



Special issue: Second Language Assessment in Online Classes: New Trends

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It is evident that the ongoing development of new digital technologies has paved the ground for gaining knowledge and skills in the virtual environments. Over the last decades, learning in virtual environments has been extensively welcomed across the globe. A lion's share of this extensive popularity is due to the outstanding advantages of learning in the virtual environments, including added flexibility and self-paced learning, better time management, demonstrated self-motivation, improved virtual communication and collaboration, a broader, global perspective, refined critical-thinking skills, and new technical skills. Using effective assessment practices is an integral part of effective instruction in virtual environments. Owing to the unique features of virtual instruction, the assessment practices used in this setting are certainly different from those adopted in face-to-face classes. This implies that assessment practices should be designed, administered, and scored tailored to the unique features of virtual learning environments. Despite the paramount importance of this issue, it is interesting to note that second language assessment in the online classes has received scant attention in the literature. Thus, this issue aims to collate original research and review articles addressing it.

The first article, "Self-assessment and Immunity in Online Language Learning: Probing into The Impacts of Critical Thinking, Self-Efficacy, and Academic Resilience" by **Ali Ramadan Elbaioumi Shaddad** investigated impacts of critical thinking, self-efficacy, and academic resilience on self-assessment and immunity in Saudi Arabian EFL settings. The research used a convenience or opportunity sampling approaches involving 423 university students. The findings revealed that that the level of critical thinking, immunity, self-efficacy, and academic resilience among EFL students is directly related to how well they do on their online assessments. Moreover, the results demonstrated that those EFL students who maintained a healthy state of critical thinking, self-efficacy, and academic resilience felt more immune and did better in their online assessments.

The second paper with the title "Ways to Decrease Anxiety in Online Assessment: Can Self-

Assessment, Teacher Support, Self-esteem, and L2 Grit Be Empowering?” written by **Anwar Hammad Al Rashidi** uncovered the factors that may hinder or decrease test anxiety. The study adopted a quantitative approach, collecting data through pre and posttests. Ninety-one intermediate EFL learners volunteered to take part in the research. The results demonstrated that EFL students in the experimental group experienced less anxiety in the final assessment, which was done online.

The third article, by **Afsheen Rezai** from University of Ayatollah Ozma Borujerdi, Borujerd City, Iran, is titled “Online Peer-Dynamic Assessment as an Approach for Promoting Listening Comprehension and Relieving Learning Anxiety: Evidence from Iranian EFL Learners”. Afsheen Rezai investigated the impact of online peer-DA on the LC and LA of intermediate EFL learners in Iran. Using a convenience sampling method involving 85 participants, he concluded that the experimental group demonstrated statistically significant improvements in their LC scores compared to the control group in both the post-test and delayed post-test. Moreover, the experimental group reported experiencing less anxiety than the control group in the post-test and delayed post-test.

The fourth article is by **Dulfqar Mhaibes Abdulrazzaq** and **Mohamed Sayed Abdellatif** and it is titled “Online Assessment or Offline Assessment, Which One Is More Addressive? The Impacts on Willingness to Communicate, Test Taking Anxiety, And Language Achievement”. They explored the impacts of online assessment (OA) and offline assessment on willingness to communicate, test taking anxiety, and language achievement among Iraqi intermediate EFL students. Using a sample consisting of 63 participants, the results indicated a notable differences amongst the post-tests of the two classes in favor of the OA class.

The fifth article by **I-Chen Chen** disclosed a blended learning course focused on formative assessments to enhance English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' writing proficiency. The study was conducted over 15 sessions in which students received complete a MOOC – English paragraph writing. Moreover, the formative assessments in this blended writing course included online quizzes, discussion boards, teacher's evaluation of students' writing, students' self-assessments, and peer assessments. The findings evidenced that students improved their writing performance after the blended learning course. Students perceived formative assessment activities to be useful in developing their writing skills.

In article six, **Ima Fitriyah, Imelda Gozali, Utami Widiati, Niamika El Khoiri, and Amreet Kaur Jageer Singh** evaluated the practices and values of Indonesian EFL writing teachers towards AfL and AaL strategies during the constrained context of online learning setting because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was conducted on 54 Indonesian EFL teachers who taught writing in a higher education level during the full online learning. Using an explanatory sequential mixed method in conjunction with a case study research design, the findings showed that all respondents accorded high importance to all AfL-AaL strategies and rated themselves as frequently implementing the AfL-AaL strategies. In both practice and values, the highest mean value was obtained for “providing assessment criteria”, and the lowest for the “peer- and self-assessment”.

Next, in the seventh paper entitled “Demystifying the Challenges of E-Assessment in Turkish Preparatory Language Schools,” **Kaveh Jalilzadeh, Christine Coombe, Behzad Nezakatgoo, and Nasibeh Bagherpour** investigated examined 56 EFL teachers working at Preparatory Language Schools, outlining their perceptions of e-assessment challenges and potential solutions in Turkish Preparatory Language Schools. 56 teachers with M.A. and Ph.D. degrees participated to complete an open-ended questionnaire. After analyzing the data, the findings revealed the following challenges in implementing e-assessment: individual differences, ethics, infrastructure, policy power, mediating artifacts, teacher and student assessment and feedback literacy, and teacher and student technological literacy. This research contributed to professional development, policy-making, and in-service training.

Khaled Ahmed Abdel Al Ibrahim in the eighth paper checked the effects of practicing critical thinking (CT), self-esteem (S-E), and self-assessment (S-A) on moderating evaluation apprehension (EA) and increasing academic achievement in online assessment. The data were

collected from 391 EFL students through the use of the Watson–Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal Form A, The Foreign Language Learning Self-esteem Scale (FLLSE), The Core of Self-Assessments Questionnaire, The Student Evaluation Apprehension Scale, and a Researcher-made test. The results showed that developing CT, S-E, and S-A can moderate student EA and increase academic achievement.

Liqaq Habeb Al-Obaydi, Marcel Pikhart, and Ragad M Tawafak, in the ninth article, investigated the online assessment in language teaching environment through essays, oral discussion, and multiple-choice questions. Two samples participated, each consists of thirty EFL college students in The English Department, College of Education for human Sciences at the University of Diyala in Iraq. The results showed that the experimental group that was tested by using essays for their evaluation reached better results in their final oral exam, while the control group that was tested by only using multiple-choice tests reached better results in their interim evaluation, but they showed only lower levels of cognitive skills. The results also showed that to improve cognitive and oral competencies, it is more efficient to assess the students with written essays via weekly quizzes in addition to oral discussion tests rather than just fill-in-the-form tests despite the fact that these tests are able to generate better results in the students' formative exams.

In paper ten, **Fatemeh Sharifi, Mehrdad Sepehri, and Sajad Shafiee** investigated the impacts of online DA on cognitive use of reading comprehension strategies among Iranian ESP students. In addition, the ESP students' attitudes towards online DA were investigated in this research. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, 80 PhD students of general psychology studying at Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch, Iran were participated in this study. After teaching ten reading psychological texts, the cognitive strategies use questionnaire was re-administered along with the attitude questionnaire to uncover the impacts of the treatment and understand the perceptions of the subjects about the application of online DA. The results demonstrated that online DA had significant impacts on the use of cognitive reading strategies of both Iranian female and male ESP students. Moreover, the outcomes revealed that there was not a substantial difference amongst post-tests of both EGs. The findings of one sample t-test demonstrated that both groups presented a favorable attitude towards utilizing online DA.

In paper eleven, **Marziye Keshavarz, Nasim Ghanbari, and Parisa Abdolrezapour** checked the effect of the mode of delivery (online vs. paper-based) on the integrated writing performance of the test-takers in the Iranian EFL context. Using a quasi-experimental research approach, data were collected from 44 Iranian EFL male and female students who were divided into two online and paper-based groups.. The findings showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups. The study discusses that when composing a text, online modality reduces the learners' psychological burden, improving the quality of integrated texts produced by the students.

The twelfth article by **Omar Abu Al-majd** intended to highlight the results of the negative washback effect in online instruction on learners' language achievement and engagement. In his study, 96 English as foreign language learners were grouped into an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG). After collecting the data through SInAPSi Academic Engagement Scale (SAES) and researcher-made tests, it was revealed that the language improvement of EG was less than CG. Moreover, the EG experienced more disengagement in online instruction and assessment.

In article thirteen, **Supiani Supiani, Noni Mia Rahmawati, Ratnawati, Titik Lina Widyaningsih, Nunung Suryati, and Nur Mukminatien** investigated EFL students' experiences and perceptions of their language accuracy development through self-assessment from online written feedback (OWF). The participants included 30 EFL students enrolled in a university-level writing course who were required to submit their writing drafts online in Google Docs, and six of them were recruited to participate voluntarily in the semi-structured interview session. The findings reported

that although EFL students experienced internal and external challenges in self-assessment from OWF, most engaged with self-assessment from Grammarly as an OWF tool for specifically identifying their language errors. They believed it could help them develop a greater sense of ownership over their language-learning process, promote learner autonomy, and boost their motivation to learn writing..

In the fourteenth paper of this issue, **Tahereh Heydarnejad** investigated how well self-evaluation and academic resilience improve positive orientation, enjoyment, and language achievement. 386 Iranian students who were studying English as a foreign language (EFL) at upper intermediate levels were provided with of on-line survey with five sub-sections: the core of self-evaluation questionnaire (CSEQ), the academic resilience scale (ASR), the positive orientation scale (POS), the foreign language enjoyment scale (FLES), and a researcher-made test. After analyzing the data, the results disclosed that resilient English as a foreign language (EFL) students felt better about their performance on online assessments and in pursuing their goals. The direct and indirect effects of SE on students' enjoyment, attitudes, as well as language success were dissected in great details.

Article fifteen was the effort of two researchers namely **Sayed M. Ismail** and **Tahereh Heydarnejad**. This study aimed to picture the effects of test-taking skills, buoyancy, techno-stress, and language achievement in online assessment via LMS (Learned Management System) and portfolio assessment. 87 upper-intermediate EFL students from Saudi Arabia took part this research. The participants in the experimental group (n=45) took both an online assessment and portfolio assessment, while the other group, the control group (n=42), passed the online assessment. The results of data analysis indicated that the participants in the experimental group outperformed their peers in the control group in test-taking skills, buoyancy, and language achievement. They can also manage their techno stress much better than the control group..

The last article titled "Designing Effective Computerized Assessments for Promoting Higher-Order Thinking Skills in Online Environments" by **Vijayakumar. S, Sheik Hameed N, Akhter Habib Shah, Horizan Prasanna Kumar, and A. Sathikul Ameen** addressed the possibility of computerised tests that align with Bloom's Taxonomy to improve higher-order thinking among a varied population of online students to fill the current research gap. Qualitative data via structured student interviews and quantitative data from computerised assessments were collected. Two groups of students from the B.S. Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute of Science and Technology conducted the investigation. The first group consisted of 28 students in their fifth semester of aeronautical engineering, while the second group comprised 30 students in their fifth semester of automobile engineering. Based on their comments in the structured interviews, students in the experimental group strongly believed that the course contents and activities had improved their higher-order thinking. The outcomes of performance tests showed that students participating in higher-level activities significantly improved.

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