LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT LITERACY: THE ROLE OF SELF-REFLECTION

Neda Kianinezhad*

Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran

Abstract

Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) is an indispensable component of an English language teacher's professional skill set. In recent decades, a significant volume of research has aimed to elucidate the dimensions of LAL, explore variations in teachers' LAL across diverse contexts, and identify supportive resources. This review will commence with a comprehensive analysis of varying conceptualizations and empirical investigations into teachers' understanding of the concept. Specifically, then, this review centers on the assessment training requirements of English language teachers, the effectiveness of current assessment training programs, and the role of self-reflection in fostering the growth of LAL among English language teachers. The findings of this review will offer a thorough overview of the existing body of literature and provide a foundation for future inquiries in the domain of language assessment literacy in English language teaching.

Keywords: assessment training needs; conceptualizations of LAL; empirical explorations; Language Assessment Literacy (LAL); self-reflection

Abstrak

Literasi Penilaian Bahasa (LPB) adalah komponen yang sangat diperlukan dari keahlian profesional guru bahasa Inggris. Dalam beberapa dekade terakhir, sejumlah besar penelitian bertujuan untuk menjelaskan dimensi LPB, mengeksplorasi variasi LPB guru dalam berbagai konteks, dan mengidentifikasi sumber daya pendukung. Tinjauan ini akan dimulai dengan analisis komprehensif terhadap berbagai konseptualisasi dan penyelidikan empiris terhadap pemahaman guru terhadap konsep tersebut. Secara khusus, tinjauan ini berpusat pada persyaratan pelatihan penilaian guru bahasa Inggris, efektivitas program pelatihan penilaian saat ini, dan peran refleksi diri dalam mendorong pertumbuhan LPB di kalangan guru bahasa Inggris. Temuan dari tinjauan ini akan memberikan gambaran menyeluruh tentang literatur yang ada dan memberikan landasan untuk pertanyaan di masa depan mengenai domain literasi penilaian bahasa dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: *kebutuhan pelatihan penilaian; konseptualisasi LPB; eksplorasi empiris; Literasi Penilaian Bahasa (LPB); refleksi diri*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of literacy has evolved beyond traditional boundaries, extending its scope beyond reading and writing skills. In its contemporary form, literacy encompasses specialized expertise, skills, and competencies tailored meticulously to specific objectives and fields. In our rapidly progressing era, marked by a diverse range of domains, the cultivation of various literacies has become imperative to stay aligned with prevailing trends. These literacies encompass a broad spectrum of areas, including computer proficiency, media discernment, academic excellence, and more.

In this dynamic landscape, the emergence of assessment literacy, particularly within English language testing, holds exceptional significance. In addition, assessment literacy involves

*Author(s) Correspondence:
E-mail: kianinezhad.neda@gmail.com

understanding the attributes that constitute testing proficiency and the competencies exhibited by educators. In this multifaceted perspective, it's evident that the concept of literacy has evolved into an intricate tapestry woven together with various strands of expertise. Accordingly, assessment literacy is one of these threads, playing a pivotal role in shaping effective language testing practices.

As English language educators navigate the complexities of evaluating language skills, possessing a nuanced understanding of assessment literacy becomes indispensable. This understanding empowers educators to design assessments that accurately measure language proficiency, align with pedagogical objectives, and cultivate optimal learning outcomes. Furthermore, the integration of assessment literacy into the broader spectrum of literacies enriches the educational landscape. Just as proficiency in computer skills empowers individuals to navigate the digital sphere and media literacy fosters critical engagement with information, assessment literacy empowers educators to adeptly design, implement, and interpret assessments. It contributes to the refinement of instructional strategies, curriculum development, and the overall enhancement of language education programs.

In conclusion, the evolution of literacy encompasses a harmonious blend of competencies that resonate across diverse domains. Besides, assessment literacy emerges as a pivotal movement within this symphony, orchestrating the art and science of evaluating English language proficiency. Its influence reverberates throughout the realm of education, amplifying the efficacy of English language instruction. As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of literacy, assessment literacy stands as a testament to the adaptability and dynamism of education in the face of changing times. A pivotal turning point in the evolution of this field can be traced back to the 1990 Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students. This seminal contribution spurred extensive research into the foundational knowledge and skills that form the bedrock of assessment literacy. This exploration spanned various dimensions, encompassing assessment objectives and stakeholders involved, the contexts of formative evaluation, accountability frameworks, and the metrics utilized to gauge levels of teacher assessment literacy. Within the specific realm of English language assessment literacy, a synthesis of competencies takes center stage. This entails a firm grasp of assessment methodologies, adept utilization of pertinent tools, and the capability for critical interpretation, formulation, and evaluation of English language assessments along with the ensuing test data.

In the field of English language education, Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) has gained increasing importance, becoming a crucial element of a language teacher's professional skills (Popham, 2009; Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Tajeddin et al., 2022). Mastery in LAL enables educators to create and implement effective assessments, accurately interpret student scores, develop relevant teaching strategies, and make informed educational decisions. Conversely, a lack of LAL skills can lead to poorly designed language assessments, misinterpretation of test results, and uninformed educational choices, all of which can negatively affect students. Despite its vital role, many educators face difficulties in acquiring strong LAL skills (Khodashenas et al., 2023; Berry et al., 2017; Xu & Brown, 2017; Kianinezhad, 2023). Aspiring teachers often encounter deficiencies in language assessment-focused content within Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programs (Jeong, 2013), and experienced teachers frequently lack access to continuous training in language assessment (Crusan et al., 2016). Moreover, educational policymakers and institutional administrators sometimes struggle to provide comprehensive preparatory training for educators entering the profession (Coombe et al., 2012). Collectively, these factors hinder the development of proficient LAL abilities among teachers.

In this regard, recognizing the fundamental importance of robust Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) skills for English language educators and acknowledging the indispensability of their professional advancement, an array of studies has been dedicated to unraveling the multifaceted dimensions of LAL, probing the intricate facets of educators' LAL across diverse contextual domains, and identifying the scaffolding resources that underpin this competence. Nonetheless, it remains paramount to underscore that the scholarly exploration within this domain

*Author(s) Correspondence:
E-mail: kianinezhad.neda@gmail.com

remains in its embryonic phase (Fulcher, 2012), thereby necessitating further exploration to propel the discourse encompassing LAL to new frontiers.

Hence, with the intent of furnishing a comprehensive overview of the extant research milieu and paving the intellectual pathways for forthcoming inquiries in the expansive domain of LAL, the present review embarks on a rigorous and meticulous examination. It inaugurates this endeavor by subjecting varying conceptual elucidations of LAL to meticulous scrutiny, as well as delving into empirical investigations aimed at explicating educators' nuanced comprehension of this intricate construct. Therefore, in subsequent discourse, the review navigates the terrain of implications that emerges from the existing corpus of research, concurrently delineating trajectories that hold potential for charting the course of prospective inquiries in this dynamic domain.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Evolution of English Language Assessment Literacy Research

In the broader field of assessment literacy, the concept of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) was introduced, with a specific focus on English language educators. During this time period, research efforts primarily revolved around defining LAL in the context of English language teaching and devising various frameworks tailored specifically for educators of English. This phase of exploration yielded two noteworthy perspectives. Firstly, it became apparent that LAL demanded distinctive attention when juxtaposed with assessment literacy in the broader educational landscape, particularly due to the intricacies associated with evaluating language skills and communicative aptitude in English (Harding & Kremmel, 2016). Secondly, scholars advocated for a paradigm shift in the methodology of LAL research, proposing a more expansive social constructivist approach that resonates with contemporary societal demands within English language education, as opposed to being confined within the confines of the traditional psychometrics-based testing culture (Khodashenas et al., 2022; Inbar-Lourie, 2016; Wu, 2018; Kianinezhad, 2023).

The subsequent decade witnessed a continuous evolution in LAL research, particularly in the context of English language education. This phase was marked by heightened efforts to conceptualize LAL across diverse English language teaching contexts, accompanied by a surge in empirical investigations centered on English language educators' grasp of LAL. During this period, the concept of LAL transformed into a multidimensional and developmental entity, especially within the field of English language teaching. Notably emphasizing the contextual impact, LAL came to be understood as context-dependent, with distinct LAL profiles deemed necessary for English language educators operating within varying social milieus. The burgeoning interest in LAL catalyzed a plethora of empirical inquiries delving into English language educators' levels of LAL, their specific training requisites in language assessment, and the formulation of tailored professional development initiatives. The research landscape during this decade bore witness to the maturation of LAL as a critical pedagogical consideration, with heightened attention to the dynamic interplay between English language educators, contexts, and the evolving landscape of English language instruction.

Conceptualizing English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL)

The foundation of assessment literacy was originally established by Stiggins (1991), who defined assessment literates as individuals possessing a foundational understanding of high-quality assessment and the ability to apply this understanding across various measures of student achievement. Building upon this foundation, scholars within the field of English language education introduced the concept of English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), recognizing its distinctiveness due to the intricate nature of evaluating English language skills and communicative competence (Jeong, 2013; Harding & Kremmel, 2016). As time progressed, academics approached the conceptualization of LAL through various perspectives.

*Author(s) Correspondence:
E-mail: kianinezhad.neda@gmail.com

Some researchers introduced componential models for LAL (e.g., Brindley, 2001; Davies, 2008; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Fulcher, 2012 Khodashenas et al., 2022), while others envisioned LAL as evolving along a continuum (Pill & Harding, 2013). Brindley (2001) identified five constituent elements of LAL, with two fundamental facets focusing on understanding the social context of assessments and defining students' English language proficiency. The remaining three elements emphasized constructing and evaluating English language tests, integrating assessments into English language curricula, and applying assessment practices. Emphasizing the societal dimension of English language assessment, Brindley emphasized understanding the social, educational, and political dimensions of assessment.

Besides, Inbar-Lourie (2008) introduced a social constructivist perspective, categorizing Brindley's components into three dimensions: the "what," the "how," and the "why." This approach underscored the significance of grasping the "what" and operationalizing the "how" to elucidate the underlying "why." Davies (2008) proposed that LAL encompasses skills, knowledge, and principles, aligning with Inbar-Lourie's perspective. Subsequent studies widely concur that these three elements constitute the core of LAL (Giraldo, 2018; Deygers and Malone, 2019; Lee and Butler, 2020; Butler et al., 2021).

Drawing from empirical findings, Fulcher (2012) expanded upon Davies's conceptualization, introducing a hierarchical LAL model in which assessment practices serve as the foundational tier, encompassing English language assessment-related knowledge, skills, and abilities. This sequential approach better articulated the developmental nature of LAL and highlighted the interplay between various aspects of assessment competence.

Principles and Perspectives in English Language Assessment

English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) encompasses a nuanced mastery of the methodologies employed in gauging English language proficiencies. It entails not only the adeptness to construct appropriate evaluation tools but also a profound grasp of pertinent feedback mechanisms that aid English learners in enhancing their command of the English language, propelling them toward both immediate and enduring linguistic objectives.

Within the realm of English language pedagogy, LAL assumes a pivotal role as an essential facet of an English language instructor's professional acumen. This expertise empowers English educators to formulate and execute assessments that yield tangible outcomes, accurately decipher student performance metrics, devise pertinent pedagogical approaches, and execute judicious educational determinations. The underpinnings of English language assessment encompass a cognizance of pivotal tenets, including validity, reliability, and the repercussions of feedback on the learning process.

The corpus of knowledge, competencies, and principles requisite for proficient English LAL remains at an incipient juncture of scholarly exploration. It warrants further scholarly scrutiny to advance the comprehension of English LAL, foster the cultivation of adept LAL proficiencies among English educators, and provide robust support for their pedagogical endeavors.

The foundational principles of English language assessment, encompassing its processes, principles, and concepts, reside at the core of the model. Moving up the hierarchy, we encounter the contextual layer, which encompasses the historical, social, political, and philosophical underpinnings of English language assessment. In line with earlier studies on English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) (Brindley, 2001; Inbar-Lourie, 2008), Fulcher's (2012) model emphasizes the importance of understanding English language assessment within a broader historical, social, political, and ethical context. However, Fulcher's departure from Brindley's (2001) approach becomes evident as he places greater emphasis on comprehending the social context as a primary requirement, while acknowledging its varying relevance to different stakeholder groups.

Historically, prevailing conceptualizations of English LAL often dichotomized individuals as either literate or illiterate in assessment matters. To rectify this oversimplified perspective, Pill and Harding (2013) proposed a more nuanced viewpoint, considering English LAL as existing

*Author(s) Correspondence:
E-mail: kianinezhad.neda@gmail.com

along a continuum. Within this framework, five distinct stages of English LAL development emerge: illiteracy, nominal literacy, functional literacy, procedural and conceptual literacy, and multidimensional literacy. This model constructs a "literacy ladder" for English language assessment, shedding light on the evolution of understanding.

Merging the componential view (Brindley, 2001; Davies, 2008; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Fulcher, 2012) with the developmental outlook (Pill & Harding, 2013) of English LAL, Taylor (2013) introduced a comprehensive approach. Taylor's conceptualization encompasses eight dimensions and five stages, including facets like theoretical knowledge, technical skills, and sociocultural values. These stages span from initial illiteracy to comprehensive multidimensional literacy, each grounded in values from 0 to 4. For instance, Taylor's (2013) proposed LAL profile for English language classroom teachers underscores the essential competence of language pedagogy, alongside technical skills, personal beliefs, attitudes, and local practices. Taylor's model advocates tailored English LAL profiles for different stakeholder groups (Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Csépes, 2021) to meet their specific needs.

However, beyond the various dimensions and stages of English LAL, due attention must be paid to the developmental trajectory of English LAL. In this vein, Yan and Fan (2021) introduce an apprenticeship-based, experience-mediated model. According to this framework, stakeholders possess a foundational level of English LAL shaped by their prior assessment experiences. Effective assessments within distinct English language contexts require not only the application of English LAL knowledge but also a keen awareness of local dynamics for adaptable strategies. Stakeholders' assessment practices within specific English language contexts then generate new experiences, fostering English LAL growth, self-reflection, and critical evaluation of their practices. Besides, Yan and Fan's (2021) model highlights the dynamic interplay between English LAL and contextual and experiential factors, offering a comprehensive perspective. However, complexities remain, as stakeholders' cognitive attributes and affective factors, intertwined with English, also impact this process (Xu & Brown, 2016; Vogt et al., 2020).

Significant progress has been made in conceptualizing English LAL, underscoring its multidimensional and contextually intricate nature. Nevertheless, certain challenges persist within existing English LAL definitions and conceptualizations. Notably, the majority of current English LAL models stem from English-speaking contexts. Yet, the highly context-sensitive nature of English LAL suggests that dimensions of English LAL could significantly diverge across different English language contexts. Furthermore, there is a pressing need to delve into skill-specific English LAL conceptualizations. Present English LAL models predominantly cater to general English language assessment, inadvertently sidelining the nuanced expertise and competency required for evaluating distinct English language skills (Firoozi et al., 2019). Crafting listening tests, i.e., demands considering phenomena like dialects, accents, regional variations, as well as colloquial language and slang (Wagner, 2013) – aspects that are irrelevant when designing writing assessments.

Exploring English Language Teachers' English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL)

English language educators, holding a pivotal role in the English language assessment process, occupy a central position in managing a diverse range of English language assessment responsibilities. The significance of English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) for these educators has prompted a substantial body of research focused on their domain of expertise. The scrutiny of their proficiency in English LAL and strategies for its enhancement emerges as the primary areas of investigative focus.

Comprehending English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) Levels

Numerous research endeavors have been undertaken to assess whether English language educators possess a satisfactory level of English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) to effectively fulfill their educational responsibilities (e.g., Cumming, 2001; Cheng et al., 2004;

*Author(s) Correspondence:
E-mail: kianinezhad.neda@gmail.com

Alkharusi et al., 2011; Kiomrs et al., 2011; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017; Xu & Brown, 2017; Homayounzadeh & Razmjoo, 2021). Surveys are commonly employed tools in these investigations, often adapted from broader assessment literacy frameworks within the general education context. Interviews have also gained prominence as a recent approach. Across these studies, a consistent pattern emerges, highlighting a significant number of English language teachers lacking adequate English LAL. The findings reveal instances where teachers misconceive language assessment concepts (Kiomrs et al., 2011; Berry et al., 2017), possess a limited theoretical grasp of language assessment (Mede and Atay, 2017; Xu & Brown, 2017; Kim et al., 2020), rely on intuitive assessment design (Sultana, 2019), or misinterpret students' test results (Kim et al., 2020).

Parallel to comprehensive English LAL assessments, several studies have honed in on teachers' LAL concerning specific English language skills, such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking (Ho & Yan, 2021). For instance, research has specifically examined teachers' LAL in the context of English writing assessment (Crusan et al., 2016; Lam, 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Remarkably, these studies unveil that while a majority of English language teachers exhibit reasonably adequate English writing assessment literacy, there remains room for improvement in specific facets such as rubric design (Crusan et al., 2016) and the seamless integration of assessment as a learning process (Lam, 2019). Furthermore, Shahzamani and Tahririan (2021) explored the LAL of Iranian Medical English for Specific Purposes (ESP) practitioners in reading comprehension, finding that the evaluation of students' reading abilities exhibited no significant disparity between English language teachers and content teachers.

This body of research consistently underscores instances where English language teachers' LAL falls short, prompting a deeper exploration into their professional development within the realm of English language assessment. Nevertheless, it's important to acknowledge certain limitations. Firstly, most survey instruments employed in these studies weren't specifically designed to measure English teachers' LAL; rather, they were generally applicable to a range of disciplines in terms of assessment literacy. Consequently, survey responses may offer insights mainly into the general assessment literacy of English language teachers. Additionally, much of the existing research relies on self-reported data collected from surveys and interviews, a method that could potentially introduce biases due to English language teachers' potential challenges in accurately assessing their own levels of English LAL.

Factors Influencing English LAL

Two key factors, namely individual and contextual, have been recognized as instrumental in shaping English language teachers' Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) (Crusan et al., 2016). Multiple studies have delved into the influence of individual factors on English LAL (e.g., Crusan et al., 2016; Xu & Brown, 2017; Afshar & Ranjbar, 2021), revealing that elements, i.e., English language teachers' linguistic backgrounds, teaching experience (Crusan et al., 2016), educational qualifications, training exposure, and academic disciplines (Afshar & Ranjbar, 2021) significantly impact their English LAL. In the realm of contextual factors, the assessment cultures prevailing in different countries (Sultana, 2019; Tsagari, 2021), national and local-level educational landscapes and policies (Carless, 2012; Gu, 2014; Yan et al., 2018), school regulations (Mansouri et al., 2021), institutional directives (Yan et al., 2018), and provided institutional resources (Firoozi et al., 2019) can all exert diverse influences on English language teachers' LAL. These insights gleaned from research provide valuable pathways for future exploration into the intricate ways that various factors shape the dimensions of English LAL. It is important to acknowledge that a significant portion of research within this domain has been centered in Asia, where exam-focused cultures predominate, resulting in a relatively limited exploration in other geographical regions.

Additionally, despite the ongoing impact of both contextual and individual factors, much of the research has leaned towards cross-sectional designs. As a result, longitudinal studies assume paramount importance to comprehensively understand the dynamics of how these factors unfold over time, affecting English LAL development.

*Author(s) Correspondence:
E-mail: kianinezhad.neda@gmail.com

Enhancing English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) for English Language Educators

Given the prevalent deficiency in English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) evident among a significant segment of English language educators (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Lam, 2015; Crusan et al., 2016; Berry et al., 2017; Xu & Brown, 2017), the imperative to devise strategies for augmenting English language teachers' LAL has assumed prominence. This section delves into inquiries focused on the assessment training prerequisites of English language instructors, the efficacy of existing English assessment training programs, and the pivotal role of self-reflection in fostering the maturation of English LAL.

Training Needs for English Language Educators in Assessment

Gaining insight into the training requirements of English language educators in the realm of English language assessment holds immense significance. Research endeavors in this domain have concentrated on pinpointing the specific necessities of English language educators to effectively fulfill their English language assessment duties. These inquiries have brought to light that English language educators' training needs are influenced by individual factors, such as their linguistic backgrounds, teaching experience, academic credentials, and specialized areas. Furthermore, contextual factors, including English language assessment cultures, educational policies, and available institutional resources, play a substantial role in shaping English language educators' training needs. It's pertinent to note that a considerable portion of the existing research in this field has been concentrated in Asian contexts, warranting further investigation into training needs in other global regions.

Developing effective English language assessment training programs mandates a thorough comprehension of the requirements of English language educators. A plethora of pertinent inquiries have addressed this facet. For instance, Hasselgreen et al. (2004) examined the assessment training needs of European English language educators, underscoring the pressing need for familiarity with alternate assessment methods such as portfolios, peer assessment, and self-assessment.

Given the intricate nature of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) within the context of English language assessment, distinct educational systems necessitate tailored forms of assessment training. Vogt and Tsagari's investigations emphasize how English language instructors in Greece, Germany, and Cyprus hold differing expectations regarding LAL training. Greek English language educators sought advanced training in classroom-based assessment activities due to the rigorous requirements of the Ministry of Education. Conversely, German and Cypriot English language instructors exhibited relatively moderate LAL training needs. German teachers emphasized reading and writing assessment, aligning with the significance of these areas in the German school leaving certificate (Abitur) examination. In Cyprus, where English language instructors primarily relied on established large-scale international language exams, enthusiasm for advanced language assessment training was subdued.

Distinct educational levels also lead to varying assessment training needs. Notably, Chinese secondary English language educators favored practical assessment practice training, while college English language instructors sought advanced training in assessment theories and concepts. This divergence could stem from differences in daily responsibilities and career aspirations within Chinese secondary schools and universities. This line of research unveils nuanced insights into assessment training needs across diverse English language contexts. These insights play a pivotal role in shaping forthcoming teacher education programs, as a comprehensive understanding of English language instructors' authentic needs is indispensable for delivering effective English language assessment training. Currently, most relevant studies have relied on feedback from English language educators via surveys or interviews. Nevertheless, English language educators might not always possess a clear understanding of their needs or could consider all presented content as essential. Consequently, future research could contemplate incorporating viewpoints

*Author(s) Correspondence:
E-mail: kianinezhad.neda@gmail.com

from other stakeholders closely engaged with English language instructors, thus enriching the discourse with diverse perspectives.

Language Assessment Courses: Enhancing Educator Proficiency in English Language Assessment

In recent decades, an abundance of English language assessment courses has emerged, prompting extensive scholarly investigations into both the overarching trends of these courses (Bailey & Brown, 1996; Brown & Bailey, 2008) and the distinctive attributes that characterize current offerings (e.g., Kremmel et al., 2018; Giraldo, 2021). Bailey and Brown conducted parallel studies to comprehensively examine the nature of English language assessment courses on a global scale and to trace their evolutionary trajectory over time (Bailey & Brown, 1996; Brown & Bailey, 2008). Their findings underscore a gradual expansion of themes within English language assessment courses, rather than abrupt shifts. Noteworthy topics such as "classroom testing practices," "testing in relation to curriculum," and "measuring different skills" consistently garnered substantial attention. Recent analyses of the literature have further elucidated critical aspects of these courses. Notably, these programs were intricately designed to cater to the needs of in-service English language educators (Nier et al., 2009; Baker & Riches, 2018; Giraldo, 2021), with fewer courses tailored to the specific requirements of pre-service teachers (Walters, 2010; Bolívar & Restrepo, 2020) and student teachers (O'Loughlin, 2006; Walters, 2010).

However, comprehensive English language assessment training for pre-service and student teachers holds paramount significance, given their potential involvement in assessment tasks early in their careers.

The core themes addressed in these programs encompass the evaluation and critical analysis of English language assessments, the design of English language assessments, and the creation of English language assessment items (Kremmel et al., 2018; Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2020). Nevertheless, fundamental principles such as assessment fairness and ethical considerations are comparatively underemphasized. The majority of training courses typically span one semester or less (e.g., Nier et al., 2009; Walters, 2010; Giraldo & Murcia, 2019; Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2020), with fewer programs extending over several years (Kremmel et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the long-term effectiveness of short-term teacher training programs has been critically scrutinized in relevant research (e.g., Giraldo, 2021). While most training initiatives are conducted in face-to-face settings, a limited number incorporate online resources and on-site training (O'Loughlin, 2006; Nier et al., 2009). Factors such as heavy workloads or geographical constraints might impede educators' participation in on-site training. Thus, the exploration of more adaptable training approaches assumes substantial importance. One illustrative example is teacher reflection, which will be expounded upon in the subsequent section.

Additionally, Delgado et al. (2022) shed light on the outcomes of a large-scale endeavor aimed at enhancing teachers' English language assessment literacy (LAL) within the context of public English language education for adults in Spain. The study delves into the scale and nature of teacher LAL, the perceived impact of training, and teachers' self-identified further needs. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse surrounding English language assessment education and its implications for effective teaching practices.

Enhancing English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) Through Reflective Practice

In the pursuit of advancing English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), a series of studies has delved into the transformative potential of reflective practice. Through these studies, the crucial role of reflective approaches in fostering LAL becomes clear, as they provide concrete examples of practical implementation that ultimately lead to improved English language learning outcomes.

Reflection, a pivotal strategy for nurturing educators' professional growth (Jamil & Hamre, 2018), empowers instructors to pause and contemplate their current status and future aspirations

*Author(s) Correspondence:
E-mail: kianinezhad.neda@gmail.com

(Farrell, 2012). Within the modern educational discourse, teacher reflection has gained prominence and is recognized as a compensatory approach to enhancing English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) (Babaii & Asadnia, 2019; Tian et al., 2021). Engaging in consistent reflection about assessment practices assists educators in recognizing biases and reconsidering the integration of English language assessment within the broader teaching and learning context (Scarino, 2013).

One noteworthy scholarly work encapsulates this journey of growth by involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including English language educators, teacher trainers, and language assessment specialists. This study delves into the symbiotic process of developing English LAL, emphasizing the pivotal role of reflective practice. Through a nuanced exploration, the research sheds light on both the challenges and opportunities associated with English LAL maturation (Gan & Lam, 2022).

Besides, in a duo ethnographic study by Tian et al. (2021), teacher-researchers from various countries examined the impact of reflection on teachers' English LAL. Their findings revealed that introspection and collaborative exchange with peers facing similar challenges in distinct contexts bolstered confidence and equipped them to adeptly address assessment-related dilemmas. Reflection also facilitated a deeper understanding of the relationship between alternative assessment methods and teaching objectives for these teacher-researchers. Similarly, Babaii and Asadnia (2019) observed that educators, after reflecting on English language assessment theories and practices, experienced an increased sense of autonomy and empowerment to actively engage in the English language assessment process. Hence, Yan and Fan (2021) proposed that self-reflection could assist English as a foreign language teachers in refining their grasp of English language assessment, effectively linking it with the domain of teaching and learning.

Shifting our focus to the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, a specific chapter delves into the author's introspective journey. This chapter underscores how personal reflection enhances English assessment literacy through the strategic integration of feedback and feedforward mechanisms. Practical examples further highlight how reflective practice serves as a conduit for nurturing English LAL, thus contributing to a more impactful English language learning experience (Abatayo, 2020).

Accordingly, in another scholarly contribution, the spotlight turns towards the implications of English LAL for language educators. This study fervently emphasizes the significance of reflective practice in cultivating English LAL, substantiating its claims through real-world instances. It outlines how reflective practice acts as a catalyst, reinforcing English LAL and subsequently enhancing English language learning outcomes (Giraldo, 2018). A curated collection harmoniously compiles pioneering research and insightful reviews, collectively illuminating the intricate landscape of English language assessment. The studies within this compilation collectively underscore the pivotal role of English LAL development. With concrete instances presented, the argument for the efficacy of reflective practice in fostering English LAL enhancement gains strength (Coombe et al., 2020).

Currently, research endeavors aimed at enhancing teachers' English LAL through reflection are still in their early stages. Existing research predominantly centers around educators' self-initiated reflective efforts, which may not heavily rely on external resources such as expert guidance or English language assessment courses. Consequently, this mode of reflection particularly aligns with educators possessing a certain level of English LAL proficiency. To support English language teachers with limited English LAL in honing their skills, training programs that seamlessly integrate reflective components within formal training courses are likely to yield heightened effectiveness.

*Author(s) Correspondence:
E-mail: kianinezhad.neda@gmail.com

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Upon reviewing the provided search results, several promising directions for future investigation and progress in the field of English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) among language instructors become evident:

In considering future exploration, moving beyond a sole focus on overarching language skills has the potential to yield valuable insights. Skill-specific interpretations of LAL introduce a nuanced approach that requires acknowledging and valuing the unique intricacies inherent in each language facet—covering listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiencies. Yet, the path ahead beckons us with a pressing need for continued exploration. The horizon of potential avenues for future study is promising and varied.

Furthermore, current LAL research frequently adopts survey tools from broader educational assessment frameworks. However, a more intricate approach is necessary to thoroughly assess educators' English LAL. Future studies could concentrate on creating specialized surveys that intricately align with the subtleties of English language assessment, enabling a more detailed evaluation of educators' English LAL.

Next, our current understanding of how sociocultural dynamics influence English LAL remains somewhat limited. Therefore, as educators navigate diverse assessment cultures, educational policies, and varying student abilities, future research should aim to transcend national boundaries through cross-national investigations. Such efforts hold the potential to provide valuable insights into the widespread impact of sociocultural factors on English LAL.

Hence, exploring the perspectives of teacher educators and university administrators—often overlooked—reveals untapped sources of valuable insights within the realm of English LAL. Upcoming research endeavors could shift towards elucidating their viewpoints, thereby shedding light on previously unexplored pathways and fostering a deeper comprehension of English LAL from their specific viewpoints.

Besides that, investigating the assessment practices of language educators, including tailored assignments, final projects, and how assessment outcomes inform customized training needs, offers a way to uncover the precise nuances of skills and knowledge that educators grapple with. This investigative approach holds the potential to provide significant insights for enhancing English LAL training programs.

In the realm of English LAL training, while many programs tend to prioritize brevity, future research could examine the effectiveness of immersive, extended initiatives. Approaches like online courses, collaborative learning frameworks, and reflective exercises present avenues to foster ongoing engagement and practical application of English LAL knowledge in educators' professional environments.

Finally, by embarking on these paths, researchers have the opportunity to actively contribute to the continual development and refinement of English LAL among language instructors, ultimately raising the caliber of English language assessment practices in educational contexts. As we delve deeper into the realm of English Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) among language instructors, recent research undoubtedly expands our cognitive horizons. Nonetheless, the road ahead calls for a compelling need for further exploration. The array of potential avenues for future inquiry remains vibrant and multifaceted, illuminating the route towards an enriched and comprehensive understanding of English LAL's intricate framework.

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*Author(s) Correspondence:
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*Author(s) Correspondence:
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*Author(s) Correspondence:
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*Author(s) Correspondence:
E-mail: kianinezhad.neda@gmail.com