the results, between the other two dimensions, 'self-assessment' and 'assessment to improve instruction' have been given relative importance respectively. Another result of the study is that as a variable, teachers' years of experience did not have an effect about the teachers' (Önalan and Karagül, 2018).



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study has been carried out through a sequential mixed-method research conducted with the integration of quantitative and qualitative data. As comprehensively discussed by Johnson et al. (2007), mixed-methods research is a research model which allows the inclusion of various methods of collecting data in a single study to obtain more comprehensive information about the phenomenon of interest and to see whether the obtained findings corroborate each other. For the data to be gathered quantitatively, a 5-point Likert scale was used while for the qualitative phase, open-ended questions were used in a semi-structured interview. The data collected through a semi-structured interview method comprises broader information with elaborative answers related to the participants' opinions (Mackey & Gass, 2005). And in this way, the findings obtained from the survey are expected to coincide with the qualitative findings, and the aim is to synthesize the information obtained.

Data Collection Tools and Participants

An AA Attitude Scale which was developed by İzci et al (2014) was used as the instrument of collecting the quantitative data, having taken necessary permission from the authors via e-mail to be able to use the scale in this study. The instrument, which is based on 5-point Likert scale with 15 items, (ranging as 'strongly disagree (1); disagree (2); partly agree (3); agree (4); strongly agree (5)'), has three sub-dimensions that explain the items in terms of three factors. These are ; 'supporting the learning process', limitations of AA' and 'supporting the teaching process'. The items pertaining to the subdimension 'supporting the learning process' are represented by items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 while the items for the 'limitations of AA' are represented by items 3, 7, 10, 12, 14 and 15. The items, 8, 9, 11, and 13 are the items which represent the subdimension 'supporting the teaching process'. Since items 3, 7, 10, 12, 14, and 15 in the questionnaire are formulated negatively, the responses to these items have been reversed for the analysis of overall attitudes. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient for the overall scale was found to be 0.81. On the other hand, the Cronbach alpha for the sub-dimensions, supporting the learning process', boosting the teaching process' and 'the limitations of the AA' were calculated as 0.76, 0.76 and 0.73 respectively.

Along with the scale, a questionnaire was also used for demographic information about the participants such as gender, seniority, school type and in-service training. This part also comprised a section which search for whether the teachers use any type of AA tools, and which ones they use. The qualitative data were gathered through the semi-structured interviews, in which the participants were asked to answer four open-ended questions that were constructed by the researchers. As for the population of the research, they were the EFL teachers who work in state primary, secondary and high schools affiliated to MoNE in the province of Samsun in Türkiye. The sampling of the study included 137 EFL teachers, who voluntarily participated in the quantitative phase of the study. The demographic information of the participants are as shown in Table 2 :

Table 2. Demographic Information of the Participants (n=137)

Variables	Demographic Details	The number of the participants (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	108	78,8%
	Male	29	21,2%
Seniority	0-10 years	43	31,4%
	11-20 years	53	38,7%
	21 and more	41	29,9%
School Type	Primary School	22	16,1%
	Secondary School	71	51,8%
	High School	44	32,1%
In-service Training	Yes	57	41,6%
	No	80	58,4%



Total	137	100%
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As Table 2 illustrates, according to the gender distribution, 108 teachers out of 137 (78, 8 %) are female and 29 (21, 2 %) of them are male. The results regarding the teaching experience of the teachers show a relatively balanced distribution in such a way that 43 teachers (31, 4 %) have 0- 10 years of teaching experience while 53 teachers (38, 7 %) and 41 teachers (29, 9 %) have 11-20 years of experience and above 21 years of experience respectively. In regard to the variable ‘in-service training’, 57 teachers out of 137 (41,6 %) have indicated that they have participated in in-service training programs about AA while 80 (58,4 %) teachers’ responses point to the result that they have not receive any in-service training so far. In terms of the type of school where they have worked, the distribution was as follows: 22 (16,1 %) teachers work in a primary school while 71 (51,8 %) teachers work in secondary school and 44 (32,1 %) teachers work in a high school.

Procedure and Data Analysis

Primarily, the convenience sampling approach was chosen to determine the sample for the study. Convenience sampling is the selection of individuals who happen to be available for study (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The data collection form for the survey was arranged through Google forms and the collection was administered online in the academic year 2024-2025. The forms were sent to the EFL teachers working in state schools affiliated to MoNE in the province of Samsun in Türkiye through various online applications. Thus, as the sample of the study, 137 EFL teachers, giving their informed consent, voluntarily participated in the survey. The participants of the qualitative phase of the study were also determined through the convenience sampling method. The data which were based on the responses provided by 16 volunteer teachers were gathered through the semi-structured interviews conducted by one of the researchers, who also works in a secondary school as an EFL teacher. Nine participants were the EFL teachers who work in secondary schools while three and four of them work in high schools and primary schools respectively. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and one-on-one at the schools where the teachers work. The participants, who were invited to answer four open-ended questions, were primarily assured that their responses would only be used in this present study anonymously. The participants were interviewed in Turkish for their own convenience. The interactions, which lasted between 10 and 15 minutes were audio-recorded for later analysis. The recorded interviews, after being listened to several times in order to accurately capture what the participants uttered were transcribed by the two researchers together. Later they were translated into English.

The descriptive survey model was used to analyze the quantitatively obtained data using SPSS 26 program.

Table 3. Results of reliability analysis

Constructs	Cronbach’s Alpha	N of Items
AA Attitude Scale	0.786	15
Supporting the learning process	0.897	5
Supporting the teaching process	0.815	4
Limitations of alternative assessment	0.806	6

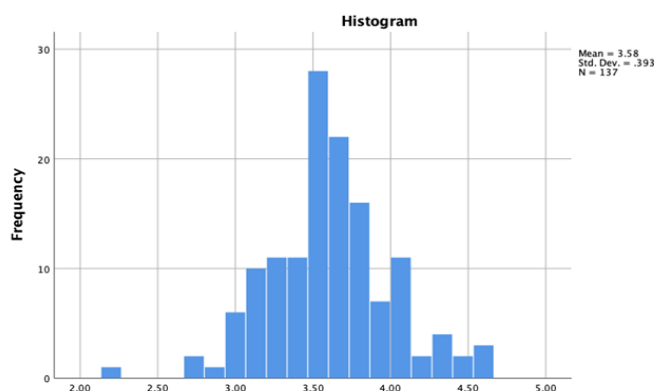
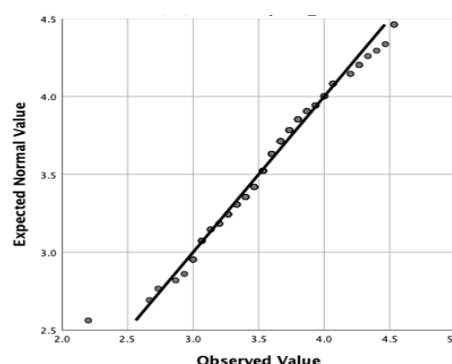
As Table 3 illustrates, in the analysis conducted regarding the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient for the overall scale was found to be 0.786 in this current study. The reliability coefficients were calculated as 0.897 for the sub-dimension ‘supporting the learning process’, 0.806 for the sub-dimension ‘limitations of AA methods’, and 0.815 for the sub-dimension ‘supporting the teaching process’. These results indicate that the overall scale and each sub-dimension are reliable in terms of internal consistency. In this case, the reliability value of all items was found to be 0.786.



Table 4. Results of normality analysis

	N	Skewness	Kurtosis
The participants' perception	137	-.012	.815

Moreover, a normality test was applied to ascertain whether the data had been obtained from a normally distributed population. As in shown in Table 4, the Skewness value was calculated as $-.012$, and Kurtosis value was calculated as $.815$. Since these values are in the range of -1 and $+1$, the data indicate a normal distribution (Ak, 2010). Furthermore, Histogram and Q-Q Plot graphs as indicated in the figures below were also analyzed and it was seen that the distributions were normal. After this procedure, the data was prepared for parametric analysis. As the methods of analysis, the Independent Sample T-Test was employed to find out the relation between the teachers' attitudes toward AA and the variable 'receiving in-service training', whereas a One-Way ANOVA was employed in order to see the effect of the 'seniority' and 'school type' variables upon the teachers' AA attitudes. As for the analysis of the qualitative data gathered through the semi-structured interviews, the content analysis method was found appropriate to interpret the participants' responses. Firstly, the researchers had discussion about the procedure to be followed for the coding process. It was decided that open coding with an inductive approach should be employed (Creswell, 2009). After scrutinizing the data several times to detect expressions with similar ideas, each researcher created initial codes individually first. As a second step, the researchers compared their individual code sets. It was agreed that the same code was used for the expressions in the participants' responses that were not exactly equal but had similar meanings. After the coded data was revised by the researchers together, potential themes under which codes could be grouped were identified. At this point, an expert opinion was taken to ensure the interrater reliability of the process and to minimize the possible bias. After the codes and themes were revisited and cross-examined once more, it was agreed that the code sets and related themes were compatible with the questions in the interview.

**Figure 1. Histogram****Figure 2. Q-Q Plot**

FINDINGS

Findings of Quantitative Data

The findings of the quantitative data obtained from the survey are presented mainly in relation to the research questions: The findings related to the AA tools used by the teachers are followed by the findings regarding the teachers' attitudes toward AA, and the effect of some independent variables in the teachers' perceptions of AA



Table 5. Assessment tools used by the participants

	f	%	n
Portfolios	48	35	137
Peer assessment	48	35	137
Performance tasks	40	29.2	137
Self assessment	57	41.6	137
Projects	117	85.4	137
Observations	104	75.9	137
Presentation	98	71.5	137
Others	1	0.7	137
None of them	2	1.5	137

As can be seen in Table 5, most of the participants use projects, observation and presentation. Some of the participants use self-assessment while a few participants use portfolios, peer assessment and performance in ELT classrooms. Only one teacher state that s/he uses group projects as another AA tool. Moreover, only two of the participants never use AA tools.

Table 6. The descriptive analysis on the perceptions of EFL teachers about AA

Factor	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Supporting the learning process	1. With the help of AA, students' higher-order thinking skills (critical thinking, creativity, etc.) are measured.	4.05	.657
	2. With the help of AA methods, the student's interest, curiosity, and self-confidence are increased	4.07	.637
	4. Students can be proud of their learning through AA.	4.00	.748
	5. Performance and portfolio assessments allow students to develop solutions to everyday problems.	3.94	.784
	6. AA motivates students towards the lesson.	4.00	.653
	3. It is difficult to evaluate with AA tools.	3.18	.848
Limitations of AA tools	7. It is difficult to evaluate project tasks objectively.	2.88	.924
	10. Portfolios are not practical due to the time-consuming nature, their storage, and the analysis of the data obtained.	2.93	.913
	12. The abundance of AA tools presents a usability challenge.	2.79	.981
	14. AA is more complex than TA.	2.91	.911
	15. It is difficult to implement AA methods.	2.81	.836
Supporting the teaching process	8. AA tools make the teaching process enjoyable.	4.01	.612
	9. AA tools help to eliminate rote learning.	4.18	.667
	11. AA tools enable students' abilities to be assessed effectively and efficiently.	4.00	.594
	13. AA process shows what and how students learn.	3.80	.702

As can be seen in Table 6, when the results obtained from the 15-item scale used to determine the EFL teachers' perceptions of AA are examined; item 9 is the one which has highest mean. The mean of this item was found to be 4.18. Moreover, this was followed by items 1 and 2 with 4.05 and 4.07 means respectively. However, items 12, 15, 7, 14, 10 are the ones which have the lowest means respectively. On the other hand, the overall means of EFL teachers' perceptions on alternative is 3.58 and 'agree'.



Table 7. Results related to subdimensions of AA attitude Scale

Variables	X	ss
Supporting the learning process	4.01	.695
Limitations of alternative assessment tools	2.91	.901
Supporting the teaching process	4.06	.624

As illustrated in Table 7, the means of supporting the teaching process and learning process is 4.06 and 4.01 respectively, which means that EFL teachers perceive alternative assessment tools as a support for both teaching and learning process.

Analysis of teachers' perceptions of AA with respect to some variables

The teachers' attitudes toward AA were analyzed according to some independent variables such as type of school they work in, seniority, and in-service training. One-way ANOVA was used to investigate the relations of the EFL teachers' opinions on AA with 'seniority' and 'school type' while t-test was used to investigate in what way their opinions differ depending on whether or not they received inservice training.

Table 8. One-Way ANOVA results for the teachers' attitudes toward AA with respect to the 'type of school' variable

School Type	N	X	ss	f	p
Primary	22	3.6515	.50182	.466	.629
Secondary	71	3.5606	.34283		
High School	44	3.5682	.41234		
Total	137	3.5776	.39268		

As can be seen in Table 8, there are no statistically significant differences in EFL teachers' perceptions of AA based on the 'school type' variable ($F [2,134] = .466, p = .629; p > .05$). From this result, it can be inferred that school type is not an important factor for EFL teachers' attitude toward AA.

Table 9. One-Way ANOVA results for the teachers' attitudes toward AA with respect to the 'seniority' variable

Seniority	N	X	ss	f	p
0-10 years	43	3.6186	.37834	.465	.629
11-20 years	53	3.5409	.42540		
21-more	41	3.5821	.36758		
Total	137	3.5776	.39268		

As can be seen in Table 9, there are not statistically significant differences according to the seniority of EFL teachers in their perception of AA ($F [2,134] = .465, p = .629; p > .05$). This result shows that seniority is not an important factor for EFL teachers' perceptions of AA.

Table 10. T-test results for the teachers' attitudes toward AA with respect to the 'inservice training' variable

In-service Training	N	X	ss	t	sd	p
Yes	57	3.6608	.37823	2.12	135	.036
No	80	3.5183	.39433			
Total	137	3.5776	.39268			



As illustrated in Table 10, there is a statistically significant difference according to the ‘inservice training’ variable in terms of the teachers’ perceptions of AA, ($t[135]=2.12; p<.05$). From this result, it can be emphasized that inservice training is a substantial factor for EFL teachers’ attitude toward AA. When examining the attitudes of those who have received in-service training compared to those who have not, it can be stated that the attitudes of those who have received training are generally more positive. This difference in mean scores ranges between .01 and .28, with an average difference of .14.

FINDINGS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

With the first open-ended question ‘Do you use AA tools? If so, Which AA tools do you use?’, it was intended for revealing whether the teachers use AA tools and which of them they tend to use. The emerged key words were the names of AA tools they used, such as ‘portfolios’, ‘projects’ and ‘self-assessment’ as seen in the table below. As their elaborative responses also shed light on the frequency of using these tools, the key words were frequency words such as ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’, ‘never’ and ‘often’ as illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11. Results according to the AA tools used

Themes	Codes	Teachers’ opinions	f	%
Frequency of Use	Frequently/often	T2, T4,T5,T8,	4	25
	Occasionally/Sometimes	T9,T10,T13,T16	4	25
	Not Much/Rarely	T11, T12	2	12.5
	Never	T1,T14	2	12.5
AA tools used	Peer-Feedback	T4,T5,T7	3	18.75
	Self-Assessment	T4,T5,T7	3	18.75
	Performance tasks	T2, T4,T11	3	18.75
	Presentation	T6,T11	2	12.5
	Projects	T2,T6,T9,T11	4	25
	Portfolios	T9,T12,T13	3	18.75
	Technology-supported Assessment	T3,T15,16	3	18.75

As understood from Table 11, it was found that most of the participants use AA methods in their teaching contexts. However, it was also seen that their use varies in terms of the frequency. Some teachers use these methods regularly while others use them less frequently. It was understood that most participants generally apply AA at the end of units or during specific periods.

In terms of AA tools that they use, it can be said that participants mostly prefer group projects, performance tasks, peer assessment and self-assessment. This is due to the fact that they believe that projects and performance tasks support students’ learning by interacting with each other and also encourage creative thinking. (“I use them. I think they are as necessary as traditional assessment methods. I think that peer-feedback, self-feedback practices that we do especially in the classroom are very effective for students” [T2]; “Well, I use them often. I mostly give students projects. And I ask them to make presentations on their projects”[T3]). It has also been observed that technology-supported methods are also used by some teachers. In particular, AI-powered assessment and digital game-based assessment tools are considered to be effective tools that enable students to be involved in



the learning process. (*"I use them. I generally use self-assessment at the end of the unit and often use technology-supported game-based assessment"* [T9]).

In relation to the second question 'Do you think AA methods have limitations and difficulties in terms of implementation?' the aim was to investigate the teachers' opinions with specific respect to the restrictions and difficulties of implementing AA. The expressions used mostly in the teachers' utterances such as 'time constraints', 'workload', 'curriculum pressure', 'large classes' and 'technological access problems' constituted the category 'limitations' while such key words such as 'lack of student participation', 'objectivity/reliability problems', 'lack of knowledge', and 'difficulty in preparing rubrics' fall under the theme 'challenges' as seen in Table 12. At this point, it seems necessary to indicate that one of the participants (T1) was not included in the tables (except for Table 11) as her responses to the three questions were too short and not elaborative.

Table 12. Results in relation to the dimension 'limitations of AA'

Themes	Codes	Teachers' Opinions	f	%
Limitations	Insufficient time	T2,T7,T8,T9,T16	5	31.25
	Intensive curriculum	T4,T9	2	12.5
	Workload	T2,T4,T5,T6	4	25
	Technological Access	T3,T16	2	12.5
	Large classes	T2,T4,T11,T12,T13	5	31.25
Challenges	Difficulty in preparing rubrics	T5,T6,T7	3	18.75
	Lack of knowledge	T7,T14	2	12.5
	Objectivity / Reliability	T5,T6,T15	3	18.75
	Lack of student participation	T4,T5,T7,T10	4	25

Most of the participants had the belief that there are various limitations and challenges in the implementation of AA tools. The most important limitation of AA practices pronounced by most participants is time-consuming. They also had the opinion that the curriculum determined by MoNE limits the use of these tools. (*"Unfortunately, yes, and I can say the biggest limitation is time. While trying to keep up with the curriculum within the academic year, teachers may not find enough time to use these assessment methods"*[T9]). Moreover, it is common knowledge that crowded classes in language teaching contexts make it very difficult to do many activities that students are supposed to be engaged in. Thus, the teachers also expressed that the implementation of some AA tools to monitor student progress individually likewise becomes difficult. (*"In large classes, assessing all students individually is challenging in terms of monitoring their progress"*[T4]). As also indicated by two teachers, internet access problems experienced during the use of technology-supported AA tools is also regarded as a serious limitation. It was stated that such problems are experienced more frequently, especially in rural areas (*"It may be a problem for students. Well, you know, some students may not have a tablet or sufficient internet access"*[T3]).

Three teachers stated that objectivity is another problem and that this could also reduce the reliability of the assessment tool used. It was also noted that creating rubrics was a time-consuming and challenging process. (*"First of all, it is necessary to evaluate fairly and objectively. This is not so easy. It is necessary to score each behavior and skill at the right rate"*[T6]). Besides, some teachers also touched on some challenges such as students' unwillingness in participating sufficiently in some particular AA practices or not fulfilling their responsibilities throughout the process: (*"Unfortunately, it is unrealistic to expect every student to fulfill this responsibility over a long period of time"*[T4]).

With the third question 'Do you think alternative assessment methods are beneficial for the learning process in EFL classes?', it was intended for discovering whether the teachers believe that using AA methods support the learning process. Depending on the teachers' remarks, some particular key words such as 'internalizing', 'more engagement', 'meaningful and active learning' fall under the theme 'long-term retention' and the key words such as 'revealing student strengths', 'developing



creative thinking’ and ‘social skills’ and ‘increasing student motivation’ bring together under the theme ‘impact on the learning process’ as presented in Table 13.

Table 13. The results with regard to the dimension ‘supporting the learning process’

Themes	Codes	Teachers’ Opinions	f	%
Long-term retention	More engagement	T2,T3,T11,T12,T16	5	31.25
	Meaningful Learning	T14,T9	2	12.75
	Active Learning	T5,T6, T11	3	18.75
	Internalization	T8, T14	2	12.75
Impact on the learning process	Revealing student strengths	T2,T4,T11,T13	4	25
	Developing students’ problem solving skills, creative thinking and social skills	T2, T5,T6, T15, T16	5	31.25
	Increasing students’ motivation	T4,T7,T12,T16	4	25

Most teachers indicated that the students’ being involved in assessment process would help to enhance both meaningful and active learning, which provides long-term retention. (*“I think that AA tools are much more useful. They also provide better and more active learning because the student is more active in such processes, deals with the task on his own. I think they have great benefits”* [T6]); (*“I wish we could apply in every class, so we have the chance to see its benefits. Since it is a more individual and personalized assessment, each student has more meaningful learning in these processes”* [T14]). Two of the participants stated that AA tools help students learn by reconstructing the knowledge rather than memorizing it. It was also emphasized that these tools allow for more permanent learning and better monitoring of students’ development processes. (*“These practices allow students to internalize information rather than memorize it”* [T8]).

The participants also remarked that projects improve students’ skills such as collaboration, communication, and creativity. It was also indicated that such practices supported integration into society and a sense of responsibility. (*“Such methods... well, improve students’ 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, and creative thinking”* [T16]; *“Alternative assessment supports sense of responsibility and social development”*. [T5]). Some teachers also emphasized that AA tools are more inclusive for students with different learning styles, and implied that this enables the students to show their potential abilities. They stated that some students who cannot succeed with paper-and-pencil measurement tools can stand out when being assessed with some particular AA tools. (*“Sometimes I realize that students who are not successful with traditional methods can do very good work in some alternative assessment practices”* [T13]). As often emphasized in the literature, the crucial benefit of AA is that involving students in the assessment process increases their motivation. Four teachers also stressed that some particular AA tools have the potential to enhance student motivation. (*“It increases student motivation by providing more engaging experiences, unlike traditional methods”* [T4]).

The fourth question ‘Do you think alternative assessment methods are beneficial for the teaching process in EFL classes?’ aimed to investigate the teachers’ opinions on the possible supports of AA tools for the teaching process. Their elaborative responses led to highlight the benefits of AA methods for the teaching process with the emerged key words such as ‘process-oriented’, ‘effectiveness’, innovativeness’, ‘guidance’ and ‘monitoring’, which fall under the themes ‘impact on the teaching process’ and ‘teacher’s role’ as presented in Table 14.



Table 14. The results with regard to the dimension 'supporting the teaching process'

Themes	Codes	Teachers' opinions	f	%
Impact on the teaching process	Process-Oriented	T4,T7,T8	3	18.75
	Effectiveness	T4,T5,T6,T11,T12	3	31.25
	Innovativeness	T4,T16	2	12.75
Teacher's role	Guidance	T5,T16	2	12.75
	Monitoring	T3,T7,T9,T13,T16	5	31.25

Most of the participants had the belief that AA makes significant contributions to the teaching process. They emphasized that AA tools play an important role in increasing the effectiveness of the teaching process. It is agreed that especially practices such as group projects, peer assessment and performance tasks have the potential to increase students' interest and alleviate boredom, which enables the teaching process more effective. Moreover, it is agreed that AA tools appeal to students' different learning styles, which is important in order to enhance student interest and participation. (*"It is beneficial. It is flexible and offers continuous feedback. We can adapt alternative assessment tools to suit learning styles. This makes the process more useful and effective."* [T7]; *"Using different tools for assessment during the classes help to diversify the lesson. In this way they increase students' interest in the lesson"* [T11]).

Some participants expressed their interest in innovative ways of assessment. The use of especially up-to-date technological tools, for instance, AI-powered and digital tools, adds an innovative dimension to the teaching process. Such tools provide teachers with the opportunity to analyze students' learning processes in more detail and enable them to conduct process-oriented assessment. (*"With the technology-supported methods, I believe, it is possible to enrich the teaching process... Assessment conducted with technological tools can provide teachers with more information"* [T16]).

As it has been emphasized in the literature in relation to 'assessment for learning' and 'assessment of learning', one of the biggest advantages of AA is the continuous feedback they provide. Some participants stated that these tools allow students to progress at different speeds and help teachers manage the process more efficiently. Providing continuous feedback accelerates students' progress in the learning process. (*"For the teaching process,.. well, I think the teachers can have a process-oriented and more enjoyable teaching process. They follow their students' progress continuously and can notice what needs to be improved more quickly and effectively"* [T4]).

It is acknowledged that classroom-based assessments allow teachers to monitor students' progress constantly and guide them more efficiently. In particular, AA tools such as observation allow for a closer monitoring of language progress of the student. Most participants, emphasizing the importance of the teacher's guidance role, expressed that these methods provide the opportunity to monitor students' progress more closely. They stated that feedback allows teachers to make faster and more effective interventions according to students' needs. (*"Teachers can closely monitor their students' development and quickly identify their weaknesses"* [T9]); *"Since the teacher is in a role that supports... or guides learning rather than explaining, the student becomes active"* [T5]).

DISCUSSION

The discussion was based on the research questions respectively. The findings of the previous studies in the literature were referenced to make comparisons with what this current study has found. This study aimed to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of AA and with the findings, to raise an awareness about the importance of the use of AA tools. Along with the search for their perceptions, the factors affecting their attitudes, the AA methods that they use and the use of frequency were also examined.



With the first research question, EFL teachers' AA practices and the tools were explored. The findings demonstrated that projects, observation and presentation are the most common tools preferred by EFL teachers. This may be due to two factors: One is that teachers must give one project assignment to the students for each term and the students are asked to make presentation about their projects, which means that teachers make observations and evaluate students' presentation. Hence, the most common tools preferred by the participants of this study are interrelated. The other is that English classes have been based on the Communicative Language Teaching Method since MoNE reorganized the curriculum according to the principles of the constructivist approach, so each unit has a project work about the topic. Portfolios, peer assessment are AA tools which were preferred least by the participants, which is not in line with the study conducted by Cheng et al. (2004). This may be due to the fact that it is difficult to apply these tools as it requires more time, effort, and sources, considering the crowded classes in most Turkish educational contexts. As Brindley (2001b) underlines, teachers have some concerns about how to give feedback to the students and guide them during the process.

In the second research question, the major aim of the study, the attitudes of EFL teachers toward AA were explored. The findings demonstrated that the teachers agreed that AA is useful to evaluate both the product and process and it also focuses on individual differences. This supports what was stated by Al-Ruqeishi and Al-Humaidi (2016) that teachers' belief was that AA promote students' creativity and their language skills in a stress free and natural environment. The same is also asserted in the study by Demir (2022) that teachers' attitudes towards AA are positive. Moreover, they preferred AA to TA as it provides the students to relate their knowledge with the real world and create multi solutions for the problems they encounter. This finding goes in harmony with the findings of the studies which revealed that participants held a favourable manner toward AA, and that they believed that AA tools are beneficial on the part of the students' learning process as they are considered to increase active learning, stimulate students' creativity and motivation (Danica, 2020; Ghaicha & Omarkaly, 2018; Küçükayrat, 2024; Nasri et al., 2010).

The results also indicated that the participants had the view that AA helps to eliminate rote learning and measure students' higher-order skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. Additionally, it was found that the teachers agree that AA also fosters students' interest, curiosity, and self-confidence. Findings of this study further expanded insights of previous studies, such as the study conducted by Göçtü (2013), which indicated that implementation of both traditional and portfolio assessment boosts motivation and improves the students' language skills when compared with TA. Furthermore, it was found in the study that the teachers were eager to use them as they thought that it is effective and efficient to evaluate students with the help of these tools. They take a lot of advantage for both the students and the teachers as it helps them detect the students' weaknesses and strenghts in detail. It also boosts learner autonomy as it provides them to evaluate themselves and their peers so that they can manage their own learning process. Similarly, the research conducted by Chan (2008) revealed that a great majority of teachers were in favour of utilizing multiple assessment tools including AA tools such as portfolios and observation.

Another important result of the study about the teachers' attitude toward AA is that the participants have the belief that it is difficult and complex to evaluate objectively with the use of these tools. It was found that the teachers hold the opinion that AAs require a lot of time to complete, store, and analyze the data, which led to the view that implementing AA methods such as portfolios are considerably challenging. Not surprisingly, the study also revealed that the common belief that the teachers hold is that implementing AA methods cause extra workload such as preparing rubrics, storing the assignments, and analyzing the students' works. This result is in line with the study conducted by Çakır (2020), as it was found that class hours and crowded classes were prominent problems for EFL teachers in Türkiye. Another related result of the study is that assessing the students individually and evaluating their work was another critical issue because of being time-consuming. In other words, the teachers reported that alternative assessment requires a large amount of preparation and class time. Consistent with the findings of this research, the research by Çetin (2011) also concluded that time constraints and workload are critical issues for all the teachers. The conclusions



drawn related to the restrictions and challenges of AA methods are also corroborated by the findings of some other studies. (Abbas, 2012; Chan, 2008; Danica, 2020; Ghaicha & Omarkaly, 2018; Moradian et al. 2018).

In the third question, the teachers' perceptions on alternative assessment and their level of usage were analyzed according to some variables such as the type of school they work in, seniority, and in-service training status. It was found that there are not statistically significant differences according to the school type and seniority of EFL instructors in their perception of AA and their level of use while there are statistically significant differences in their perception of AA according to their participation in in-service training. This finding is consistent with the study of Küçükhayrat (2024) which explored the effect of the 'in-service training' variable. The study also showed a result in favour of the teachers who received in-service training. The result that the 'seniority' variable is not a significant determinant of EFL teachers' perceptions of AA does not contradict with the result of the study by Önalın and Karagöl (2018), which revealed that the teachers' years of experience was not a determining factor in the teachers' perception of assessment.

CONCLUSION

Assessment of language learners' achievement has often been a critical issue debated in many research contexts. It has been stressed that testing and assessment, which should not be viewed as a separate process from the instruction, should often be incorporated into the classroom practices. It is also common knowledge that AA practices enable the students to monitor their own progress and take charge of their language learning. This leads to the students' being more-autonomous learners, the importance of which is often highlighted in terms of effective learning in the literature of EFL learning and teaching. Moreover, in terms of providing the students with ongoing feedback, promoting motivation, and making the learning process individualized, it could be said that the pedagogical aspects of AA methods are stronger than paper-and-pencil tests because of their positive washback effect. However, as indicated in some studies, they should be used with TA tools in some particular learning contexts in a way that they should be complementary to each other.

The major purpose of this present study, which was grounded in both quantitative and qualitative information, was to explore the overall opinions of EFL teachers working in different educational settings in the Turkish context, with regard to the use of AA methods. In this respect, to get more elaborative and comprehensive results, the findings were analyzed in both phases of the study regarding the factors such as the benefits of AA in terms of learning and teaching process along with their limitations. The findings yielded from both the survey and the interviews revealed that the participants of the study, the EFL teachers, had a positive attitude toward AA and that they held the belief that AA methods are beneficial for both the learning process and teaching process, and that they have crucial limitations. It is also worth noting that the teachers' attitude varied significantly according to the 'in-service training' variable, which underscores that EFL teachers should have AA literacy. Although another finding showed that more than half of the teachers used AA tools from time to time, it was also found that the teachers believed that the implementation of AA is considerably a challenging job and that it is also impeded by some factors.

To conclude, the findings of this study have several important implications for EFL teaching practice, teacher education, and policy-making. In order to promote meaningful assessment procedures that develop language proficiency with critical thinking, creativity, and learner autonomy, curriculum designers and administrators might more methodically integrate AA tools into language programs. The teachers are usually more inclined to use AA tools if they are included in the coursebooks. Moreover, training on AA techniques should also be given more importance in professional development programs, with an emphasis on both theoretical understanding and real-world implementation. Such in-service trainings should be regular, reflective, and context-sensitive so that they can have the greatest impact. Policymakers should recognize the benefits of AA and incorporate it into national curricula. Clear guidelines, assessment frameworks, and assessment literacy can further promote effective implementation.



Although the results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the field, it is essential to underline that it has several limitations. First and foremost, the current study has been confined to a cross-sectional research which was conducted with 137 EFL teachers, who work at state schools in the province of Samsun. Naturally, the sample of the study cannot be said to be entirely representative of EFL teachers. In other words, it should be acknowledged that this has restricted the generalizability of the findings to both the whole city and diverse educational settings. The study has also been limited to only the EFL teachers' views on AA and the inclusion of some particular independent variables. Further studies could be conducted with larger samples and the inclusion of different variables such as AA literacy of EFL teachers. The current study has been confined to the self-reported opinions of the teachers on AA methods. Therefore, a further study could investigate in what way some particular AA tools are implemented in classroom settings. Besides, quasi-experimental studies could also be carried out in order to see the impact of some particular AA methods on the students' motivation level, or academic achievement, and to explore students' perceptions on AAs in particular EFL contexts.

Ethical statement: Necessary permission and approval for the research, which was granted from the Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Ondokuz Mayıs University, is documented on 29.11.2024 with 'Decision ID' 2024-1109.

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