# IDEAS

# Unlocking the Potential: Exploring the Impact of Online Assessment in English Language Teaching

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## Abstract

The primary aim of this research is to examine the types of online assessments utilized by English educators teaching tenth-grade students at SMAN 15 Luwu and to discern students' attitudes towards integrating online assessment methodologies. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data collection involved the administration of questionnaires and conducting interviews. Interviews were conducted with both English instructors and students from SMAN 15 Luwu. Findings reveal that English instructors at SMAN 15 Luwu employ online assessment tools such as Google Forms, Google Classroom, Quizzes, and Instagram. These tools present various advantages, disadvantages, and challenges, including the complexities of designing appropriate assessments, managing student behavior, and grappling with unreliable internet connectivity. Concurrently, student perspectives toward online assessment exhibit both favorable and unfavorable inclinations. Positive perceptions include enjoyment of the online assessment, prompt feedback acquisition, flexibility, time efficiency, effectiveness, and increased confidence in online assessment execution.

**Keywords***: Online Assessment, English Language Teaching, Students' Perceptions*

## Introduction

Technology plays a pivotal role in modern education, particularly with the widespread adoption of online methods or e-learning, supplanting traditional instructional approaches. In the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0) context, the internet assumes a central role across various domains, including education (Wibowo & Novitasari, 2021). Key advantages of online learning facilitated by the internet include its temporal and spatial flexibility, enabling

learning activities to occur at any time and from any location (Amalia, 2020). The advent of Industry 4.0 signifies an era marked by the pervasive application of advanced technologies in computing and communication, reshaping conventional human roles and responsibilities (Kristiyanti, 2021).

Interactive technologies allow students to engage in immersive learning experiences unbound by geographic constraints, fostering the acquisition of local and global knowledge within the confines of a classroom setting (Lisyowati et al., 2021). However, the knowledge gleaned through technological mediums necessitates critical appraisal and reflection. For many students, the internet is a virtual repository akin to a textbook or reference library, facilitating access to course materials, collaborative note-sharing, academic assistance, and more (Marisa Yoestara et al., 2020). Leveraging technology, evaluations can be conducted asynchronously, allowing for assessment at one's convenience, while instructors can monitor student performance remotely (Amalia, 2020; Wibowo & Novitasari, 2021).

The demands of the 21st-century learning landscape, catalyzed by Industry 4.0, emphasize the cultivation of essential skills such as critical thinking, communication (oral, written, and digital), collaboration, networking, and creativity. Moreover, proficiency in information, media, technology, and life and career skills are deemed indispensable in navigating contemporary educational paradigms (Fitriyah & Jannah, 2021; Lisyowati et al., 2021).

Amidst contemporary discourse, considerable attention is directed towards the utilization of internet-based or online assessments, indicative of the transformative influence of technology on pedagogical practices (Yulia et al., 2019). As education undergoes a digital metamorphosis, online assessment emerges as a pivotal component of online learning environments, offering a technologically-mediated alternative to traditional paper-based assessments (Widiastuti et al., 2021). While online assessment introduces efficiencies such as immediate feedback, streamlined administration, and reduced reliance on tangible resources like paper, it also presents inherent challenges necessitating ongoing refinement and methodological sophistication (Fitriyah & Jannah, 2021; Kristiyanti, 2021).

Central to the learning process is the dynamic interaction between students and the knowledge they engage with, culminating in constructing personal understanding and skill development. Learning, characterized by active participation and practical engagement, entails the assimilation of knowledge and its application within real-world contexts, fostering a more profound comprehension and broader perspective among students (Fitria, 2020b; Fitriyah & Jannah, 2021; Wibowo & Novitasari, 2021).

Drawing from prior scholarly endeavours, including studies by Ridho Rojabi, which explored students' perceptions and challenges about online assessment, this research seeks to expand upon existing literature by investigating the perspectives and challenges encountered by educators in the implementation of online assessment within the senior high school context (Ridho Rojabi, 2021). While extant research predominantly focuses on junior education settings, this study endeavours to bridge this gap by shedding light on the unique dynamics and exigencies shaping online assessment practices within the senior high school milieu.

## Literature Review

### Online Assessment

Online assessment is a method of evaluation conducted online through internet platforms or applications, encompassing various types of tests, quizzes, assignments, or exercises to measure participants' knowledge, skills, or abilities in a particular subject or area (Elzainy et al., 2020; Howell, 2006). The main components of online assessment include the platform or application where the assessment takes place, various types of tests tailored to the evaluation objectives, and technological requirements such as computer or mobile devices and internet connection (Purkayastha et al., 2019).

One of the main advantages of online assessment is the flexibility of time and place, allowing participants to access and complete tests from anywhere and anytime as long as they are connected to the internet. Automated assessment is also a crucial feature of online assessment platforms, reducing the time and effort of human assessors. Upon completion, test results are usually available directly through the platform, including participant scores, weakness and strength analyses, and other information to aid in understanding participants' progress (Alruwais et al., 2018; Karaoğlan et al., 2020; Zylfiu & Rasimi, 2020).

However, online assessment poses challenges, such as security and cheating issues. Strict measures, such as webcam monitoring and anti-plagiarism software, are required to prevent such occurrences. In the context of education, business, or professional certification, online assessment has become a primary tool for measuring and evaluating knowledge and skills. However, to maximize its benefits, careful planning and appropriate implementation strategies are necessary (Amalia, 2020; Wibowo & Novitasari, 2021).

### English Language Teaching

English Language Teaching (ELT) is a discipline that focuses on teaching and learning the English language to non-native speakers of English. It involves various methods, strategies, and approaches designed to assist students in developing speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in English. The methods of teaching English vary depending on the learning context, objectives, and student

characteristics (Chambers & Gregory, 2006; Fitria, 2020a). One common approach is the communicative approach, which emphasizes active interaction between students and focuses on language use in real communicative situations. Additionally, task- and project-based learning are frequently implemented to enhance students' language skills while providing meaningful contexts (Fitria, 2020a; Sofiana et al., 2019).

Technology also plays a significant role in modern English language teaching. Using software, applications, online learning platforms, and other digital resources can enrich students' learning experiences and facilitate language practice outside the classroom. Moreover, technology enables collaboration between students and teachers worldwide, expanding the scope of learning and introducing students to various cultures (Farrell & Jacobs, 2020; Shadiev & Yang, 2020; Sofyan, 2021).

However, English language teaching involves more than just developing linguistic abilities. It also encompasses understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultures associated with the language. English language teachers must often promote cross-cultural understanding and global awareness through their teaching materials (Burns, 2019; Sofiana et al., 2019). Overall, English language teaching is a dynamic and evolving, combining traditional elements with the latest innovations to provide effective and meaningful learning experiences for students worldwide.

**Method**

The researcher employed a qualitative methodology for this study. Qualitative research is utilized to elucidate behaviours or specific attitudes. It accentuates data such as text, images, or unique phrases for analysis (Mey, 2022). The researcher serves as a primary instrument for data collection from participants. Sources of qualitative data include interviews and questionnaires. Qualitative research tends to interpret what the researcher observes, hears, and comprehends. It involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the subject matter, aiming to make sense of or interpret phenomena. In the qualitative paradigm, numerical data are not only presented but also explained in written text, emphasizing their meaning and significance.

**Findings**

The data collection methodology employed by the researcher involved interviews with English teachers and the use of questionnaires to gather students' perceptions. The interviews with English teachers were conducted to obtain insights into their practices regarding online assessment. Additionally, student perceptions were obtained through questionnaires and interviews conducted in September via Google Forms.

Regarding the implementation of online assessment in teaching English, Mrs. A highlighted the use of Google Forms and Google Classroom as preferred platforms due to their ease of understanding for students. Feedback on assessments primarily focused on correcting errors, such as tense usage discrepancies, with explanations provided to students. Assessment scores were assigned for daily or weekly tasks, while scores for each chapter's assessment were not explicitly mentioned.

The advantages and disadvantages of online assessment were identified through teacher responses. Challenges included technical issues, such as difficulties in printing or capturing assessments, and concerns about students submitting multiple responses or assessments. Additionally, time and cost considerations favoured face-to-face assessments due to the absence of data or memory constraints associated with online platforms.

Preference for paper-based assessments over online ones stemmed from issues such as the need for excessive scrolling, leading to student fatigue and reduced comprehension. While online assessment offered flexibility for teachers, students perceived it as less flexible due to perceived repetitive tasks and occasional late submissions despite deadlines.

Signal issues during online assessments posed challenges for teachers, affecting the reliability of assessment delivery. To address potential biases, Mrs. A designed assessments randomly to ensure each student received a unique set of questions. However, managing double responses and determining appropriate scoring remained problematic.

Various online platforms were utilized to assess different language skills, such as Instagram for speaking assessments and Google Forms for reading and writing assessments, tailored to each teacher's preferences.

The students' perceptions of online assessment were analyzed based on data from 5 respondents, comprising questionnaire responses and interview data. The majority of respondents disagreed with the statement that online assessment was ineffective, suggesting a nuanced view wherein some students perceived it as effective while others did not.

**Discussions**

Our results reveal that teachers utilize a diverse array of online assessment tools to evaluate different skills. Popular platforms include Google Forms, Quizziz, Google Docs, and Instagram, each serving distinct purposes. For instance, Google Classroom is predominantly used for assessing reading, writing, and listening skills, while speaking assessments are often carried out using Instagram and video features within Google Classroom. This variety indicates a flexible approach to online education, allowing teachers to choose tools that best fit the learning outcomes they aim to achieve (Amalia, 2020; Wibowo & Novitasari, 2021).

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Online assessments provide several educational benefits, such as immediate grading and more precise measurement of learning outcomes (Makransky et al., 2019). Teachers capitalize on these advantages by providing clear instructions and feedback, which are delivered through online platforms and phone calls. This dual approach not only ensures clarity and understanding but also promotes independent learning, as students are encouraged to identify and correct their errors (Putri & Sari, 2021; Sun et al., 2021).

Despite the benefits, our study identifies significant variability in student motivation towards online assessments. Factors influencing engagement include the novelty of the assessment format and individual student preferences. Some students excel in this autonomous and flexible learning environment, while others struggle with issues like missed deadlines, lower performance, and cheating, indicating a need for more structured or guided assessment frameworks to maintain consistent student engagement and integrity (Amalia, 2020; Kristiyanti, 2021; Wibowo & Novitasari, 2021).

Teachers also encounter specific challenges when implementing online assessments. Technical issues, such as unreliable internet connectivity and the requirement for high bandwidth, frequently disrupt the assessment process (Joshi et al., 2020). Additionally, designing suitable questions that accurately reflect students' comprehension levels remains a challenge. Concerns about students searching for answers online or engaging in unauthorized collaboration highlight the need for secure and fair testing environments (Fitriyah & Jannah, 2021; Zhang et al., 2021).

Despite the overarching positivity towards online assessments reflected in our questionnaire and interview analysis, many respondents have a notable preference for paper-based traditional evaluations. This preference often stems from concerns over the ease of cheating online and the perceived reduction in skill practice that online platforms might entail. These insights suggest that while online assessments are celebrated for their efficiency and innovation, they also require careful consideration to ensure they meet all educational standards and student needs (Khan & Khan, 2019; Widiastuti et al., 2021).

While online assessments are valued for their potential to streamline and enhance educational processes, they also bring to light significant concerns regarding student motivation, assessment integrity, and logistical challenges. As we move forward, addressing these issues will be crucial to fully leveraging the benefits of online assessments in educational settings. This will involve not only improving technological infrastructure and assessment designs but also ensuring that digital assessments can accommodate diverse learning styles and needs.

## Conclusion

The study delves into the utilization and perceptions of online assessments in English language teaching, examining insights from both educators and students. Teachers employ a range of online platforms, such as Google Forms and Instagram, to evaluate various language skills, showcasing adaptability in their instructional methods. While online assessments offer advantages like instant grading and precise learning outcome measurement, they also present challenges like technical glitches and concerns regarding student engagement and academic integrity. Student views on online assessments vary, with some finding them effective while others prefer traditional paper-based methods due to worries about cheating and reduced skill practice. Despite these obstacles, online assessments are valued for their potential to enrich educational processes, yet addressing issues such as student motivation and assessment integrity remains pivotal for their successful integration. The interviews with English language teachers underscore the importance of adept classroom management strategies, tailored approaches to accommodate diverse class sizes, and the role of adequate facilities in fostering positive learning environments. Overall, the study emphasizes the necessity of adaptive teaching practices and ongoing professional development to meet the diverse needs of students across different learning contexts.

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