

Teaching Practicum: Does It Impact to Pre-service EFL Teachers' Language Assessment Literacy?

Entika Fani Prastikawati¹, Yan Mujiyanto¹, Mursid Saleh¹, Sri Wuli Fitriati¹

¹ Language Education Postgraduate Programs (Doctoral), Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Correspondence: Entika Fani Prastikawati, Language Education, Postgraduate Programs (Doctoral), Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Sekaran Gunung Pati Semarang 50229, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia. E-mail: entikafani@students.unnes.ac.id

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Abstract

The current study aimed to dig into two issues on the development of language assessment literacy among pre-service EFL teachers after they accomplished a six-week teaching practicum. Forty-two (42) pre-service EFL teachers from the English department took part in this study on a voluntary basis. The participants consisted of sixth semester students who were enrolled in a 6-week teaching practicum program at state and private senior high schools in Semarang, Indonesia. By utilizing mixed-method design, this present study used a closed-questionnaire, focused-group interview, and semi-structured individual interview to collect the data. The findings of this study reveal that pre-service EFL teachers possess an insufficient level of language assessment literacy prior to their teaching practicum. Upon completion of their six-week teaching practicum, their language assessment literacy level is elevated to a moderate level. Additionally, this study emphasizes the significant impact of a six-week teaching practicum on the pre-service EFL teachers' development of language assessment literacy. This includes enhancing their knowledge, skills, and fundamental principles in the field of language assessment. The teaching practicum bridges the gap between student teaching and full-fledged teacher certification by exposing pre-service EFL teachers to classroom management and allowing them to develop into their roles as teachers and assessors.

Keywords: teaching practicum, language assessment literacy, pre-service EFL teachers

1. Introduction

The demand for proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL) is unavoidable in the modern world. Consequently, there is a growing demand for language teachers who can adapt to changing education policies, particularly in English language education. To achieve qualified English language teaching and learning, it is essential to make progress with these current changes (Arsyad Arrafii, 2020; Cheng et al., 2010; Daneen & Hoo, 2023). Accordingly, English language instructors are expected to adapt their instruction to these changes, including delivering effective instruction, employing effective teaching strategies, and accurately assessing the language learning development of their students.

The assessment, as one of the adjustments' pillars, is a fundamental aspect of the complete teaching and learning cycle. It serves as a tool for controlling the teaching process administered by teachers, monitoring students' learning progress, and quantifying the output of teaching during or at the conclusion of the teaching and learning process (Brown & Bailey, 2008; Hidri, 2016; Gan & Lam, 2022). Teachers also can determine the relevance of course content, course tempo, and teaching methods with the help of assessment (Fulmer et al., 2015; Nurdiana, 2022; Weng & Shen, 2022). Throughout the course, a suitable assessment yields pertinent information about the students' learning progress. Similarly, students utilize the assessment feedback. This feedback positions assessment as a component of their learning experience that enables them to increase their subject-matter expertise (Tsagari, 2020; Graham, 2005). In demonstrating the quality of the teaching and learning process, these examples illustrate the indispensable role of assessment that cannot be ignored.

Point to the assessment's indispensable function in teaching and learning process, the teachers are expected to have the expertise necessary to conduct fair and accurate assessments of their students. Teachers have a responsibility to be proficient in assessment (Lam, 2015; Giraldo & Murcia, 2019). This means that they should know what to assess, how to assess it, what problems may develop, and how to solve them. In other words, teachers need to be assessment literate.

Since its introduction in 1995, assessment literacy has garnered increasing interest in secondary and postsecondary education. As stated by Inbar-Lourie (2008), assessment literacy is an important skill for educators to develop. The capacity to bridge the gap between assessment theory and practice is what is meant by the term "assessment literacy." Assessment literacy in K-12 education refers to educators' familiarity with and skill in using a variety of assessment tools and techniques (Tajeddin et al., 2022; Fulcher, 2012) and their ability to plan for and respond to students' performance data (Fitriyah et al., 2022). Similarly, Chan and Luk (2022) stress the importance of teachers being able to make informed judgments about how to implement, understand, and react to assessment. In conclusion, teachers' assessment literacy entails two facets: their familiarity with and use of assessment procedures.

In English teaching context, English teachers are expected to have expertise in evaluating students' language skills. In order to pick and

develop appropriate assessments from the many options available, as well as to make a connection between approaches to English language teaching and assessment methods, teachers need a high level of language assessment literacy (Brown & Gao, 2015; Fitriyah et al., 2022). English teachers may better weigh the benefits and drawbacks of various evaluation strategies for language acquisition by developing language assessment literacy. In addition, it allows EFL teachers to investigate the impact of international English proficiency exams like TOEFL and IELTS (Jan-nesar, 2020). As a result, English teachers are obligated to strengthen their own language assessment literacy skills in order to better serve their students.

Despite the widespread recognition of the need of language assessment literacy for language teachers, a growing body of research has uncovered concerning findings regarding teachers' proficiency in this area. Unfortunately, the aforementioned empirical investigations indicate that the primary factor contributing to teachers' inadequate grasp of assessment knowledge is their low level of comprehension (Jeong, 2013). Additionally, they have a limited capacity in adequately equipping students to confront both low-stakes and high-stakes tests. According to Luthfiyyah et al. (2020) and Koh (2011), the teachers express concerns regarding their insufficient training in the field of language assessment. Their educational backgrounds do not have an impact on their ability to acquire knowledge and understanding of assessment theories and methods (Barnes et al., 2017). In addition, teachers without proficiency in assessment literacy are confronted with the task of addressing diverse student needs within the classroom, while also navigating the dynamic landscape of national and local educational policy. In summary, the lack of proficiency in assessment skills has resulted in detrimental consequences for teachers, perhaps leading to the demise of their professional careers in the field of education.

Aligned with the urgency for professional development initiatives in the realm of assessment, a burgeoning body of scholarly inquiry also underscores the dearth of adequate training afforded to language teachers in the domain of language testing and assessment formerly. DeLuca (2012) asserts that language teachers encounter a dearth of opportunities to engage in assessment methods during their undergraduate education. Hence, it is essential to provide additional training on assessment language and testing for preservice teachers, in order to facilitate a re-evaluation of their assessment conceptions and foster the development of their assessment literacy.

In previous years, there has been a tendency for teacher education programs and in-service opportunities to overlook the need of incorporating assessment courses (Castañeda-Trujillo et al., 2018). However, it is now imperative for contemporary teacher education to address this issue. The assessment course has been incorporated into the teacher education program. Within the realm of English education, there exist multiple designations for courses focused on assessment, including language testing and assessment, language testing and evaluation, and language assessment. The primary objective of this course is to provide focused training for pre-service EFL teachers, with the aim of equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively demonstrate their understanding of assessment theory and methods. The course is intended to be completed prior to their engagement in a teaching practicum. The primary objective of this assessment course is to enhance the understanding of pre-service EFL teachers in relation to the principles and techniques of language assessment, with the aim of facilitating effective assessment practices (McGee & Colby, 2014; Prastikawati et al., 2022).

In order to use the knowledge and skills acquired from a language testing and evaluation course in a practical setting, pre-service EFL teachers are afforded the opportunity to engage in a six-week teaching practicum at a school. The inclusion of a teaching practicum in the curriculum provides valuable opportunities for pre-service English teachers to enhance their teaching abilities and develop their proficiency in assessing student learning. During this teaching practicum, pre-service EFL instructors are exposed to an authentic setting in order to enhance their assessment literacy. They are given the opportunity to create, administer, analyze, and evaluate assessments, thereby developing their understanding and proficiency in this area. According to Trent (2013), pre-service teachers who engage in a teaching practicum and get experience in conducting assessments within authentic educational settings demonstrate superior performance compared to their counterparts who lack such practicum experience. It is imperative to acknowledge that the teaching practicum holds significant importance in the professional development of pre-service teachers. Moreover, it serves as a connection or link between theoretical concepts and practical applications (Lawson et al., 2015; Aghabarari & Rahimi, 2020; Kabilan, 2013). Due to these factors, it is anticipated that the implementation of assessment in a teaching practicum will serve as a means to connect and assist pre-service EFL teachers in enhancing their understanding and proficiency in assessment, as well as in their overall professional development.

Limited study has been undertaken regarding the assessment techniques of pre-service EFL teachers during their teaching practicum in educational institutions. Examining the manner in which pre-service EFL teachers develop and execute classroom-based assessment within their instructional practice or field experience might serve as a means to circumvent the occurrence of administering assessments to students in a manner that mirrors their own testing experiences. (Wei et al., 2021; DeLuca et al., 2013; Zulaiha et al., 2020; Yan & Pastore, 2022). The assessment knowledge, conceptions of assessment, and assessment practices of pre-service EFL teachers may exhibit variation before to, during, and subsequent to the mentoring process within school settings (Yan et al., 2022). The findings suggest that the teaching practicum experience of pre-service EFL teachers has the potential to shape their understanding of assessment and subsequent assessment-related choices, ultimately impacting their level of language assessment literacy.

Considering the lack of studies on the development of language assessment literacy among pre-service teachers during their practicum, the primary objective of this study is to fill this gap by investigating the following two inquiries: (1) What characterize pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy pre- and post-teaching practicum? (2) To what extent do pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy change after participation in the teaching practicum?

2. Method

2.1 Research Context and Participants

A total number of forty-two (42) pre-service EFL teachers from English department involved in this study voluntarily. The participants were the sixth semester students joining teaching practicum program for 6-weeks at some state and private senior high schools in Semarang, Indonesia. In conducting teaching practicum, pre-service EFL teachers were supervised by a university lecturer and a mentor teacher from the school. The mentor teachers were in charge of providing feedback and guidance to student teachers throughout their practicum, while the university lecturer made regular visits to monitor classrooms and offer suggestions to pre-service EFL teachers' performance.

Table 1. Details of the participants involved

Item	n	Percent (%)
Years		
19	0	0
20	5	11.90
21	29	69.04
22	8	19.04
Genders		
Male	11	26.19
Female	31	73.80

The realization of teaching practicum lasts around six weeks. At the beginning of teaching practicum at schools, pre-service EFL teachers did observation and discussion with their mentor teachers. After conducting a classroom observation and discussion with mentor teachers, pre-service EFL teachers are given the opportunity to implement their knowledge of assessment as well as teaching and conducting classroom assessment. They were also afforded additional opportunities to collaborate with their mentor teacher as they construct lessons. That means they may confer on how to best prepare for class and how to assess the students' progress.

Responding to the changes in Indonesian curriculum in 2022, Indonesia has changed the education curriculum from 2013 Curriculum to “Merdeka Belajar” curriculum. The new change in education curriculum is stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology number 21 of 2022 concerning Education Assessment Standards in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education Levels, and Secondary Education Levels (Sari & Murwaningsih, 2023). Point to this, pre-service EFL teachers were also obligated to know and implement teaching and learning process based on the new regulation during their teaching practicum at schools.

According to the current curriculum in Indonesia “Merdeka Belajar”, schools in Indonesia today are emphasized to effectively combine diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments (Kusumawardani et al., 2022). Diagnostic assessment serves primarily as a pre-assessment, allowing the instructor to gauge students' strengths, shortcomings, knowledge, and abilities before actually teaching them. Meanwhile, the purpose of formative assessment is to assess student progress toward learning goals and make adjustments to instruction as needed. Formative assessment may be used at any point in the learning process to make sure it is on track to achieve its goal. On the other hand, the primary objective of a summative assessment is to ascertain if a student has fulfilled the criteria for progressing to the subsequent stage of their education.

Specific to language assessment literacy, pre-service EFL teachers were guided and evaluated in planning and conducting their students' assessment. The assessment plan made by pre-service ELF teachers were checked by the mentor teachers before it was implemented in the classroom teaching and learning. The mentor teachers also sat in the classroom at the beginning of pre-service EFL teachers' teaching practice to monitor the process of teaching and learning. After pre-service EFL teachers finished their classroom teaching practice, the mentor teachers gave feedback and evaluation. The feedback and evaluation were used to give a better teaching and learning quality for the next teaching session

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Each of participants completed an adapting language assessment literacy questionnaire from Giraldo (2018). This questionnaire was chosen for it has been widely used as the instrument in measuring language assessment literacy. The questionnaire covers three major components of language assessment literacy as introduced by Davies (2008) namely knowledge, skills, and principles. The knowledge component enfolds three dimensions; awareness of applied linguistics (3 items), awareness of theory and concepts (13 items), and awareness of own language assessment context (5 items). The skills component covers four dimensions; instructional skills (11 items), design skills for language assessments (11 items), skills in educational measurement (4 items), and technological skills (3 items). Finally, the principles component consists of a dimension on awareness of and action toward critical issues in language assessment (7 items). Table 2 summarizes three central components of language assessment literacy, the dimensions for each central components, and examples of items.

Table 2. Dimensions in language assessment literacy questionnaireable

Components of language assessment literacy	Dimensions	Examples of item
Knowledge	Awareness of applied linguistics (3 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating theories pertaining to language and its usage; e.g., models of linguistics proficiency, discourse analysis, and methods of teaching grammar. Examining different methods for teaching and evaluating language skills, such as communicative language testing and task-based assessment.
	Awareness of theory and concepts (13 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illustrating the historical development of language testing and evaluation and its influence on contemporary practices and society. Differentiating topics concerning assessment paradigms include the comparison between traditional and alternative methods, as well as the distinction between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced testing.
	Awareness of own language assessment context (5 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining individual's personal convictions, thoughts, conditions, and requirements for assessment Evaluating the test and assessment policies that influence his/her teaching
Skills	Instructional skills (11 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning curriculum objectives, teaching instruction, and assessment. Enhancing teaching methods by utilizing assessment outcomes and input (feedback).
	Design skills for language assessment (11 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving test items based on item analysis, with a specific focus on items that exhibit excessive difficulty, excessive simplicity, or lack of clarity. Designing constructed-response items (for oral and written communication), in along with assessment rubrics.
	Skills in educational measurement (4 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreting large-scale tests data (descriptive statistics) in term of means, modes, medians, etc
	Technological skills (3 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizing online tutorials and customizing information to cater to one's specific language assessment requirements through internet resources. Using SPSS software
Principles	Awareness of and action toward critical issues in language assessment (7 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examining the ethical principles employed by the institution for language assessment. Executing democratic language assessment practices, by giving students opportunities to share their voices about assessment.

Before the questionnaire was given to the participants of this study, it was verified by two experts of assessment. These two experts ascertained the linguistics and content accuracy of items in the questionnaire. Afterwards, the questionnaire were tried out to fifty-four pre-service EFL to measure its validity and reliability. The results of Pearson Correlations measurement reveal 59 questionnaire items out of 66 were smaller than 0.05 significance level. That means 59 questionnaire items were valid and administered to this current study. On the other hand, the reliability of the questionnaire was also measured using Cronbach's alphas. The result of reliability measurement shows that Cronbach's alphas of the questionnaire scale was 0.96 in which it showed a high internal consistency (Ho, 2013)

Moreover, a focused-group interview was also utilized as the data triangulation to scrutinize pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy over teaching practicum. A focused-group interview was employed at the very beginning of teaching practicum. All participants were willing to join the sessions in a focused-group discussion. A focused-group discussion was intended to capture pre-service EFL teachers' initial language assessment of assessment. During a focused-group discussion, all participants took part fully in this informal interview session. In this focused-group discussion, the participants shared their initial idea and thought about assessment.

Meanwhile, a semi-structure individual interview was then employed at the end of teaching practicum. This semi-structured interview was conducted to explore their current language assessment literacy after finishing their teaching practicum. This individual interview was carried out in some different sessions and days for all the participants agreed to take part. In this individual semi-structured interview, participants of interview were also allowed to share their assessment practice and experience during their teaching practicum. Unfortunately, not all participants volunteered in the individual interview. Among 42 participants, there were 31 participants agreed to be interviewed personally. In conducting both interviews, the researchers used Indonesian language.

Since this study carried out a mixed-method design, there were two different data; quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data was taken from the result of language assessment literacy questionnaire. Instead, interviews were used to acquire the qualitative data. The acquired data from questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The questionnaire data were presented in mean (M), standard deviation (SD). Paired sample t-test was used to determine the pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy before and after teaching practicum. Moreover, paired sample test and effect size (η^2) was calculated and analyzed to assess the significance of a difference or strength between teaching practicum and pre-service language assessment literacy.

On the other hand, the collected data from a focused-group interview and a semi-structured interview were transcribed in verbatim and sent to the participants for member checking. The researchers employed a qualitative coding technique to analyse the transcribed data. The transcribed data were analysed to identify the most salient themes that corresponded to the changes of pre-service EFL teachers' assessment literacy before and after the teaching practicum. The transcribed data were then coded. Then, every piece of information was

sorted by determining which keywords best described the subjects that were investigated. When the data was coded, the researchers dug for meaningful information. The researchers then matched their findings to those of previous research. The last step was the researchers interpreted and stated the finding comprehensively.

3. Findings

The findings of this study reveal two main sessions. The initial investigation pertains to the language assessment literacy results of pre-service EFL teachers prior to and subsequent to their teaching practicum. The second is the effect of teaching practicum on the language assessment literacy of pre-service EFL teachers. In the following sections, the findings are reported and analyzed.

3.1 Pre-service EFL Teachers' Language Assessment Literacy Pre- and Post- Teaching Practicum

The first research question of this study focused on the language assessment literacy levels of pre-service EFL teachers both before and after they had completed their teaching practicum. According to Giraldo (2018), there are three major components of language assessment literacy that spread into eight corresponding dimensions. The mean and standard deviation (SD) are depicted in table 3 to represent the finding on pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy pre- and post- teaching practicum.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy pre- and post-teaching practicum

Major Components and the Dimensions in Language Assessment Literacy	Pre-teaching practicum		Post-teaching practicum	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
A. Knowledge	1.46	0.46	2.7	0.37
1. Awareness of Applied Linguistics	1.52	0.64	3.1	0.55
2. Awareness of Theory and Concepts	1.57	0.47	2.76	0.45
3. Awareness of Own Language Assessment Context	1.29	0.57	2.25	0.55
B. Skills	1.27	0.31	1.93	0.35
1. Instructional Skills	1.17	0.41	2.01	0.45
2. Design Skills for Language Assessments	1.15	0.47	1.96	0.44
3. Skills in Educational Measurement	1.51	0.46	2.34	0.67
4. Technological Skills	1.27	0.49	1.43	0.63
C. Principles	1.22	0.45	2.32	0.51
1. Awareness of and Actions towards Critical Issues in Language Assessment	1.22	0.45	2.32	0.51
Language Assessment Literacy (LAL)	1.32	0.33	2.32	0.28

Table 3 elucidates that there was a degree of enhancement of language assessment literacy level for pre-service EFL teachers with the different mean scores and standard deviation before (Mean=1.32; SD=0.33) and after (Mean=2.32; SD=0.28) teaching practicum. Pre-service EFL teachers showed their low level of language assessment literacy before they conducted their teaching practicum at school. Their limitedly knowledgeable was explicated by two of the three major components in language assessment literacy appeared in low level. The two main components were the skills (Mean= 1.27; SD= 0.31) and principles (Mean=1.22; SD=0.45).

On the other hand, the enhancement of language assessment literacy was appeared after pre-service EFL teachers conducted their teaching practicum. As seen in table 2, the mean scores and standard deviation of overall language assessment literacy level revealed significantly improved (Mean=2.32; SD= 0.28). All of the three main components of language assessment literacy showed the notable enhancement in each mean score before and after teaching practicum. Among three components, knowledge of pre-service EFL teachers on assessment reached the highest improvement (pre-Mean= 1.46; post-Mean=2.7). Meanwhile, the component of principles and skills also showed a significant improvement in the second and third position. Based on these results, it can be deduced that pre-service EFL teachers were in the low level of language assessment literacy before they conducted teaching practicum. Their level of language assessment literacy turned into moderate level after they finished their teaching practicum.

3.2 The Impact of Teaching Practicum on the Changes of Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Language Assessment Literacy

To compare the enhancement of pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy before and after conducting teaching practicum at school, a paired sample test was deployed. The result of this paired sample test (see table 4) revealed that the enhancement from pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy before and after teaching practicum was 1.00 points with a remarkable difference (p < 0.05). This result validates the previous study that teaching practicum provides a real arena for pre-service EFL teachers to trial their concept of assessment practices that they learned in college (Aghabarari & Rahimi, 2020). Even teaching practicum was conducted in a brief time (six weeks), pre-service teachers were given a chance to practice and confirm the theory and concept they have learned during assessment course in the college.

Table 4. Paired sample test

	Mean	SD	SE	95% confidence interval of the difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
				Pre-service EFL teachers' Language assessment literacy (Pre- and Post-)	1.00306			

Moreover, the paired sample test yielded a t of 14.151 which shows statistically significant difference between pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy before teaching practicum and after teaching practicum.

To justify the impact of teaching practicum, a focused-group interview and individual interviews were carried out. A focused-group interview in the very beginning of teaching practicum digs deep into pre-service EFL teachers convincing justifications for their competencies. In this interview, they came with limited comprehension of assessment principles:

Assessment is something I am not familiar with. The only exams I can think of are the midterm and final exams, which consist of things like grades, attendance, and participation in the classroom activities. (PS-4; FGD)

I think assessment is about scoring the students' achievement in their learning process such as quiz, midterm test, and final test. Some of the teachers also include students' characters and attitude in the assessment criteria. (PS-18; FGD)

In my perspective, assessment serves the dual purpose of evaluating students' abilities and facilitating self-reflection as a teacher. It enables me to gauge the current progress of my students and provides them with valuable insights into their own learning trajectories, thereby guiding them towards areas of improvement. This may be a subjective perspective, but it appears that a significant number of educators do not adhere to this particular assessment objective. (PS-27; FGD)

The concise responses (PS-4 and PS-18) in the excerpts imply that they had not yet prepared to concisely convey their conception of assessment. They both appeared perplexed regarding the inclusion of assessment criteria. They immediately established links between their personal experiences with assessment in higher education and subsequently included students' moral character as a component within their comprehension of credible conceptions in assessment criteria. Point to the excerpts, it can be inferred that PS-4 and PS-18 have a limited and shallow understanding on assessment purposes and principles, primarily centered around assessing students' learning outcomes rather than prioritizing the improvement of learning quality and the development of more effective teaching practices. On the other hand, PS-27 served a better understanding of assessment. PS-27 recognizes that assessment serves various objectives, including a review of students' competencies, identification of their strengths and weaknesses, and support of teachers' instructional practices. Nevertheless, she concedes that a significant number of her peers/friends adhere to the utilization of assessment as a paradigm for measuring.

Fortunately, teaching practicum afforded pre-service EFL teachers numerous opportunities to engage in critical reflection regarding their understanding of assessment. The practicum served as a pivotal moment in pre-service EFL teachers' journey, prompting her to adopt a teacher's viewpoint and develop a more nuance comprehension of assessment within the school environment. This was achieved through a careful observation of the mentor teacher's instructional practices.

I observed and took a note when my mentor teachers pointed the naughty students in the classroom. She would come closer to the students and asked him to come forward in the class. She would ask him to stand and asked some questions in English. She requested him to response in English too. I think it is an effective way so that the naughty students will not repeat making noise during the learning process. (PS-2; INDI)

The classroom I observed had more than 40 students. The students were likely to become distracted in the classroom, resulting in class disorganization. During that moment, my mentor teacher would abruptly cease speaking for some second time. Subsequently, he either commended or censured the student, instructed them to remain silent. My mentor teachers graded students based on their participation in class and awarded them at end of semester. The strategy enabled an increase in students' level of involvement and motivation (PS-12; INDI)

Based on the excerpts, pre-service EFL teachers perceived tangible rewards as an essential and efficacious method of reinforcement to improve student engagement and motivation for English learning. To add, pre-service EFL teachers' elevated professional role as teacher assessors facilitated their ability to engage in critical analysis of their mentor teacher's instructional methods, while also prompting them to introspect on their own negative encounters with incorrect assessments. It can be seen from an excerpt from PS-9:

I observed the teacher criticizing some misbehaving students in class. I disagreed with that. I had a similar experience during my speaking class. My lecturer kept criticizing me for a half an hour because I did mispronunciation on some words. In my opinion, it is preferable to engage in private discussions when addressing such issues and to provide constructive criticism through written means. (PS-9; INDI)

Furthermore, teaching practicum also shaped pre-service EFL teachers' agency as teacher assessor through their changing conception of assessment. They realized that The main goals of administering an assessment go beyond only gauging the extent to which students have learned. The excerpts from PS-15 and PS-22 reflected their changes of their conception of assessment.

Assessment is a dynamic process involving reciprocal engagement. Teachers must prioritize enhancing students' engagement with assessment in order to build an active and happy classroom culture, hence facilitating their own professional growth through subsequent improvement efforts. (PS-15; INDI)

The aims of assessment are to engage in critical reflection and make necessary modifications to the processes of teaching and learning. Assessment plays a crucial role in the acquisition of evidence pertaining to students' learning. Students have the ability to adapt their learning priorities and approaches by utilizing the feedback received from assessments.

Then, the teachers should utilize student and colleague assessments to modify their instructional approaches. (PS-22; INDI)

Throughout the teaching practicum, pre-service EFL teachers emphasized the collaborative nature of assessment and recognized the important role of students' agentic involvement. As pre-service teachers, their simultaneous positions as a teacher and a student afforded them enhanced prospects for perceiving the interrelationship between teaching and learning. For example, PS-15 discovered that the efficacy of assessment is contingent upon students' participation in the activity. Her intuitive understanding aligns with previous scholarly investigations that emphasize the crucial significance of students' active participation in enhancing the efficacy of feedback (Gan & Lam, 2022).

In order to increase the students' engagement, pre-service EFL teachers also mentioned that they made more interaction with their students during their teaching practicum.

I always get in touch with myclassroom students. I observed that they exhibit varying attention in the assessment context. Teachers must take into account their students' various needs.. Alternatively, they may perceive comments as lacking substance. (PS-23; INDI)

Effective communication with students plays a crucial role in facilitating their academic progress and overall development. Providing regular feedback on students' work is an essential practice that teachers must consistently engage in. (PS-30; INDI)

These quotations imply that pre-service teachers' engagement with students may have influenced their understanding and belief of assessment, as they began to think about the requirements of students in the assessment process. During their teaching practicum, their instructional skills were improved as they tried to give encouraging feedback as well as serving motivational assessment experience. Moreover, pre-service EFL teachers' heightened consciousness of student needs within the context of feedback procedures holds significance in facilitating dialogic feedback and enhancing student learning. This implies that their assessment skills are improved during their real practice of assessment in the classroom.

In summary, the language assessment literacy of pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers was found to be changed by a dynamic process that occurred throughout their teaching practicum. It is dynamic, continuously evolving alongside the pre-service EFL teachers' educational experience. The individuals' understanding of assessment is derived from their personal encounters with being assessed as students and subsequently evolves throughout their teacher education journey. The apprenticeship of observation, which refers to the process of unconsciously learning about teaching through witnessing their own teachers, significantly impacts the first beliefs and teaching practices of pre-service teachers. The presence of negative experiences in the apprenticeship of observation can function as a deterrent to the adoption of such practices, as prospective EFL teachers can learn valuable insights from their mentor teachers regarding ineffective teaching methods to avoid.

4. Discussion

The present study sought to look into two inquiries pertaining to the improvement of language assessment literacy among pre-service EFL teachers subsequent to their completion of a six-week teaching practicum. According to language assessment literacy questionnaire, it reveals that pre-service EFL teachers are in low level of language assessment literacy before they conduct their teaching practicum. After they have finished their six-week teaching practicum, their language assessment literacy level is increased into moderate level. Further, this study highlights the prominent role of six-week teaching practicum in changing pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy covering their knowledge, skills, and principles.

One of this study findings highlighted the changes of pre-service EFL teachers' conception of assessment in term of assessment principles and purposes. According to the study's findings, pre-service EFL teachers originally believed that assessment helps with diagnosing and promoting learning, and it further assists students develop their moral character. Their incomplete understanding of assessment stems from two sources: their time spent learning (their previous experiences as students) and the cultural legacy of Indonesia's educational system, which shapes the long-standing moral goal of assessment. Similar perspectives are frequently observed in several research conducted within Asian countries that possess high-stakes educational assessment systems (Xu & He, 2019; Koh, 2011; Lam, 2015; Aziz, 2015). The findings of our research indicate that participating in a practicum that provides exposure to the intricate realities of assessment within actual school environments may offer greater value in terms of fostering a deeper awareness of the processes involved in implementing effective assessment strategies. During the practicum, the pre-service EFL teachers came to the realization that assessment serves multiple objectives, including handling classrooms and facilitation. The emergence of their novel perspective on the function of assessment within the context of classroom management can be ascribed to the considerable magnitude of class enrolment and the distinctive attributes exhibited by students in educational settings (Izci & Caliskan, 2017). Although previous research has indicated that big class size can hinder the implementation of assessment for learning practices (Xu & Harfitt, 2019), our study proposes that it could potentially facilitate practical thinking among pre-service EFL teachers.

The changing level of pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy from low level into moderate level after teaching practicum presents a transitional period for pre-service EFL teachers. The perception of possessing knowledge and proficiency in classroom assessment may potentially be ascribed to the completion of a six-week teaching practicum or the process of trial and error inside the

classroom setting. Given the participants' demonstrated level of literacy, it is evident that they possess a diverse understanding of assessment methodologies and their suitable application. Moreover, they exhibit capacity to efficiently oversee the academic development of students and apply the acquired data to improve their academic performance in the classroom environment (Gan & Lam, 2022). Further, the teaching practicum serves as a transitional period during which pre-service EFL teachers are acquainted with the practical aspects of teaching and have the opportunity to progressively shape their identity as assessors. This discovery complements previous research that emphasizes the increased importance of assessors following their exposure to various assessment challenges in assessment courses (Xu & He, 2019; Fulcher, 2012). This study's emphasis of the function of practicum in creating their identity as assessors highlights the need of integrating assessment education with authentic school environments. This is because the experiential learning that takes place in schools can have a profound effect on the cognitive growth of pre-service EFL teachers (Lawson et al., 2015).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that pre-service EFL teachers exhibit a substantial transformation in their language assessment literacy, particularly in relation to the utilization of informal data, including non-achievement features, as an integral component of students' learning. Pre-service EFL teachers deemed it necessary to examine non-achievement features (i.e., students' engagement, attitudes, and learning motivation) while assessing the student's progress in language learning. This finding corroborates Arsyad Arrafii (2020) mentioning that prioritize to non-achievement factors in grading the students is also needed during the assessment and grading process. Pre-service ELF teachers' decision in utilizing non-achievement features reflect their language assessment skills that go far beyond the ability to create the assessment instruments only.

In addition, pre-service EFL teachers' ability to effectively utilize feedback in the assessment process has shown noticeable improvements. Pre-service ELF teachers increasingly recognized the significance and techniques of providing efficient and enlightening feedback by means of classroom observation and independent feedback practice. Nevertheless, it was discovered that their feedback methods did not evolve in accordance with these transformed ideas, since the teachers often provided positive feedback that was unrelated to the tasks at hand. The insufficient quantity of practice obtained during the practicum is the main reason for the difference between the mentor teachers' real feedback practices and their changed understanding of assessment, as well as their partial alterations in conception of assessment (Tsagari, 2020). These results provide further evidence for the necessity of incorporating various school-based assessment activities into the practicum in order to aid pre-service EFL teachers in effectively internalizing and integrating assessment principles, as well as in closing the divide between their conception and assessment practices.

5. Conclusion

This study evaluated the development of language assessment literacy among pre-service EFL instructors during a six-week teaching practicum. The results suggest that pre-service EFL teachers acquired a greater depth of practical and broad knowledge, principles and assessment skills during teaching practicum. The teaching practicum serves as a bridge between student teaching and full-fledged teacher certification by exposing pre-service EFL teachers to classroom management and providing them with opportunities to grow into their roles as teachers and assessors.

Undoubtedly, this research possesses a few limitations. The absence of exam-related tasks performed throughout the practicum has prevented an investigation into the effect of high-stakes assessments on the development of pre-service EFL teachers' language assessment literacy. Notwithstanding these limitations, our findings have implications for teacher education. One implication is that pre-service EFL teachers require extended hours to actively participate in assessment practice during their practicum. Adequate familiarity with diverse assessment methodologies is an advantageous initial step for them to actively contemplate and evaluate their proficiency in language assessment. Second, mentor teachers are required to work together to offer support and guidance to pre-service EFL teachers in order to develop their language assessment literacy. Additionally, it is necessary for them to collaborate for the purpose of enhancing the capabilities of pre-service EFL teachers in challenging traditional methods and their guidance. In order to accomplish this, they might allow the ample independence to experiment with their ideas. Furthermore, they should assist pre-service EFL teachers in assimilating into the field schools by educating the school's policies and regulations, the subject matter, the requirements of the students, and other relevant information.

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Authors contributions

Entika Fani Prastikawati was responsible for study design, the instrument validation, data collection, and data analysis. Prof. Yan Mujiyanto and Prof. Mursid Saleh were responsible for drafting the manuscript. Prof. Sri Wuli Fitriati was responsible for revising the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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