

Exploring the Impact of EFL Teachers' Knowledge on the Implementation of Differentiated Assessment in Indonesian Classrooms

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: August 2025

Accepted: September 2025

KEYWORDS

differentiated
assessment
EFL assessment
teachers' knowledge
teachers' practice

ABSTRACT

The adoption of differentiated assessment (DA) in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Indonesia faces considerable hurdles, largely due to teachers' limited comprehension of the concept. This study sought to examine EFL teachers' understanding and application of DA in language classrooms, as well as to determine how their perceptions are mirrored in their practices. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research combined quantitative data with qualitative insights. Data collection involved an online survey through Google Forms and subsequent phone interviews. A total of 24 secondary school English teachers participated, with six being interviewed in-depth. The quantitative data were analyzed descriptively to find the mean score (M) and the standard deviation (SD) of each item and inferentially through a paired samples t-test, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. The findings from the survey suggest that EFL teachers do incorporate their understanding of DA into their classroom practices. The interviews reinforced this by showing that teachers utilize DA principles through various assessment formats, such as pre-assessments, ongoing assessments, and summative assessments. Nevertheless, some inconsistencies were noted between the EFL teachers' theoretical knowledge and their practical implementation of DA. The findings of the study highlight the importance of better training and professional development for teachers, specifically in relation to DA practices, to tackle the existing discrepancies in teachers' knowledge and practice. Given the significance of DA principles for thorough implementation, it is crucial for EFL teachers to familiarize themselves with these concepts. Moreover, since the heavy workloads of teachers pose a challenge to effective DA implementation, it is hoped that teachers will improve their time management skills to optimize the use of DA in the language classroom.

1. Introduction

The EFL teachers' inability to meet learning goals may stem from the inappropriate assessment methods that the teachers use in language assessment (Babaii et al., 2016). This is the reason why assessment is arguably an influential factor in language learning (Jimaa, 2011). The other factors of failing to achieve learning goals related to assessment practices include teachers not designing

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assessments based on students' competencies and students being less engaged in ungraded assessments (Zhao & Qi, 2023). When these factors exist, students may miss opportunities to demonstrate their understanding or mastery of learning content (Kaur et al., 2017). Moreover, an inappropriate assessment method used in the EFL assessment might place EFL students in the wrong category concerning their English proficiency levels, leading to unsuitable instruction (Abedi, 2010). Therefore, teachers should take into consideration when deciding precise assessment models that suit students' levels, as this is essential for achieving effective assessment (Kaur et al., 2018). Specifically, when English teachers should assess students with different starting points in their English learning pace and competencies (Moon et al., 2020), English teachers should be able to design a language assessment that precisely assesses what students know and what has been studied.

In response to the demand for assessment methods that cater to various learning competencies in EFL classrooms, DA marks a transition from traditional uniform assessments to varied assessments that embrace this diversity. (Noman & Kaur, 2014). DA was first introduced by Tomlinson (2001) and developed by Tomlinson and Moon (2013a). It emphasizes varying assessments based on students' characteristics, backgrounds, learning abilities, learning styles, preferences, needs, parental support, and interests (Majuddin et al., 2022). This method incorporates different assessment formats, accommodates flexible timing, utilizes adaptive technology, offers tiered assignments, and provides constructive feedback to guarantee equitable and significant evaluations for every learner (Rajak & Dey, 2025). In DA, every student participates in the assessment and gains advantages from it. The assessment is designed to be accessible and appropriate for the diverse needs of students, evaluating a variety of content. (Douglas et al., 2016). To facilitate students' various learning readiness, learning styles, and learning characteristics, teachers need to design a distinctive assessment which uses various assessment methods, assessment criteria, assessment materials, and even tiering the assessment to demonstrate their knowledge (Ouyang & Ye, 2023) to reach an effective assessment (Kaur et al., 2018).

Teachers' knowledge and conceptualization have become one of the success factors of implementing assessment (Mohammadkhah et al., 2022), and it might influence their practice in assessing their students (Rasyidah et al., 2020). Teachers' knowledge and practice are also included in the investigation of teacher assessment identity (TAI; Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2021). Teacher assessment identity also reflects how educators establish their identities for themselves and for others (Lasky, 2005). The interrelation of teachers' knowledge and experiences in practicing DA is captivating to investigate, especially as DA principles are newly recognized in Indonesian education, including in English classrooms. DA is introduced as one of the principles in the latest Indonesian curriculum, emphasizing teachers' flexibility to design instruction and assessment based on the needs and interests of students (Rizaldi & Fatimah, 2023).

Studies on the teachers' knowledge and practices in EFL assessment are found, particularly in the Indonesian context. To what extent teachers' perceptions are reflected in the EFL assessment practiced has been investigated by Zulaiha et al. (2020). Nurfiqah and Yusuf (2021) are concerned with the struggles and strategies of practicing the EFL assessment in the classrooms. Aria et al. (2021) studied the self-perception of their assessment practice at the secondary level. While Saefurrohman and Balinas (2016) tried to describe how English language assessments are implemented in two countries (Indonesia and the Philippines). To date, there have been no studies specifically investigating teachers' knowledge and practices in implementing DA in Indonesia. While two existing studies from other researchers, including Aria et al. (2021) and Zulaiha et al. (2020), reflect a similar approach to investigation, they do not directly address this aspect of investigation.

Alongside research focused on teachers' expertise and knowledge in EFL classrooms, there has been a significant number of studies examining the implementation of DA. Some experts inspected DA in the area of students' perception and engagement (Liao, 2015; Majuddin et al., 2022; Varsavsky & Rayner, 2013), in-service teachers' practices in various learning subjects (Kaur et al., 2018), integration of diagnostic assessment for designing an oral tiered task (Rafi & Pourdana, 2023), the pre-assessment practice (Bukhari, 2019), and oral tiered task implementation (Pourdana & Shahpouri Rad, 2017). Research indicates a significant gap in studies examining the influence of EFL teachers' knowledge on their practices in DA, particularly within the Indonesian context. To fill this gap, this study aims to explore how teachers' knowledge is reflected in DA practice within the EFL context. The current study is sophisticated with the following research questions: (1) What is the teachers' knowledge and practice

of DA in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom? and (2) To what extent is teachers' knowledge reflected in their practice of dynamic assessment in the EFL classroom? This study employed a mixed-method approach, specifically using a sequential explanatory design. A quantitative study was conducted to explore the extent to which the teachers' knowledge is reflected in their practice of DA in EFL classrooms. In addition to the quantitative findings, qualitative interviews were conducted to provide further insights.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 The Concept of DA

Assessment is interrelated with the teaching instruction (Islam et al., 2021; Noman & Kaur, 2014). In the language assessment, teachers gather, integrate, and define information in the classroom to assist them in identifying their students for the sake of creating an effective community (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013a). The language assessment is implemented through a series of assessment steps, including planning, assessment preparation, and assessment collection (Widiastuti, 2021). However, several challenges in the language assessment emerge because of an inadequate assessment method (Prapphal, 2008) and an invalid instrument used in the assessment (Bachman, 2013). To address these issues, appropriate methods and valid instruments should be selected.

DA aims to accommodate the diverse needs of students by providing suitable assessment strategies (Ali, 2015). This assessment approach is suitable for Indonesia, where students come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. It offers the opportunity to boost academic performance and foster educational equity by providing all students with fair access to quality learning experiences and assessment opportunities (Arsyad & Suadiyatno, 2024). Students are also given opportunities to choose how they will be assessed (Majuddin et al., 2022). DA are designed by considering students' different backgrounds, skills, learning styles, and readiness (Koshy, 2013). One of the strategies for designing a DA is by tiering the assessment (Rafi & Pourdana, 2013). Tiered assessment is assessing each student with assignments suited to their individual cognitive levels (Rafi et al., 2022). Although DA is fruitful for accommodating diverse students' learning competencies, it is not easy to assess students' foreign language competencies with racially, culturally, and linguistically different backgrounds (Kaur et al., 2017). To address those challenges, Tomlinson (2017) suggested that teachers create a comfortable learning environment, enhance their assessment knowledge, and cooperate with staff, the school principal, and parents.

In practice, DA has several unique characteristics that set it apart from traditional assessment methods. First, the DA assignment is designed in tiered forms to facilitate students with various learning readiness and competencies (Rafi et al., 2022). Second, DA involves a range of formats, including role plays, videos, letters, blogs, posters, and games, enabling students to display their understanding through various modalities (Koshy, 2013). DA alters the significance of scores by moving them away from being the main focus of assessment, reducing grading to just a minor element of the overall evaluation process (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013a). Hence, grading is not applied in the pre-assessment, it is rarely used in the ongoing assessment, and it is only used in the summative assessment (Moon et al., 2020). The grading form in DA should use the scoring rubric, which helps teachers to analyze every single step of the project done by students (Blaz, 2016). Although students have different starts, learning paces, and different methods of assessment, the scoring rubric used is the same (Tomlinson, 2001). Both the self-assessments performed by students and the evaluations made by teachers follow a comparable rubric (Blaz, 2016; Kaur et al., 2018). Third, teachers' feedback plays the most crucial role in the DA for students' improvement and refinement (Moon et al., 2020). Teachers may utilize the assessment score as a consideration for giving feedback (Tomlinson et al., 2015).

2.2 DA in the Language Assessment

DA utilization in the language assessment is frequently found in several language assessment practices. This assessment is implemented in three forms, including pre-assessment or diagnostic assessment, ongoing assessment or formative assessment, and summative assessment (Moon et al., 2020). Pre-assessment is conducted at the beginning of the instruction (Kaur et al., 2019). Sufyadi et al. (2021) tend to use the diagnostic assessment term to refer to pre-assessment. This assessment is designed to evaluate the learning phase in order to better match the needs and traits of the students (Hanif, 2023). It is also beneficial to recognize students' strengths and weaknesses and predict their language ability, such as for diagnosing students' prior reading and listening skills (Harding et al., 2015). Identifying students' strengths and weaknesses in acquiring language productive skills, i.e., speaking skills, may

help teachers to design instruction that fits with students' learning competencies (Abdulaal et al., 2022). To diagnose the students' strengths and weaknesses, the English teacher may utilize a language skill test (Harding et al., 2015) or distribute questionnaires to identify students' anxiety and students' cognitive load (Abdulaal et al., 2022). Conversely, there are considerable obstacles to implementing the diagnostic test. Educators struggle with time constraints, insufficient facilities and infrastructure, as well as difficulties in utilizing specific assessment methods (Mannong & Purwanti, 2020).

Ongoing assessment is conducted during the learning process (Blaz, 2016). It serves as assessment for learning and assessment as learning (Moon et al., 2020), which are closely related to formative assessment (Clark, 2012). This kind of assessment is empirically significant to be applied in the language assessment (Slamet et al., 2024). Ismail et al. (2022) highlight that this assessment plays an essential role in teaching, especially within EFL instructional settings. Additionally, this assessment aids teachers in identifying their students' knowledge, understanding, and skills in language learning, which will guide the planning of future materials (Kaur et al., 2019).

Several strategies have been identified to enhance the effectiveness of ongoing assessment, specifically through assessment as learning and assessment for learning. Green (2018) summarized that there are three key principles that can enhance the effectiveness of assessment for learning, even though transitioning to this approach on a large scale is challenging due to the entrenched nature of current assessment practices. First, they ought to create tasks that provide meaningful insights into learners' skills. Second, it is important for them to assist students in becoming engaged in their learning journey by encouraging goal-setting and clarifying success criteria. Finally, feedback must be employed effectively to not only engage students but also to advance their learning. While in terms of assessment as learning, it is effectively implemented when students are actively involved (Schellekens et al., 2021) in the form of self-reflection, evaluation, and peer assessment (DeLuca et al., 2018).

Various assessment methods are identified to be utilized in the ongoing assessment. Perishko (2020) highlighted a wide range of formative assessment methods that encompass questioning, quizzes, discussions, interviews, role plays, observations, teacher-created tests, checklists, self-reports, journals, and projects. Rodrigues (2007) urged that questioning and feedback play a vital role in formative assessment within English language classrooms. Through questioning, teachers can assess comprehension and encourage critical thinking, while feedback acknowledges students' efforts and helps clarify any misunderstandings. Hashini et al. (2021) discovered that formative assessment effectively identifies learning gaps and offers constructive feedback; however, it presents challenges such as being time-consuming, requiring unconventional strategies, and lacking sufficient professional development support.

Summative assessment is established at the end of the learning series (Moon et al., 2020). It functions as an assessment of learning that assesses what students have absorbed at the end of their learning experiences, ideally using methods that are focused on products or performance (Inman & Roberts, 2021). Utilizing tiered assessment is a distinctive form of summative assessment in differentiated assessment (Blaz, 2016). Various assessment methods can be utilized, such as portfolios, projects, and examinations, to determine final grades (Kaur et al., 2019). Students' involvement is also found in the planning of summative assessment in the form of the ways they are going to be assessed (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013b). Although this assessment is beneficial for recognizing students' comprehension and skills, summative assessments can potentially impede students' acquisition of a second or foreign language, particularly if they are administered in a careless manner (Torres, 2019).

2.3 The Significance of Teachers' Knowledge and Practice in Carrying Out DA in Language Assessment

As the assessor in the differentiated classroom, teachers should be knowledgeable and ready to be the diagnosticians, planners, and leaders who are able to make informed, needs-based curricular decisions to meet the different students' needs (Mengistie, 2020). Teachers should comprehend the goals of assessments and the rationale behind them. They must be familiar with the most effective techniques for evaluating specific skills or knowledge, how to develop strong examples of student work, and the potential challenges that may occur during assessments. Moreover, they need to recognize possible pitfalls and strategies to mitigate them, along with the adverse effects that can stem from unreliable assessments. (Mertler, 2009; Ölmezer-Öztürk & Aydin, 2018; Stiggin, 1995). Hence, improving teachers' assessment knowledge significantly enhances their ability to implement formative assessments (Dorri et al., 2024).

Teachers' understanding of assessment is vital for implementing effective assessment practices and making informed decisions regarding assessment data (Mohammadkhah et al., 2022). In addition,

the idea of teachers taking on the role of assessors encompasses a wider range of assessment practices, highlighting various unique aspects. For example, how teachers evaluate knowledge, confidence, personal attitudes, and emotional involvement in assessment affects their own assessment methods within the classroom (Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2021). To be effective, teachers need to possess knowledge and skills in different assessment methods. Additionally, they should implement suitable assessment strategies that optimize advantages for both their students and themselves (Zulaiha et al., 2020). Furthermore, they should develop their knowledge and skills in assessment in order to improve the trends of assessment practice (Islam et al., 2021).

In addition, various studies have shown that a lack of knowledge affects the implementation of assessments. Teachers encountered numerous difficulties when required to conduct online assessments because of their limited understanding of assessment technology (Nurfiqah & Yusuf, 2021). While there is a connection between teachers' perceptions of assessment practices and comprehension, a study identified discrepancies in certain aspects of the assessment practices (Zulaiha et al., 2020). Afshar et al. (2018) also revealed that there was a significant difference in teachers' years of experience and their assessment comprehension.

3. Method

3.1. Participants and Setting

The research participants were 29 teachers aged 25 – 50 years old who taught English at 27 secondary schools in Indonesia, which consisted of private and public schools located in rural and urban areas. Of the 29 participants who filled out the surveys, only 24 teachers were used as the research participants since five teachers responded that they had never gained any knowledge and experience dealing with DA implementation. Most of the research participants were female (19 teachers), and five of them were male teachers. There were 17 of the total teachers who have experience in teaching English for more than ten years, and they have been certified as professional teachers. Eighteen of 24 teachers have participated in the DA workshops around once to twice, while only six of them have participated in the DA workshops more than twice. Six voluntary teachers were chosen to be interviewed after the survey was conducted through online interviews, phone calls, or WhatsApp voice notes. The interview lasted for 20-30 minutes for each teacher.

Each participant in the study was required to sign a consent form to ensure they understood their involvement in the research. They participated willingly and were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences. The researchers ensured the confidentiality of all participants' identities. The names of the university and participants were presented using pseudonyms in this study. All collected data were stored in password-protected folders on the researcher's secure personal computer. This research was conducted in accordance with institutional and national ethical guidelines and received approval from the Institutional Review Board of the Institute for Research and Community Service at State Islamic University of Salatiga, Indonesia (Protocol code: B-0160/EC/LP2M-UINSL3/III/2024).

3.2. Instrumentations

The questionnaire items assessed teachers' understanding and practices regarding diagnostics (pre-assessment), formative assessment (ongoing assessment), and summative assessment. The items were developed based on the frameworks for evaluating DA practice suggested by Kaur et al. (2018). He divided the frameworks into three principles: when the DA forms are implemented, how the DA forms are implemented, and why the DA forms should be implemented. Those principles were then developed into several item statements, which are divided into the knowledge of DA forms and the practice of DA forms.

3.2.1. Questionnaire Instrument. The questionnaire comprised 25 statements on teachers' knowledge and 25 statements on their experience with implementing DA. The questionnaire utilized four Likert scales to assess participants' responses. They were instructed to select one of four options (never = 1, seldom = 2, often = 3, always = 4) for each item statement. Before using the instruments, they were tested on 12 English teachers in a district in Indonesia. The preliminary data were utilized to evaluate the validity and reliability of the research tool. The validity of the items was analyzed using Pearson Correlation Product Moment, resulting in all instrument items achieving an obtained r value

higher than the r-table threshold of 0.40. The reliability of the questionnaires was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The analysis yielded encouraging results, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.94 and 0.95, significantly higher than the acceptable threshold of 0.60. This indicates that the tools used in this research are reliable.

3.2.2. Interview Instrument. A series of interviews was held to assess how their understanding is demonstrated in their implementation of differentiation and assessment in EFL classrooms. The interviews included nine questions. The assessment tool was validated for content validity. Two language assessment experts evaluated the questions and advised modifications to enhance the sentence structures. They recommended phrasing the questions in Indonesian to decrease the likelihood of misinterpretation. Participants were allowed to review the transcriptions of the interviews to verify that their responses were accurately captured. Both the survey questions and the interviews were conducted in Indonesian to ensure clarity and avoid misunderstandings.

3.3. Procedures

The data from the survey were examined utilizing the SPSS application, version 27 (IBM Corporation, 2021). The data was initially analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for each questionnaire item. The data were presented in six separate tables, categorized by teachers' knowledge of data analysis forms and their use of these forms. The items were sorted from the highest mean score to the lowest mean score. For the inferential analysis, the data were first checked for normality using the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The normality test resulted in $0.200 > 0.005$, which implied that the data were normally distributed. This study employed a paired samples t-test. This test was used to evaluate the differences between the two groups (MacFarland, 2014). In this case, the study attempted to examine the gap between the teachers' knowledge and their practice of DA in the EFL classroom. Only items that had a high gap (>0.50) between two variables were analyzed for their differences using a t-test.

Before the transcription of the interview was analyzed, there were sent to the participants to check whether their statements had been correctly stated in the transcription. Then, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis that involved several steps: careful reading, unitization, categorization, coding, finding patterns and trends, and reporting and using the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The main theme that emerged in this data interview was how the DA forms were implemented in the language assessment. A systematic cross-case checking of information and conclusions was applied in every phase of the thematic analysis steps to check the trustworthiness of this research. These data are triangulated by cross-checking the information from the interview transcript with the questionnaire results. Give adequate information to allow the experiment to be reproduced. This section will include sub-sections.

4. Results

Results should be clearly described in a concise manner. Results for different parameters should be described under subheadings or in a separate paragraph. Table or figure numbers should be mentioned in parentheses for better understanding.

To address the first research question regarding EFL teachers' knowledge and practice of diagnostic assessment (DA) in language assessment, we present the mean scores for each item in several tables. These tables are organized based on the teachers' knowledge and practice of different forms of DA. Each table includes the mean score and standard deviation for the respective items. Table 1 displays the results relating to EFL teachers' knowledge of pre-assessment, which is the first phase of diagnostic assessment.

Table 1

The Results of Teachers' Pre-assessment Knowledge

Item Number	Statements	M	SD
2	I know that pre-assessment is carried out to identify students' prior language competencies	3.58	0.72
4	I know that pre-assessment can be conducted in the form of a quiz, questionnaire, interview, and observation	3.42	0.72
1	I know that pre-assessment is carried out before the class begins	3.29	0.91
3	I know that the pre-assessment result becomes a consideration in designing the learning module	3.29	0.81
5	I know that pre-assessment results are not reported in the students' final report	3.25	0.99

Table 2*The Results of Teachers' Pre-assessment Practice*

Item Number	Statement	M	SD
4	I conduct pre-assessment either in the form of a quiz, questionnaire, interview, or observation	3.08	0.72
2	I carry out a pre-assessment to identify students' prior language competencies	3.04	0.69
1	I implement pre-assessment at the beginning of the program in my language classroom	3.00	0.78
5	I do not report the pre-assessment results in the student's final report	2.96	1.16
3	I utilize pre-assessment results as a consideration in designing the learning module	2.88	0.68

Table 1 indicates that item number 2 received the highest average score ($M = 3.58$), suggesting that most teachers understand that pre-assessment is used to gauge students' prior knowledge. Item number 4 also reflects teachers' awareness of the methods used to assess this prior knowledge. Meanwhile, items 1 and 3, which address teachers' understanding of the timing of pre-assessment and its importance for planning learning modules, both received similar scores ($M = 3.29$). A smaller number of EFL teachers are aware that pre-assessment results do not need to be documented, as shown by the mean score of ($M = 3.25$).

In Table 2, it is evident that the scores for teachers' pre-assessment practices are lower than their knowledge of pre-assessment. Item number 4 ranks highest in this category with a mean score of ($M = 3.08$), indicating that most EFL teachers employ various techniques for conducting pre-assessment. The second-highest mean score ($M = 3.04$) relates to the purpose of pre-assessment in identifying students' prior knowledge competencies. Items regarding the practice of not including pre-assessment results in final reports and utilizing pre-assessment for designing learning modules received low mean scores in this section. Pre-assessment for designing a learning module has the lowest mean scores in the pre-assessment practice.

The above presentation reveals that EFL teachers are knowledgeable and apply their knowledge in their pre-assessment practice. Then, Tables 3 and 4 present the teachers' knowledge and their practice in the ongoing assessment.

Table 3

The Results of Teachers' Ongoing Assessment of Knowledge

Item Number	Statements	M	SD
6	I know that ongoing assessment is inherent in the learning process	3.67	0.48
11	I know that ongoing assessment can be conducted through verbal and written responses	3.67	0.56
10	I know that formative assessment is one of the ongoing assessment forms	3.63	0.57
8	I know that ongoing assessment is related to assessment for learning and assessment as learning	3.54	0.59
15	I know that ongoing assessment can utilize media/ technology that fits with students' profiles	3.54	0.78
13	I know that quiz or daily exercise can also be used in the ongoing assessment	3.50	0.72
7	I know that ongoing assessment can be used to know students' progress as a consideration for grouping students and designing the classroom differentiation in the next program	3.42	0.83
12	I know that individual presentations, group presentations, or picture presentations can be carried out to assess students in the ongoing assessment	3.42	0.72
9	I know that giving feedback & scores after ongoing assessment will reduce students' errors	3.38	0.71
14	I know that ongoing assessment can be in the form of self-assessment and peer-assessment	3.08	0.88

Table 4*The Results of Teachers' Ongoing Assessment Practice*

Item Number	Statement	M	SD
10	I conduct the formative assessment as an alternative to implementing ongoing assessment forms	3.38	0.71
11	I use verbal and written responses in the ongoing assessment	3.38	0.65
9	I give my feedback & scores after giving ongoing assessments to reduce students' errors	3.29	0.62
6	I insert the ongoing assessment into the learning process	3.17	0.76
12	I conducted individual presentations, group presentations, or picture presentations to assess my students in the ongoing assessment	3.17	0.64
13	I implement quizzes or daily exercises in the ongoing assessment	3.13	0.68
8	I connect the ongoing assessment to assessment for learning and assessment as learning	2.96	0.69
7	I utilize ongoing assessment results to identify students' learning progress, and it is used as the consideration for grouping students and designing the classroom differentiation in the next program	2.92	0.78
14	I carry out self-assessment and peer assessment in the ongoing assessment	2,79	0,779

Table 3 demonstrates that items 6 and 11 have the highest mean score of 3.67. This suggests that EFL teachers understand the significance of continuous assessment within the learning framework and are knowledgeable about various strategies for conducting both verbal and written assessments. The other items also scored above 3.50, indicating that EFL teachers comprehend the role of ongoing assessment in assessing and supporting student learning, viewing it as a type of formative evaluation.

Moreover, EFL teachers recognize the potential to implement diverse assessment methods beyond conventional written and oral tests during their ongoing evaluations. They also value the influence of teacher feedback on enhancing student progress. On the other hand, item 14 scored the lowest at 3.08, highlighting that a smaller proportion of EFL teachers are aware of how to integrate self-assessment and peer assessment into their ongoing evaluation practices.

Items 10 and 11 received the highest ranking in Table 4, with a mean score of 3.38. This suggests that EFL teachers are using formative assessment as an ongoing evaluation method, incorporating both verbal and written assessments. Furthermore, Table 4 reveals that the provision of feedback aimed at improving student performance ranked second, with a mean score of 3.29. Conversely, item 14, which pertains to teachers' use of self-assessment and peer assessment, received the lowest mean score of 2.79.

Tables 3 and 4 reveal that item 11 received the highest scores, whereas item 14 received the lowest. This indicates that students prioritize understanding and practicing ways to give feedback to teachers for their development. On the other hand, EFL teachers seem to have insufficient knowledge and experience in using self-assessment and peer assessment as components of ongoing evaluation. Furthermore, Tables 5 and 6 offer a deeper analysis of EFL teachers' knowledge and their use of dynamic assessment (DA) in the English classroom.

Table 5
The Results of Teachers' Summative Assessment Knowledge

Item Number	Statements	M	SD
17	I know that summative assessment is carried out when a series of learning materials ends	3.71	0.55
23	I know that test items or tasks should be varied in their complexity level	3.63	0.57
20	I know that the summative assessment should avoid from students' stress	3.58	0.77
15	I know that ongoing assessment can utilize media/ technology that fits with students' profiles	3.54	0.78
16	I know that summative assessment is carried out when a series of sub-topics ends	3.54	0.72
19	I know that technology can be utilized as the media for language assessment	3.54	0.72
18	I know that summative assessment is in the form of a test, journal, project, or portfolio	3.50	0.88
25	I know that assessment items should be in a tiered arrangement	3.50	0.59
21	I know that planning the summative assessment should involve students	3.33	0.92
22	I know that assessment options should be offered to students	3.29	0.81
24	I know that scoring should use a scoring rubric, which is based on the learning taxonomy	3.29	0.75

Table 6
The Results of Teachers' Summative Assessment Practice

Item Number	Statement	M	SD
17	I implement summative assessment when a series of learning materials ends	3.54	0.58
16	I implement summative assessment when a series of sub-topics ends	3.38	0.71
20	I try to minimize students' stress in the summative assessment	3.38	0.95
18	I utilize tests, journals, projects, or portfolios in the summative assessment	3.29	0.71

23	I vary the complexity level of test items or tasks	3.29	0.62
22	I offer assessment options to students	3.08	0.72
25	I arrange assessment items in a tiered arrangement	3.08	0.72
19	I utilize media and technology to carry out summative assessment	3.04	0.81
21	I involve students in planning the assessment forms and instruments	2.92	0.93
24	I arrange scoring rubrics based on the learning taxonomy	2.79	0.59
15	I optimize assessment media or technology that fits with students' profiles in the ongoing assessment	2.75	0.79

Table 5 indicates that item number 17 scored the highest with a mean of 3.71, suggesting that EFL teachers have a solid understanding of when to conduct summative assessments. The items that achieved mean scores above 3.50 imply that these teachers recognize the appropriate timing for summative assessments, rather than restricting them solely to the end of a learning unit. Additionally, they are cognizant of key factors in designing summative assessments, including varying complexity levels, tiering assessments, employing a range of assessment methods, and mitigating student anxiety during the assessment process. On the other hand, item numbers 22 and 24 received the lowest mean score of 3.29, reflecting that teachers are not fully aware of the assessment options that should be provided in summative assessments and how to structure scoring rubrics according to learning taxonomies.

According to Table 6, item number 17 received the highest mean score of $M = 3.58$, surpassing the other items. Additionally, various assessment methods, such as tiering assessments, adjusting assessment complexity, offering different assessment options, and employing technology, also garnered high mean scores ($M > 3.0$) as seen in items 20, 18, 23, 22, 25, and 29. Furthermore, item number 16 recorded a high mean score of 3.38, indicating that EFL teachers typically conduct summative assessments at the conclusion of a series of subtopics. This demonstrates that teachers usually implement summative assessments at the end of their learning units. On the other hand, item number 15 ranked the lowest with a mean score of 2.75, suggesting that fewer teachers consider the results of diagnostic tests when determining the assessment methods for summative evaluations.

Tables 5 and 6 show that item number 17 received the top score in both cases, indicating that EFL teachers have a strong understanding and experience regarding when to conduct summative assessments. Conversely, while item number 24 did not rank as the lowest in Table 6, it received a low mean score comparable to that of item number 24 in Table 5, which has the lowest mean score overall. This suggests that EFL teachers lack sufficient knowledge and experience in designing and implementing scoring rubrics based on learning taxonomies.

The results from the interviews were consistent with the quantitative data, showing that teachers possess both knowledge and experience in utilizing the DA forms in their English classrooms. They agreed that pre-assessment should take place at the start of the learning process to gauge students' existing knowledge, encompassing both cognitive and non-cognitive skills. To carry out pre-assessments, the teachers implemented a variety of strategies, sometimes collaborating with EFL teachers who assisted in diagnosing students' needs through guidance and counseling. For instance, Teacher 6 noted, "I used quizzes to determine how well students understood the previous material, and I consulted the guidance and counseling teacher to interview students and assess their non-cognitive traits, such as interests and learning styles."

EFL teachers share the belief that DA are structured in tiers to accommodate students with diverse learning capabilities. The tiered assessments they implement involve varying levels of test difficulty. For instance, Teacher 1 mentioned, "I created a multiple-choice exam organized in tiers to support students with different competencies. I typically classify the questions according to their difficulty levels."

The significance of feedback from teachers after assessments is a major concern for educators. The results from the interviews show multiple ways that EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers show understanding and empathy. Teacher 3 mentioned, "The work students do throughout the ongoing phase is crucial when it comes to giving feedback."

The second research question investigates how well teachers' knowledge is reflected in their use of formative assessment (DA) in the English classroom. To address this inquiry, the study seeks to

identify discrepancies among several questionnaire items that show notable variations in their average scores. Among the 25 statements, five specific statements require detailed analysis to determine these differences. As mentioned in the research methodology section, a paired samples t-test is utilized to evaluate the significance of the differences observed. The results of the paired-sample t-test were utilized to evaluate the discrepancy between teachers' understanding and their implementation of diagnostic assessment in language classes. Following the comparison of mean scores for items across two variables, it was identified that items 2, 8, and 15 exhibited a notable discrepancy (greater than 0.50). These specific items were then further analyzed using a paired samples t-test to assess their differences. The findings from the paired samples t-test for each item are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

The Result of the Paired Sample T-test Examining the difference between Teachers' Knowledge and Teachers' Practice of DA in the EFL classroom

Assessment Form	Paired Sample T-test	Paired Differences		t	Sig. (2-tailed)
		M	SD		
Pre-assessment	Item 2A – Item 2B	.542	.588	4.511	0.000
Ongoing assessment	Item 8A – Item 8B	.583	.504	5.675	0.000
Summative assessment	Item 15A – Item 15B	.791	.779	4.978	0.000

Note: A = teachers' knowledge B = teachers' experience

Table 7 demonstrates significant differences between teachers' understanding of and their practical use of diagnostic assessments (DA) in several key areas. Specifically, there are three of the 25 questionnaire items were measured for their significance differences. These three items are from three different forms of the DA section (one item from the pre-assessment, one from the ongoing assessments, and one from summative assessments), all showing a p -value below 0.05. These results are reinforced by t-values that surpass the t-table threshold of 2.07 ($df = 23$). The differences in the mean scores were also identified in item number 2, confirming the teachers' knowledge of the pre-assessment function to identify the students' prior knowledge ($M=3.58$, $SD= 0.71$), while their practice in realizing the function of pre-assessment for identifying students' prior knowledge is lower ($M=3.04$, $SD= 0.69$). The t-test confirmed its significant difference ($t=4.51$, $p<0.05$). It is reflected from what has been stated by teacher 1, "although I know I have learnt from the workshop how to conduct the pre-assessment and the significance of pre-assessment, I only asked what my students want to learn due to my limited time and busyness."

A discrepancy has been identified in the ongoing assessment form, highlighting a notable gap between teachers' understanding of correlating ongoing assessments with assessment as learning and assessment for learning, versus their actual implementation of these assessments in relation to assessment of learning and assessment for learning. The results of the t-test indicate $t = 5.67$, $p < 0.05$, corroborated by the mean scores for item number 8, which display a significant difference: teachers' knowledge scored a mean of $M = 3.54$ ($SD = 0.58$), while their actual practices scored $M = 2.96$ ($SD = 0.69$).

Furthermore, interview findings support the notion that teachers mainly carry out ongoing assessments for the purpose of assessment as learning rather than for assessment for learning. One teacher remarked, "I observe during the teaching and learning process. At the conclusion of each topic, I conduct performance assessments for speaking and listening at every session."

Additionally, notable differences were found in one of the summative assessment items from the t-test result presented in the table 7 ($t=4.97$, $p<0.05$). In Item 15, which pertains to teachers' awareness of considering students' profiles when choosing assessment media, the mean score was 3.54 with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.78. In comparison, the mean score for teachers' practical application of considering learning profiles during media selection was only 2.75, with an SD of 0.79.

These findings align with teachers' comments about their methods for the assessments. Many continue to employ traditional evaluation techniques. For example, Teacher 3 stated, "I still use multiple choice to assess my students in the assessments." This preference for a singular assessment method indicates that teachers are not utilizing insights from diagnostic tests about learning styles to inform their choices of media or technology for assessments.

5. Discussion

This study explores the understanding and implementation of Dynamic Assessment (DA) among teachers in the context of language evaluation, with a focus on English classes in secondary schools. The findings from the questionnaire suggest that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers possess a solid grasp of DA and successfully incorporate this knowledge into their teaching practices in the English classroom. This research aligns with earlier studies that demonstrate a notable improvement in teachers' assessment knowledge, as evidenced by their assessment practices (Mertler, 2009). Aria et al. (2021) also support this conclusion, highlighting that teachers' thorough understanding of assessment is incorporated into their practices. This finding further supports Dorri et al.'s (2024) discovery that strengthening teachers' knowledge of assessment leads to a notable enhancement in their practices for assessing language skills. Nevertheless, this relationship between teachers' knowledge and their experience conflicts with other findings that indicate a significant variation in assessment knowledge related to the number of years of experience (Afshar et al., 2018).

According to the participants' feedback, EFL teachers gain their knowledge from a range of workshops and seminars that address the use of dynamic assessment (DA) in English language classrooms. Although their training may be somewhat limited, they appear to have successfully integrated what they've learned. The survey findings indicate that several items from two variables yield comparable results. This discovery reflects the notion that understanding DA is crucial for teachers, as it allows them to effectively assess, evaluate, guide, and strategize to determine their students' needs (Mengistie, 2020). In-depth interviews reveal how teachers' understanding is manifested in their approaches to English assessment. However, certain practices in DA had strayed from their guidelines because of external influences. In the interviews, teachers pointed out that their demanding schedules and substantial workloads hinder their ability to utilize their knowledge effectively in differentiated assessment (DA). This observation supports research showing that teachers face challenges in creating differentiated instruction, including DA, due to their workloads (Shareefa et al., 2021). The lack of sufficient professional development in differentiated assessment (DA) for teachers—many of whom have attended training only once or twice—could limit their ability to effectively practice DA. Additionally, challenges such as inadequate teacher training and a lack of resources further obstruct the successful implementation of DA (Arsyad & Suadiyatno, 2024).

While EFL teachers typically know when to carry out pre-assessments and how to gather the necessary information, they frequently lack the ability to apply the results meaningfully when creating their learning modules. Recognizing students' strengths and weaknesses in developing language skills, especially speaking, can aid teachers in designing instruction that aligns more closely with the learning abilities of their students (Abdulaal et al., 2022). EFL teachers typically understand when to carry out ongoing assessments and the methods involved, similar to their grasp of pre-assessment results. However, they generally have less familiarity and experience in combining the principles of assessment for learning and assessment as learning in their ongoing assessments. This is in contrast to the assertions made by Moon et al. (2020), who state that ongoing assessment is associated with both assessment of learning and assessment as learning. While EFL teachers have created summative assessments with a tiered structure and adjusted test difficulty, they frequently struggle with comprehending and applying scoring rubrics based on the learning taxonomy for evaluation purposes. This challenges the notion that grading in DA should incorporate a scoring rubric, which would aid teachers in assessing each stage of the students' projects (Blaz, 2016).

The deceptive nature of DA is evident in the design of summative assessments. Some educators did not tailor their assessments to the individual learning profiles of their students. Due to a lack of experience in creating tiered assessments, many teachers relied on summative assessments developed by the English teachers' community, which ignored students' learning profiles and readiness levels. This issue is further highlighted by survey findings indicating that teachers did not leverage student learning

profile data to inform their choice of assessment methods or tools. The difficulty teachers face in transitioning from a uniform assessment approach to a differentiated assessment approach may be a contributing factor to this struggle in their English classrooms. Although the assessments designed by the teachers' community offer varying levels of complexity, they may not align with the learning profiles of the students (Arsyad & Suadiyatno, 2024). The tiered assessment fails to align with the learning profiles and readiness of students in that school (Tomlinson et al., 2015).

6. Conclusion

The research findings indicate a positive impact of EFL teachers' knowledge of DA on their practical implementation in language assessment. The mean scores of teachers' knowledge regarding pre-assessment procedures suggest a solid understanding of the purpose and methods of pre-assessment, with items scoring above average. However, the mean scores for their practical application of these assessments show room for improvement, particularly in consistently conducting pre-assessments and utilizing the results effectively. Specifically, while teachers recognize the importance of pre-assessment in identifying students' prior knowledge and competencies, their actual practice reflects a gap in executing these assessments at the beginning of the language program and in using the results to guide instruction. The high reliability of the questionnaire and the validation of the interview process ensure that the findings are trustworthy and relevant. Overall, the study highlights the need for ongoing professional development to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice in DA among EFL teachers. This could enhance the effectiveness of language assessment and ultimately improve student learning outcomes.

The findings of this study indicate that the impact of differentiated assessment (DA) relies not only on teachers' understanding of the practice but also on the collective efforts of all involved parties and their shared commitment to implementing DA comprehensively and synchronously. At present, teachers' ability to combine assessment for learning and assessment as learning in their ongoing assessments, as well as their proficiency in creating scoring rubrics based on students' learning profiles, is quite limited. As a result, it is advisable for the government to improve EFL teachers' knowledge to tackle these issues.

Furthermore, EFL teachers should strive to apply DA principles in their practice to minimize the disparity between their theoretical knowledge and actual implementation, which will enhance the effectiveness of DA for students with diverse learning abilities. EFL teachers must effectively manage their time to address workload challenges and avoid difficulties with DA implementation. Given that this study was based solely on survey and interview data, additional research is necessary to explore how teachers' understanding is reflected in their assessment practices through observational methods.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions who supported this study. Special thanks are extended to the Secondary English Teachers Community of Semarang Regency, Indonesia, for granting permission to conduct the research, and to all English teachers who participated wholeheartedly in the study.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Declaration of Applying AI

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used Grammarly for the desktop application in order to assist in revising errors in grammar and sentence structures. After using this tool/service, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Funding

We would like to thank the Endowment Fund for the Education Agency (LPDP) from the Ministry of Finance of Indonesia for funding this research.

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