

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mohamed Kheidher University of Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English



LAB UNIT: A2LA

6-7 April 2022

CALL FOR PAPERS

Laboratory of Interdisciplinary Studies in Language and Culture (ISLC)
Unit of Applied Linguistics and Language Assessment (A2LA)

THE FIRST ONLINE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

FOSTERING LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT LITERACY FOR
UNIVERSITY LANGUAGE TEACHERS: *FACTS AND FUTURE
PERSPECTIVES*

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1. CONFERENCE MAIN THEME

In many countries, evidence from the assessment practices in the different school systems, including the tertiary level, is scanty and such evidence is not of quality to support the inferences that these assessments are expected to yield in relation to both teaching and learning. It can be argued that the available assessment tools used by a great deal of teachers may be developed under pressure to reflect more closely and sustain desired educational goals. There is clear evidence that the assessment practices are meant to exploit the format and content of developed texts to improve the outcomes quickly and efficiently. In reality, there is something wrong in the way these assessments are conceived. The assessment practices do not consider the fundamental theoretical and procedural constructs of language tests and the connection that should exist between teaching and learning and the mechanisms by which learners have to be assessed and evaluated. In explicit terms, these assessment practices do not provide teachers with specific information about the students' actual performance. They are not appropriate to achieve comprehensive judgement and make accurate inferences. Such assessment practices are currently ready-made language tests or examinations, or merely tests developed by the teacher in a hurry or by intuition. In clear assumptions, these tests do not rely on any well-defined theoretical background. They are not developed through systematic procedures. They are not often related to specified and general educational goals. These evidences reveal that the majority of teachers and instructors do not have the proper understanding about basic conceptions of test design and development and the purposes of assessments. As a result, they show a lack of clear connection between their instructional goals and assessment practices. In one word, these evidences indicate that these teachers suffer from poor assessment literacy.

Considering assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning means that being assessment literate for a language teacher becomes very crucial. This indicates that language assessment literacy (LAL) in today's general education, in general, and language teaching, in particular, requires the greatest attention. As an evidence to such a claim, the significance of LAL is affirmed by a great deal of researchers and scholars in the context of language teaching. Patterno (2001) considers LAL as the possession of knowledge about the basic principles of sound assessment practices, including terminology, the development and use of assessment methodologies and techniques, familiarity with standards of quality in assessment.

Scholars, such as Popham (2004), McMillan (2000), and Stiggins (1999), establish assessment literacy as the core elements that could help in maintaining the overall quality of teaching and learning by understanding the fundamentals of language assessment practices and connecting this understanding to obtain reliable information about the learners' performance and achievement (Chan, 2008). For Webb (2002), LAL is prospected into a new perspective. He defines it as the knowledge needed about how to assess learners in what they know and how they can do. More importantly, this scholar advocates that the forms of LAL should shift from teacher and testing to student and learning (Nimehehisalem & Bhatti, 2019).

What is remarkable on the literature about LAL is the description that LAL has undergone an interesting evolution since its emergence in the scene of language assessment in the 1990's. A good description of this evolution is what has been suggested by Davidson and Coombe (2019). For these two scholars, early definitions of LAL focused on the knowledge and skills associated with assessment. They refer to Stiggins (1995) who notes that teachers with a high level of assessment literacy know what they assess, why they assess, how to assess, what the possible problems with assessment are, how to prevent these problems from occurring, and whether they are familiar with the possible negative consequences of poor and inaccurate assessment.

Later definitions of LAL, as claimed by Davidson and Coombe (2019), have moved beyond LAL as just knowledge and skills of testing to include awareness of the impact of that assessment can have on individuals and society. To corroborate this last assumption, O'Loughin (2013) as cited by Davidson and Coombe (2019) views

LAL as a range of skills related to test production, test score interpretation, use, and test evaluation in conjunction with the development of a critical understanding about the roles of assessment within society. In addition to this new perspective about LAL, Fulcher's (2012) definition is perhaps the most broad and comprehensive to date. In Fulcher's words, it is mentioned that LAL is:

The knowledge, skills and abilities required to design, develop, maintain or evaluate, large-scale standardized and/or classroom-based tests, familiarity with test processes, and awareness of principles and concepts that guide and underpin practice, including ethics and codes of practice. The ability to place knowledge, skills, processes, principles and concepts within wider historical, social, political and philosophical frameworks in order understand why practices have arisen as they have, and to evaluate the role and impact of testing on society, institutions, and individuals (p. 125).

Accordingly, Coombe et al. (2009), elicit a set of guidelines that could help in achieving language assessment literacy. This concerns mainly achieving LAL through:

- Understanding what a good assessment means while recognising the different views about the nature of education that may lead to dissimilar approaches to assessment.
- Providing professional development through both online training of teachers and through assessment workshops at all levels.
- Being committed to significant change in educational practices.
- Making assessment resources (especially online) available to language teachers to achieve successful professional development.

In short, this brief account of some available literature on LAL suggests that, for a language teacher, there is a dire need, on one hand, to integrate language assessment knowledge, skills, and principles with awareness of principles and concepts that guide and underpin practice, including ethics and codes of practice, on the other one. Certainly, if these requirements are realised and attained, in this case, one can say that the language teacher is assessment literate.

2. CONFERENCE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following the above research background and problems, raising these questions might be of a great value:

- How do language teachers conceive the relationship between assessment, teaching, and learning?
- Are language teachers aware enough about the uses and purposes of language assessment in the teaching operation?
- Are language teachers systematic in developing their language assessment tools?
- Do these teachers possess the required competences, knowledge, and skills to develop their assessment tools?
- Regarding language teachers' current practices, are these teachers assessment literate?
- How do language assessment specialists and experts define language assessment literacy?
- Is there a need to develop language assessment literacy for university language teachers?
- If yes, how can language assessment literacy be developed?
- What strategies and practical concerns should be adopted to promote language assessment literacy for university language teachers?
- What are the recommendations that could be set out to enable University language teachers to become assessment literate?

3. KEYWORDS

Algerian universities, assessment practices, English as a foreign language (EFL), language assessment, language assessment literacy (LAL), teaching and learning processes.

4. CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

This conference aims at identifying and defining university language teachers' language assessment literacy. It also seeks to critically examine how these teachers come to design and develop their assessment tools. In doing so, this project intends to promote EFL teachers' language assessment literacy, so that language assessment becomes an integral part of the teaching/learning process, not as conceived in the current practices to be a mere operation of assigning scores.

- In this respect, more specifically, this conference aims at:
- Deciphering the current practices regarding language assessment adopted by university EFL teachers,
- Examining and demystifying these teachers' language assessment competences, knowledge, and skills.
- Proposing alternative programmes to train university EFL teachers in the context under investigation to become assessment literate.
- Developing language assessment for university EFL teachers to become a discipline per se.

5. CALL FOR PAPERS

The First Online Conference on Language Assessment Literacy calls for **ORIGINAL** contributions (**abstracts of no more than 250 words**) addressing one of the main tracks that fall within the main conference theme and special focus. In this respect, participants are invited to submit abstracts following the academic requirements and standards. The conference encourages the submission of studies/investigations that report theoretical studies, as well as practices related to language assessment literacy at the university level in different contexts and regions in the world.

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7. THE SCIENTIFIC / READING COMMITTEE

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9. KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Prof. Frank Giraldo

University of Caldas, Colombia

Prof. Frank Giraldo is a professor at the Foreign Languages Department of Universidad de Caldas in Colombia, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in language teaching and assessment. Professor Giraldo holds a BA in English language Teaching, from Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira in Colombia; an MA in English Didactics from Universidad de Caldas in Colombia; and an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in the USA. His main research interest is the interface between Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) and Teachers' Professional Development. He has published articles on language testing and assessment (specifically LAL) and has experience training pre- and in-service teachers in this area of applied linguistics. He is currently the main investigator in the research group called "Semillero de Investigación en Evaluación de Lenguas Extranjeras" (SIELE). With this group, he is currently researching and fostering the LAL of English teachers from state schools in Colombia.



Prof. Shahid Abrar-ul-Hassan

University of Vancouver, Canada

Prof. Shahid Abrar-ul-Hassan has been working as a language educator, researcher, and teacher developer in multiple roles for over two decades that straddled institutions in many regions of the world. He is currently Professor of English language education at Yorkville University, British Columbia Campus in Vancouver, BC, Canada. He also serves as a TESOL subject expert with the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education in Canada. He is a Visiting Researcher/Professor in several institutions, in the USA and in China. He has offered invited (onsite) professional development workshops at universities in Albania, Canada, China, South Korea, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, USA, and Vietnam. His professional areas of interest include research-informed teaching, instructional efficacy, learner-centered instruction, ESP/EAP, learner motivation, differentiated teacher development (also, INSET), and, in particular, effective language assessment.



Dr. Ismaeil Fazel

University of Simon Fraser, Canada

Dr. Ismaeil Fazel has a PhD in Language and Literacy Education (2018) and a sub-specialization in Measurement, Evaluation, and Research Methodology (2015) from the University of British Columbia. He is currently an instructor at Yorkville University in New Westminster, BC. He has previously served as a lecturer at Simon Fraser University (2017-2020) and at Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences in Iran (2005-2010), teaching English and communication for academic and professional purposes to second language students.



Prof. Bava Harji Madhubala

University of Multimedia, Malaysia

Prof. Bava Harji Madhubala is an experienced Associate Professor with a demonstrated history of working in the higher education industry. She is skilled in Lecturing, Educational Technology, Instructional Design, and Curriculum Development. She is a strong education professional with a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) focused in TESL from Multimedia University. She headed diploma (Head), language (Director), foundation (Director) centres and institution/faculty as Dean of Learning Institute for Empowerment /Faculty of Applied Communication, and has also held numerous administrative positions in the university: Dean (Faculty of Applied Com & Learning Institute for Empowerment), Director (Centre for Foundation Studies and Extension Education, Institute of Modern Languages and Communication, MMU University Press, Centre for Diploma Programs), Head (Effective Teaching Methodology Unit). Her main research interests include Education, TESL, Communication, Teaching Methods, and Educational Technology.

10. TRACKS

The suggested tracks include, but are not only limited to:

1. Principles of Language Assessment Literacy.
2. Language teachers' Conceptions and Beliefs of Language Assessment Literacy.
3. Language Assessment Literacy in Different Educational Contexts.
4. Language Assessment Literacy for Classroom Teachers.
5. Language Assessment Literacy and Alternative Assessment Techniques.
6. Language Assessment Literacy and Washback in Testing.
7. Language Assessment Literacy for Pre-service Language Teachers.
8. Language Assessment Literacy and Professional Development.
9. Language Assessment Literacy and the 21st Century Classrooms.
10. Language Assessment Literacy and Ethics in Testing.

11. IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION

Abstract submission deadline	15 February 2022
Abstract decision notification	28 February 2022
Full paper submission deadline	15 March 2022
Conference Days	6-7 April 2022

Conference Language(s): English – French - Arabic.

Publication: Selected papers, after blind peer reviewing, will be published in two journals: *Traduction et Langues (TRANSLANG)*, edited by Oran2 University, Algeria, and *Studies in Culture, Language, and Society (JSCLS)*, edited by Bejaia, University, Algeria.

The full conference programme along with the webinar links will be revealed in the upcoming months following the abstract decision notification.

For any inquiries and/or questions, please contact a2la.assessment.2022@gmail.com

APPLICATION FORM

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Last Name(s)

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Country(ies)

Email Address(es)

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Short Biography(ies)

Selected Track

Title of the Paper

Keywords (5-7 Keywords)

The abstracts ought to be sent to a2la.assessment.2022@gmail.com

Code

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