

IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' WRITING ASSESSMENT BELIEFS, LITERACY, AND TRAINING NEEDS: DO MAJORS MATTER?

By

FATEMEH SOLTANPOUR *

MOHAMMADREZA VALIZADEH **

* Kar Higher Education Institute, Qazvin, Iran.

** School of Foreign Languages, Istanbul Gelisim University, Istanbul, Turkey.

Date Received: 25/12/2018

Date Revised: 27/02/2019

Date Accepted: 03/06/2019

ABSTRACT

This study gauged the current level of Iranian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers in Writing Assessment Literacy (WAL) and identified their training needs in this area. Further, this research investigated the teachers' beliefs about scoring accuracy in writing assessment, general assessment issues in writing classrooms, and different writing assessment methods. 146 participating Iranian EFL teachers were divided into two groups of TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and Non-TEFL, based on their university degrees, so the mentioned issues were explored in terms of the teachers' majors in order to find any significant associations between the teachers' majors and the raised issues or any significant differences between the two groups of teachers' beliefs in the above-mentioned subjects. Quantitative data were collected via a questionnaire. A significant association was found between the teachers' majors and the status of receiving prior writing assessment training. Moreover, comparative analyses between the TEFL and Non-TEFL groups revealed significant differences in all areas of WAL training, as well as the teachers' beliefs about general assessment issues in writing classrooms and different writing assessment methods. However, regarding the teachers' self-report about the perceived level of training need and the teachers' beliefs about writing scoring accuracy, no significant differences were found between the two groups in majority of WAL areas and belief statements. To improve the condition, amending of the language teacher education programs is a vital step to be taken in Iran.

Keywords: Writing Assessment literacy, Teacher knowledge, Teacher beliefs, Teacher Training Needs, Iranian EFL Teachers' Majors.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' assessment competence is a crucial skill as it is a contributing factor in encouraging or undermining students' learning (Mertler, 2009; Weigle, 2007; White, 2009). Webb (2002) defined teachers' assessment literacy "as the knowledge of means for assessing what students know and can do, how to interpret the results from these assessments, and how to apply these results to improve student learning and program effectiveness" (p. 1). Further, Boyles (2006) stated that to assess students' performance effectively, teachers need to have the skills to select appropriate assessment method, design valid assessment tasks, provide feedback to their students about their performance, and evaluate the process of teaching and

learning.

Although teachers spend a great deal of their professional time on assessment-related work, they often lack the essential training to do it well (Stiggins, 2014; White, 2009). It is essential for teachers to have knowledge of various "assessment methods, their purposes, functions, intended and unintended consequences and how to mesh traditional and creative classroom assessments" (Mede & Atay, 2017, p. 44).

As for the writing skill, foreign language teachers often neglect the teaching of writing in their classes due to the fact that they usually receive inadequate training in the teaching and detailed assessments of writing (Dempsey, Pytlíkzillig, & Bruning, 2009). Therefore, in order to help in-

service and pre-service foreign language teachers acquire assessment skills, including developing, administering, and scoring tasks, it is essential to provide professional development for them by including assessment in teacher training courses and workshops (Boyles, 2006; Malone, 2013; Weigle, 2007).

Additionally, assessment literacy is not only about content or delivery but how this content is involved with teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices (Crusan, Plakans, & Gebriel, 2016). Further, according to Crusan et al. (2016), the factors which affect teachers' decisions about what to do in the classroom and how to do it "include teaching context, teachers' prior language learning experiences, and teacher learning, both as a practitioner and a student" (p. 45).

1. Review of Literature

Crusan et al. (2016) studied writing assessment literacy, considering the knowledge, beliefs, and practices of 702 writing teachers; they revealed that 26% of the teachers had little or no training to teach and assess writing. There was also a significant difference among teachers in terms of linguistic background and teacher experience.

In Iran, however, the already done research has been into issues relevant to general assessment literacy, not Writing Assessment Literacy (WAL). For instance, Zolfaghari and Ashraf (2015) indicated "there is a highly significant positive relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' assessment literacy and teaching experience. There also found a positive relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' assessment literacy and their age". (p. 2550). Rahmani (2016) found a positive correlation between EFL teacher's assessment literacy and the corresponding professional success. Ahmadi and Mirshojaee (2016) found that the 20 participating EFL teachers' assessment literacy "was not satisfactory in issues like assessment bias, validity evidence, assessment reliability, alternatives in assessment, formative assessment, assessing students with disabilities, social consequences of assessment results, and students' involvement" (p. 6). As the last example, Mellati and Khademi (2018) revealed that teachers' assessment literacy has a statistically significant effect on "learners'

writing achievements and teachers' assessment awareness leads teaching environments into effective and motivated assessment design" (p. 1).

Nemati, Alavi, Mohebbi, and Masjedlou (2017) stated Iranian EFL teachers' writing assessment ability is not accurate. However, they mainly investigated the Iranian EFL teachers' writing proficiency and their Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) practices; they, in fact, explored the teachers' writing proficiency, their WCF knowledge, beliefs, and practices in Iran. Therefore, as the literature indicates, the issues of the Iranian EFL teachers' WAL, including their knowledge, beliefs, and training needs has remained under-investigated.

2. Statement of the Problem and Significance of the Study

As stated by Weigle (2014) "in the 21st century, the ability to write in an L2 may be even more important than ever" (p. 222) because of globalization and the crucial need for written communication across languages and cultures and in many fields, such as education and business. It is also well acknowledged that focusing only on improving L2 proficiency does not lead to good writing production (Weigle, 2014); therefore, EFL teachers' Writing Assessment Literacy (henceforth, WAL) is a crucial component in the process of teaching and learning the writing skill because it enables teachers to evaluate student learning and use the information to facilitate and promote learning through modifying and improving their instructional practices.

Considering the mentioned points, to the best knowledge of the researchers of the present study, to date, no research has been published which systematically explored the issues of the Iranian EFL teachers' WAL, including their knowledge, beliefs, and training needs; as a result, the mentioned issues certainly deserve attention due to the fact that understanding about what Iranian EFL teachers currently know and believe as well as what writing assessment training needs they have could pave the way of providing support for further learning on this topic.

Moreover, in Iran, not only the English university students, graduates, and postgraduates with specialization in TEFL, English Literature, Translation Studies, and Theoretical Linguistics, but also those who major or graduate in

subjects not relevant to English at all and have never passed any creditable TEFL courses, yet have fluent command of English, are teaching English in language institutes in Iran (Karimi, 2011; Moghaddas & Zakeri, 2012; Soltanpour & Valizadeh, 2017). As Karimi (2011, p. 90) stated, most of the courses the teachers whose majors were English-related fields other than TEFL "have passed during their studies have been subject matter rather than pedagogical courses. They have, however, had a minimal number of courses on EFL instruction". Talebinejad and Moattarian (2015, p. 7) found, "teachers in language institutes are mostly selected based on their knowledge of general English, not specialized knowledge in SLA or applied linguistics". Mohsenian, Rezai, and Abdolmanafi-Rokni (2015) found that the most important criterion in teacher selection for the Iranian managers of 100 private English institutes was general English skills and especially the speaking skill. The criterion of academic degree or authentic teaching certificate, stood fourth in the ranking of the importance of each qualification criterion.

Consequently, this question arises whether there exists any differences between the writing assessment knowledge, beliefs, as well as training experiences and needs of TEFL-major teachers and the Non-TEFL ones (i.e., the teachers who have studied majors other than TEFL or been selected based on their knowledge of general English, not specialized knowledge in applied linguistics). Therefore, this issue has been investigated in order to enlighten the authorities, scholars and teacher educators, especially in Iran. All in all, the following research questions have been addressed:

- 1) Is there a significant association between the Iranian EFL teachers' majors and receiving prior WAL training?
- 2) In what ways have Iranian EFL teachers obtained WAL? Is there a significant association between the teachers' majors and their ways of obtaining WAL?
- 3) What level of training in areas of WAL do Iranian EFL teachers report? Is there a significant difference between the two groups of teachers in this issue?
- 4) Do Iranian EFL teachers consider themselves as proficient writing instructors? Is there a significant difference

between the two groups in their ideas?

- 5) To what extent do Iranian EFL teachers perceive a need for in-service training in different fields of WAL? Is there a significant difference between the two groups of teachers in this issue?
- 6) What do Iranian EFL teachers believe about scoring accuracy in writing assessment? Is there a significant difference between the two groups in their beliefs?
- 7) What do Iranian EFL teachers believe about general assessment issues in writing classrooms? Is there a significant difference between the two groups in their beliefs?
- 8) What do Iranian EFL teachers' believe about different writing assessment methods? Is there a significant difference between the two groups in their beliefs?

3. Method

This study has quantitative approach and is a questionnaire cross-sectional design.

3.1 Data Collection Instrument

The data was collected by means of a questionnaire incorporating the adapted items which had already been developed by Vogt and Tsagari (2014) as well as Crusan et al. (2016) in their studies.

Before the questionnaire was administered to the participants, it was piloted with 84 Iranian EFL teachers. Reliability of the questionnaire, estimated via Cronbach Alpha, was 0.72, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency (Pallant, 2013).

The questionnaire included three sections. The 1st section provided biodata about the teachers' gender, age, education, and teaching experience. The 2nd section, included some questions requiring either 'yes' or 'no' answers regarding receiving prior WAL training and ways of obtaining WAL in addition to an open-ended part which asked for other ways of obtaining WAL. Then, the teachers were provided with 12 areas of WAL in a Likert-type scale, and were asked first whether they had already received training in the mentioned issues. They needed to read each statement and select one of the options of 'Not at all', 'A little', 'Advanced'. Next, the teachers were asked to

mention whether they perceived any need to receive more WAL training. They were required to select one of the options of 'None', 'Yes. Basic training', 'Yes. More advanced training'. The 3rd section of the questionnaire contained 19 questions in Likert scale asking about the teachers' beliefs about scoring accuracy in writing assessment, general assessment issues in writing classrooms, and different writing assessment methods. The teachers needed to read the statements and select one of the options of 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Not Sure', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree'.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to Iranian EFL teachers via e-mail, personal contact and two Iranian EFL teachers' groups on Telegram Messenger. Each group consisted of more than 1000 members. The teachers' participation was voluntary, so by completing and returning the questionnaire, they would consent to participate in the study. The teachers were also assured that their responses would remain strictly confidential and would be used only for research purposes.

3.3 Participants

146 teachers filled out the questionnaire anonymously and returned them. Table 1 includes the relevant details.

4. Analyses and Results

4.1 1st Research Question: Teachers' Receiving Prior WAL Training

The 1st research question looked for the possible existence

		TEFL	Non-TEFL
Age	Mean	35.15	33.28
	SD	6.44	6.99
Years of Teaching Experience	Mean	10.48	9.29
	SD	5.88	6.06
Gender	Female	71.2%	80.0%
	Male	28.8%	20.0%
Highest Degree Completed	B.A/B.S	9.1%	70.0%
	M.A/M.S	75.8%	30.0%
	PhD	15.2%	0%
Teaching Levels	Beginner	47.0%	62.5%
	Low-Intermediate	57.6%	78.8%
	Intermediate	72.7%	73.8%
	High-Intermediate	56.1%	58.8%
	Advanced	50.0%	27.5%
	IELTS	7.6%	6.3%
Teaching Age Groups	TOEFL	6.1%	0%
	Children	30.3%	50.0%
	Teenagers	59.1%	73.8%
	Adults	87.9%	82.5%

Table 1. Teachers' Background Information

of a significant association between the Iranian EFL teachers' majors and receiving prior WAL training. A question in the questionnaire asked the participating teachers whether they had already received any writing assessment training; the teachers were required to answer either 'Yes' or 'No'.

In Non-TEFL group, 48.8% of the participants stated that they had not received any writing assessment training, while this number in TEFL group was 9.1%. A Chi-square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicated a significant association between major (TEFL & Non-TEFL) and the status of receiving prior writing assessment training, $\chi^2 (1, n = 146) = 24.85, p = 0.000, \phi = 0.42$. The phi coefficient, which is the most commonly used effect size statistics for 2 by 2 tables (Pallant, 2013), showed a nearly large effect size (Cohen, 1988, as cited in Pallant, 2013).

4.2 2nd Research Question: Ways of Obtaining WAL

The 2nd question, first, investigated in what ways Iranian EFL teachers have obtained WAL.

The teachers who stated they had received prior writing assessment training were asked to mention in what ways they had gotten it. The questionnaire provided four options: part of a course, in in-service workshops, at professional conferences, and an open-ended section, 'Other'. No participant mentioned any other ways of obtaining WAL. Table 2 indicates ways of obtaining WAL for each group separately.

As Table 2 indicates, the majority of the participants in TEFL group (72.7%) stated that they had received writing assessment training as part of a course, and 34.8% of them mentioned in-service workshops. As for the Non-TEFL group, it was revealed that only half of them (51.2%) had received prior writing assessment training, and among this percentage, 33.8% stated that they had such training via in-service workshops.

Ways of Obtaining WAL	TEFL	Non-TEFL
Part of a Course	72.7%	16.3%
In-service Workshops	34.8%	33.8%
Professional Conferences	9.1%	3.8%

Table 2. Ways of Obtaining WAL

Then, the research question explored whether there is a significant association between the teachers' majors and their ways of obtaining WAL. What follows are the detailed findings.

As for the option of 'Part of a Course', a Chi-square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicated a significant association between major (TEFL and Non-TEFL) and the status of obtaining WAL as part of a course, $\chi^2 (1, n = 146) = 45.12, p = 0.00, \phi = 0.57$. It represented a large effect size.

Regarding the next option, 'In-service workshops', a Chi-square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicated no significant association between major (TEFL and Non-TEFL) and the status of obtaining WAL in in-service workshops, $\chi^2 (1, n = 146) = 0.09, p = .75, \phi = -0.04$.

And finally, as for 'professional conferences', a Chi-square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicated no significant association between major (TEFL and Non-TEFL) and the status of obtaining WAL at professional conferences, $\chi^2 (1, n = 146) = 0.98, p = 0.32, \phi = 0.11$.

Even though the questionnaire contained an open-ended part asking for other ways of obtaining WAL, the participating teachers left this part blank and provided no other option.

4.3 3rd Research Question: Levels of Prior Training in Areas of WAL

The 3rd question asked what level of prior training in areas of

WAL Iranian EFL teachers report, and whether there is a significant difference between the two groups and their reported level of WAL training.

Table 3 indicates the percentage of each level of training in the mentioned areas of WAL training for each group.

As Table 3 reveals, a large number of the teachers in TEFL group reported that they had little training (ranging from 48.5% for the options of establishing reliability and validity of tests/assessment to a high of 68.2% for 'using self-assessment'). However, a majority of the teachers in the Non-TEFL group stated they had not received any training in in WAL areas. According to Table 3, the percentages for the Non-TEFL group for the option of 'Not at all' ranges from a low of 47.5% for 'Designing good writing tasks/tests' to a high of 70.0% for 'Using pre-designed integrated writing tasks'.

To reveal the possible existence of a significant difference between the groups and each level WAL training areas, a Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted, as recommended by statisticians (e.g., Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991; Pallant, 2013), because the data were measured on ordinal scales. The following are the details:

- Designing good writing tasks/tests: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66), Non-TEFL (Md= A little, n = 80), U = 2595.00, z = -2.35, p = 0.01, r = -0.19. However, it represented a small effect size, based on Cohen's (1988) criteria (as cited in Pallant, 2013).
- Using self-assessment: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66), Non-

Areas of WAL Training	TEFL			Non-TEFL		
	Not at all	A Little	Advanced	Not at all	A Little	Advanced
Designing Good Writing Tasks/tests	30.3	51.5	18.2	47.5	43.8	8.8
Using Self-assessment	6.1	68.2	25.8	48.8	42.5	8.8
Using Peer-assessment	15.2	59.1	25.8	42.5	50.0	7.5
Using Assessment Portfolio	19.7	65.2	15.2	66.3	32.5	1.3
Designing Integrated Writing Tasks	24.2	54.5	21.2	67.5	25.0	7.5
Using Pre-designed Integrated Writing Tasks	21.2	62.1	16.7	70.0	20.0	10.0
Designing the Scoring Rubrics	24.2	53.0	22.7	62.5	28.7	8.8
Using the Scoring Rubrics	16.7	51.5	31.8	57.5	33.8	8.8
Establishing Reliability of Tests/assessment	12.1	48.5	39.4	57.5	31.3	11.3
Establishing Validity of Tests/assessment	12.1	48.5	39.4	57.5	31.3	11.3
Using Statistics to Study the Quality of Tests/assessment	18.2	53.0	28.8	61.3	33.8	5.0
Giving Feedback to Students based on Information from Tests/assessment	4.5	51.5	43.9	38.8	47.5	13.8

Table 3. The Percentage of Prior Received Training Levels in WAL Areas

TEFL (Md= A little, n = 80), U = 1381.50, z = -5.49, p = 0.00, r = -0.45. It represented a nearly large effect size.

- Using peer-assessment: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= A little, n = 80), U = 1695.00, z = -4.12, p = 0.00, r = -0.34. It represented a medium effect size.
- Using assessment portfolio: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Not at all, n = 80), U = 1302.50, z = -5.87, p = 0.00, r = -0.48. It represented a nearly large effect size.
- Designing integrated writing tasks: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Not at all, n = 80), U = 1466.00, z = -5.06, p = 0.00, r = -0.41. It represented a medium-to-large effect size.
- Using pre-designed integrated writing tasks: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Not at all, n = 80), U = 1428.00, z = -5.23, p = 0.00, r = -0.43. It represented a nearly large effect size.
- Designing the scoring rubrics: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Not at all, n = 80), U = 1580.00, z = -4.54, p = 0.00, r = -0.37. It represented a medium effect size.
- Using the scoring rubrics: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Not at all, n = 80), U = 1397.50, z = -5.26, p = 0.00, r = -0.43. It represented a nearly large effect size.
- Establishing reliability of tests/assessment: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Not at all, n = 80), U = 1261.00, z = -5.79, p = 0.00, r = -0.43. It represented a nearly large effect size.
- Establishing validity of tests/assessment: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Not at all, n = 80), U = 1261.00, z = -5.79, p = 0.00, r = -0.43. It represented a nearly large effect size.
- Using statistics to study the quality of tests/assessment: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Not at all, n = 80), U = 1316.50, z = -5.65, p = 0.00, r = -0.46. It represented a nearly large effect size.
- Giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment: TEFL (Md= A little, n = 66) and

Non-TEFL (Md= A little, n = 80), U = 1373.00, z = -5.41, p = 0.00, r = -0.44. It represented a nearly large effect size.

Based on the above results found by the Mann-Whitney U Tests, significant differences were revealed in all areas of WAL training between the TEFL and Non-TEFL groups.

4.4 4th Research Question

An item in the questionnaire stated, "I consider myself as a proficient writing instructor". There were five options in a Likert scale: 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Not Sure', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree'. Table 4 shows to what extent the teachers consider themselves as proficient writing instructors.

As Table 4 shows, about half of the teachers in TEFL group (45.5%) considered themselves as proficient writing instructor, whereas nearly half of the teachers in Non-TEFL group (48.8%) knew they were not proficient writing instructors. Further, in TEFL group, 40.9% of the teachers and in Non-TEFL group, 33.8% of the teachers were not confident about their proficiency.

The 4th research question also investigated the possible existence of a significant difference between the two groups, and a Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in the ideas of TEFL (Md= Not Sure, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Not Sure, n = 80), U = 1524.50, z = -4.59, p = 0.00, r = -0.37. It represented a medium effect size.

4.5 5th Research Question: Teachers' in-service Training Needs for Different Fields of WAL

The 5th question studied to what extent Iranian EFL teachers perceive a need for in-service training in different fields of WAL. Table 5 indicates the percentage of each need-level of training in the mentioned WAL areas, which were perceived by each group.

I consider myself to be a proficient writing instructor					
TEFL			Non-TEFL		
Agree/ Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
45.5%	40.9%	13.6%	17.5%	33.8%	48.8%

Table 4. Teachers' Beliefs in their Current Status of Writing Instruction Proficiency

Areas of WAL Training	TEFL			Non-TEFL		
	None	Basic	Advanced	None	Basic	Advanced
Designing Good Writing Tasks/tests	7.6	22.7	69.7	7.5	36.3	56.3
Using Self-assessment	19.7	15.2	65.2	6.3	53.8	40.0
Using Peer-assessment	24.2	16.7	59.1	5.0	53.8	41.3
Using Assessment Portfolio	19.7	21.2	59.1	6.3	62.5	31.3
Designing Integrated Writing Tasks	25.8	19.7	54.5	3.8	67.5	28.7
Using Pre-designed Integrated Writing Tasks	19.7	19.7	60.6	5.0	68.8	26.3
Designing the Scoring Rubrics	15.2	24.2	60.6	10.0	66.3	23.8
Using the Scoring Rubrics	18.2	24.2	57.6	10.0	65.0	25.0
Establishing Reliability of Tests/assessment	21.2	16.7	62.1	11.3	57.5	31.3
Establishing Validity of Tests/assessment	21.2	22.7	56.1	8.8	61.3	30.0
Using Statistics to Study the Quality of Tests/assessment	18.2	22.7	59.1	5.0	60.0	35.0
Giving Feedback to Students based on Information from Tests/assessment	22.7	15.2	62.1	11.3	40.0	48.8

Table 5. The Percentage of Need Levels Perception for Receiving Training in WAL Areas

As Table 5 reveals, a large number of the teachers in TEFL group reported that they need more advanced training in different fields of WAL (ranging from a low of 54.5% for the option of 'Designing integrated writing tasks' to a high of 69.7% for 'Designing good writing tasks/tests'. However, a majority of the teachers in the Non-TEFL group stated they needed even basic training in in WAL areas. The percentages calling for receiving basic training in Non-TEFL group ranged from a low of 36.3% for 'Designing good writing tasks/tests' to a high of 68.8% for 'Using pre-designed integrated writing tasks'.

Further, the possible existence of a significant difference between the teachers' majors and their perceived WAL training needs was explored, utilizing the Mann-Whitney U Test. The following are the details of the tests results for all 12 WAL areas.

- Designing good writing tasks/tests: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66), Non-TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 80), U = 23.12.50, z = -1.50, p = 0.13, r = -0.12. It represented a small effect size.
- Using self-assessment: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66), Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), U = 2230.50, z = -1.78, p = 0.07, r = -0.14. It represented a small effect size.
- Using peer-assessment: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), U = 2491.00, z = -0.64, p = 0.51, r = -0.05.
- Using assessment portfolio: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n =

66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), U = 2195.00, z = -1.92, p = 0.055, r = -0.15. It represented a small effect size.

- Designing integrated writing tasks: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), U = 2398.50, z = -1.03, p = 0.29, r = -0.08.
- Using pre-designed integrated writing tasks: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), U = 2064.50, z = -2.49, p = 0.01, r = -0.20. However, it represented a small effect size.
- Designing the scoring rubrics: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), U = 1868.00, z = -3.33, p = 0.00, r = -0.27. It represented a nearly medium effect size.
- Using the scoring rubrics: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), U = 2028.00, z = -2.63, p = 0.00, r = -0.21. However, it represented a small effect size.
- Establishing reliability of tests/assessment: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), U = 2097.50, z = -2.32, p = 0.02, r = -0.19. However, it represented a small effect size.
- Establishing validity of tests/assessment: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), U = 2242.50, z = -1.70, p = 0.08, r = -0.14. It represented a small effect size.
- Using statistics to study the quality of tests/assessment:

TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), $U = 2262.00$, $z = -1.64$, $p = 0.10$, $r = -0.13$. It represented a small effect size.

- Giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment: TEFL (Md= Advanced, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md= Basic, n = 80), $U = 2482.00$, $z = -0.69$, $p = 0.48$, $r = -0.05$.

Based on the above information, the Mann-Whitney U Tests indicated significant differences in the perceived level of training need in only three (out of 12) areas of WAL between the TEFL and Non-TEFL majors. The significant difference was found in (1) using pre-designed integrated writing tasks, (2) designing the scoring rubrics, and (3) using the scoring rubrics.

4.6 6th Research Question: Teachers' Beliefs about Scoring Accuracy in Writing Assessment

The 6th question investigated Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs about scoring accuracy in writing assessment. The teachers were given the following statements (a-h). They mentioned to what extent they agree or disagree on each of them.

- Scoring of writing is always inaccurate.
- Scoring of writing is subjective.
- It is difficult to achieve high rater agreement in writing assessment.
- In general, writing (essay) exams provides a good estimate of writing ability.
- Rater training is NOT helpful for writing teachers.
- When scoring writing, I believe content should receive

more weight than accuracy (grammar).

- Self-assessment provides an accurate picture of student writing ability.
- It is difficult to work with other colleagues during scoring of writing exams.

Table 6 contains information about the teachers' beliefs about scoring accuracy in writing assessment for each group separately.

The 6th research question also explored whether there is a significant difference between the groups in their beliefs. What follows are the detailed findings comparing the beliefs in TEFL and Non-TEFL groups.

- The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in item (a) between TEFL (Md = disagree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = disagree, n = 80), $U = 2604.00$, $z = -0.15$, $p = 0.88$, $r = -0.01$.
- The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in item (b) between TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 80), $U = 2416.00$, $z = -0.92$, $p = 0.35$, $r = -0.07$.
- The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in item (c) between TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 80), $U = 2353.00$, $z = -1.20$, $p = 0.22$, $r = -0.09$.
- The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in item (d) between TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 80), $U = 2622.50$, $z = -0.08$, $p = 0.93$, $r = -0.00$.
- The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant

Beliefs	TEFL		Non-TEFL	
	Agree / Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Agree / Strongly Agree	Not Sure
(a) Scoring of writing is always inaccurate.	13.6%	27.3%	21.3%	15.0%
(b) Scoring of writing is subjective.	43.9%	19.7%	30.0%	31.3%
(c) It is difficult to achieve high rater agreement in writing assessment.	34.8%	28.8%	26.3%	61.3%
(d) In general, writing (essay) exams provides a good estimate of writing ability.	74.2%	16.7%	80.0%	11.3%
(e) Rater training is NOT helpful for writing teachers.	7.6%	7.6%	3.8%	20.0%
(f) When scoring writing, I believe content should receive more weight than accuracy (grammar).	28.8%	22.7%	11.3%	42.5%
(g) Self-assessment provides an accurate picture of student writing ability.	59.1%	22.7%	33.8%	55.0%
(h) It is difficult to work with other colleagues during scoring of writing exams.	27.3%	19.7%	28.7%	56.3%

Note: Totals do not add up to 100 for all items in this table because the statistics for 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' options are not included.

Table 6. Teachers' Beliefs about Scoring Accuracy in Writing Assessment

difference in item (e) between TEFL (Md = Disagree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Disagree, n = 80), $U = 1838.50$, $z = -3.45$, $p = 0.00$, $r = -0.28$. It represented a nearly medium effect size.

f) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in item (f) between TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 80), $U = 2419.00$, $z = -0.91$, $p = 0.36$, $r = -0.07$.

g) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in item (g) between TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 80), $U = 2152.50$, $z = -2.06$, $p = 0.03$, $r = -0.17$. However, it represented a small effect size.

h) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in item (h) between TEFL (Md = Disagree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 80), $U = 1942.50$, $z = -2.90$, $p = 0.00$, $r = -0.24$. It represented a nearly medium effect size.

According to the above information, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant differences in the statements regarding the teachers' beliefs about scoring accuracy in writing assessment between the TEFL and Non-TEFL majors, except for three following statements:

- Rater training is NOT helpful for writing teachers.
- Self-assessment provides an accurate picture of student writing ability.
- It is difficult to work with other colleagues during scoring of writing exams.

The teachers in TEFL group generally agreed on the statement stating 'Self-assessment provides an accurate picture of student writing ability', while the teachers in Non-

TEFL group generally were not sure about it. As for the statement stating 'It is difficult to work with other colleagues during scoring of writing exams', the teachers in TEFL group generally disagreed, whereas the teachers in Non-TEFL group, were not confident about it.

4.7 7th Research Question: Teachers' Beliefs about General Assessment Issues in Writing Classrooms

The 7th question investigated Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs about general assessment issues in writing classrooms. The teachers were given the following statements (a-e). They mentioned to what extent they agree or disagree on each of them.

- Writing assessment provides good feedback for writing instruction.
- Writing assessment is time consuming.
- Assessment plays an important role in writing classes.
- My students usually do poorly on writing exams.
- Assessment is an important capability that writing teachers should master.

Table 7 reveals teachers' beliefs about general assessment issues in writing classrooms, for each group separately.

The 7th research question also explored whether there is a significant difference between the groups in their beliefs about general assessment issues in writing classrooms. What follows are the detailed findings, comparing the beliefs in TEFL and Non-TEFL groups.

a) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in item (a) between TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 80), $U = 1862.00$, $z = -3.78$, $p = 0.00$, $r = -0.31$. It represented a medium effect size.

b) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant

Beliefs	TEFL		Non-TEFL	
	Agree / Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Agree / Strongly Agree	Not Sure
(a) Writing assessment provides good feedback for writing instruction.	95.5%	0	81.3%	0
(b) Writing assessment is time consuming.	45.5%	42.2%	68.8%	18.8%
(c) Assessment plays an important role in writing classes.	84.8%	0	91.3%	0
(d) My students usually do poorly on writing exams.	42.4%	45.5%	67.5%	16.3%
(e) Assessment is an important capability that writing teachers should master.	97.0%	0	97.5%	0

Note: Totals do not add up to 100 for all items in this table because the statistics for 'Not Sure' option are not included.

Table 7. Teachers' Beliefs about General Assessment Issues in Writing Classrooms

difference in item (b) between TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 80), $U = 1708.50$, $z = -3.77$, $p = 0.00$, $r = -0.31$. It represented a medium effect size.

c) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in item (c) between TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 80), $U = 2346.00$, $z = -1.37$, $p = 0.17$, $r = -0.11$. It represented a small effect size.

d) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in item (d) between TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 80), $U = 1811.00$, $z = -3.50$, $p = 0.00$, $r = -0.29$. It represented a medium effect size.

e) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in item (e) between TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 80), $U = 2097.00$, $z = -2.56$, $p = 0.01$, $r = -0.21$. However, it represented a small effect size.

The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed significant differences in all statements regarding the teachers' beliefs about general assessment issues in writing classrooms between the TEFL and Non-TEFL groups, except for: 'Assessment plays an important role in writing classes'. Despite this, it should be noted that the teachers in Non-TEFL group agreed on all the abatements; however, the teachers in TEFL group, generally agreed with all the statements, except for 'Writing assessment is time consuming,' and 'My students usually do poorly on writing exams,' about which they generally were not sure.

4.8 8th Research Question: Teachers' Beliefs about Different Writing Assessment Methods

The 8th question investigated Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs about different writing assessment methods. The teachers

were given the following statements (a-f). They mentioned to what extent they agree or disagree on each of them.

- a) Using scoring rubrics is necessary when grading essays.
- b) Writing can be assessed indirectly through multiple-choice questions.
- c) Writing is best assessed when integrated with other skills like reading and listening.
- d) Self-assessment can be a good technique for assessing writing.
- e) A portfolio is a good tool for assessing writing.
- f) Using computer technology in writing assessment is helpful.

Table 8 shows teachers' beliefs about different writing assessment methods, for each group separately.

The 8th research question also explored whether there is a significant difference between the groups in their beliefs about different writing assessment methods. What follows are the detailed findings, comparing the beliefs in TEFL and Non-TEFL groups.

a) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in item (a) between TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 80), $U = 1322.00$, $z = -5.40$, $p = 0.00$, $r = -0.44$. It represented a nearly large effect size.

b) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in item (b) between TEFL (Md = Disagree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Disagree, n = 80), $U = 2238.50$, $z = -1.77$, $p = 0.07$, $r = -0.14$. It represented a small effect size.

c) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant

Beliefs	TEFL			Non-TEFL		
	Agree / Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree / Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
(a) Using scoring rubrics is necessary when grading essays.	72.7%	24.2%	3.0%	37.5%	31.3%	20.0%
(b) Writing can be assessed indirectly through multiple-choice questions.	16.7%	24.2%	59.1%	5.0%	7.5%	87.6%
(c) Writing is best assessed when integrated with other skills like reading and listening.	77.3%	16.7%	6.1%	33.8%	58.8%	7.6%
(d) Self-assessment can be a good technique for assessing writing.	60.6%	33.3%	6.1%	28.7%	67.5%	3.8%
(e) A portfolio is a good tool for assessing writing.	77.3%	19.7%	3.0%	33.8%	73.7%	2.5%
(f) Using computer technology in writing assessment is helpful.	42.4%	19.7%	37.9%	28.7%	8.8%	62.5%

Table 8. Teachers' Beliefs about Different Writing Assessment Methods

difference in item (c) between TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 80), $U = 1579.00$, $z = -4.54$, $p = 0.00$, $r = -0.37$. It represented a medium effect size.

d) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in item (d) between TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 80), $U = 1790.50$, $z = -3.71$, $p = 0.00$, $r = -0.30$. It represented a medium effect size.

e) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in item (e) between TEFL (Md = Agree, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 80), $U = 1325.00$, $z = -5.62$, $p = 0.00$, $r = -0.46$. It represented a nearly large effect size.

f) The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in item (f) between TEFL (Md = Not Sure, n = 66) and Non-TEFL (Md = Disagree, n = 80), $U = 1945.50$, $z = -2.88$, $p = 0.00$, $r = -0.23$. It represented a nearly medium effect size.

The above-mentioned Mann-Whitney U Tests revealed significant differences in all statements regarding the teachers' beliefs about different writing assessment methods between the TEFL and Non-TEFL groups, except for: 'Writing can be assessed indirectly through multiple-choice questions'.

5. Discussion

A significant association was found between the teachers' majors and the status of receiving prior writing assessment training. In Non-TEFL group, 48.8% of the participants stated that they had not received any writing assessment training, while this number in TEFL group was 9.1%. Moreover, comparative analyses between the TEFL and Non-TEFL majors revealed significant differences in all areas of WAL training, as well as the teachers' beliefs about general assessment issues in writing classrooms and different writing assessment methods.

These issues mainly stem from the EFL teacher recruitment system and education programs in Iran. Mohsenian et al. (2015) found that general English skills and especially the speaking skill were the most important criterion in teacher selection for the Iranian managers of 100 private English

institutes. Talebinejad and Moattarian (2015, p. 7) also found, "teachers in language institutes are mostly selected based on their knowledge of general English, not specialized knowledge in SLA or applied linguistics".

The Iranian EFL teachers' lack of competence and preparation for writing assessment can be due to the fact that the majority of the Iranian EFL teachers at private language institutes only pass an intensive Teacher Training Course (TTC) in which they only learn the dominant approach or methodology implemented by the institute (Akbari & Yazdanmehr, 2011). Further, the lengths of some of the TTCs at private institutes are as short as three or four sessions; such length is clearly inadequate to cover all English language teaching and assessment issues (Karmivand, Hessamy, & Hemmati, 2014). Moreover, as Karimi (2011, p. 90) stated, most of the courses the teachers whose majors are English-related fields other than TEFL "have passed during their studies have been subject matter rather than pedagogical courses. They have, however, had a minimal number of courses on EFL instruction".

In the present study, only 48.8% of the participants in Non-TEFL group considered themselves as proficient writing instructors, and 33.8% of them were not sure whether they could be considered as proficient writing instructors. Although the condition seem better in TEFL group, it is not perfectly satisfactory. In TEFL group, also only half of the teachers considered themselves as proficient writing instructors and 40.9% were not sure about it. Moreover, regarding the teachers' self-report about the perceived level of training need, significant differences were found in only three (out of 12) areas of WAL. These problems also lie in the EFL teacher education programs in Iran.

As a matter of fact, although "training of pre- and in-service teachers constitutes one of the most important aspects in the quality assurance of language testing and assessment" (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014, p. 374), unfortunately, the conditions of the current in-service EFL teacher education programs and even TEFL university courses in Iran are not as effective as it is expected in terms of improving English teachers' language proficiency level, teaching skills, management skills, and assessment skills,

and thus, such courses and programs in Iran certainly need revision or reformation (Aliakbari & Ghoreyshi, 2013; Beh-Afarin, 2003; Forouzandeh, Riaz, & Sadighi, 2008; Ghaemi, Naderi & Naraghi, 2015; Moilinvaziri & Razmjoo, 2016; Razi & Kargar, 2014; Soltanpour & Valizadeh, 2017). Consequently, like the teachers in the current study, many EFL teachers who have passed English teacher education programs or graduated in TEFL in Iran often state their lack of competence and skill in doing their jobs as teachers (Hashemian & Azadi, 2014; Mehrani, 2014; Moilinvaziri & Razmjoo, 2016; Sarlak & Vafaeimehr, 2014; Talebinejad & Moattarian, 2015).

Concerning the ways teachers have obtained WAL, there was a significant difference between the two groups regarding the option of 'Part of a course'. In TEFL group, 72.7%, but in Non-TEFL group, 16.3% of the teachers stated that they obtained their WAL as part of course. On the other hand, no significant differences were found with regard to the in-service workshops and professional conferences. In TEFL group, 34.8%, and in Non-TEFL group, 38.8% of the teachers stated that they obtained their WAL in in-service workshops. These statistics do not seem satisfactory, and these problems also call for amending the teacher education system in Iran.

Furthermore, only 9.1% of the TEFL group and 3.8% of the Non-TEFL group stated that they obtained their WAL at professional conferences, and although the questionnaire included an open-ended part, entitled 'Other', no participating teacher mentioned other ways, such as self-study or doing action research. These problems stem from the Iranian EFL teachers' low levels of engagement in terms of both reading and doing research, which have already been proved in some previous studies (Mehrani, 2015; Mehrani & Behzadnia, 2013; Soltanpour & Valizadeh, 2017). Teacher research is known as a tool to promote professional development (e.g., Crookes, 1993; Crookes & Chandler, 2001; Norton, 2009; Nunan, 1997; Somekh, 2006). Richards and Farrell (2005, p. 173) also stated that "teachers who have carried out action research often report significant changes to their understanding of teaching". Nevertheless, in Iran there are several barriers to teachers' research engagement in terms of both reading

and doing research. For instance, teachers in Talebinejad and Moattarian's (2015) study reported the following barriers: (1) lack of knowledge in analyzing research articles, (2) lack of time, (3) lack of facilities, (4) Teacher Training Courses in Iran, (5) teachers' employment, (6) supervisors' ideologies and classroom observation, (7) top-down syllabus in which teachers do not have a leading role in syllabus design, (8) selected materials, and (9) teachers' knowledge and motivation. A majority of the mentioned obstacles were also found in other relevant research (e.g., Mehrani, 2014, 2015; Mehrani & Behzadnia, 2013; Soltanpour & Valizadeh, 2017). As long as these barriers are not removed, the mentioned problem will exist.

Finally, the beliefs about the writing assessment methods included a statement pertaining to using computer technology. The item said that using computer technology in writing assessment is helpful. In TEFL group, 42.4% agreed and strongly agreed; 19.7% was not sure, and 37.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed. In Non-TEFL group, the statistics were 28.7%, 8.8%, and 62.5%, respectively. This finding can be a sign of the teachers' lack of computer literacy for the implementation of technology in assessment. Iranian EFL teachers' inadequate computer literacy for the implementation of computer-assisted language learning had been revealed in some of the previous studies (Dashtestani, 2014; Jahanban-isfahlan, Tamjid, & Seifoori, 2017; Soleimani, Ravari, & Jafarigohar, 2017). Dashtestani (2014) stated, the main impeding factors behind the teachers' inadequate computer literacy "include lack of computer literacy training in teacher education programs, lack of support from EFL authorities to improve EFL teachers' computer literacy and lack of time to improve teachers' computer literacy" (p. 87). Soleimani et al. (2017) also called for the improvement of teacher education programs including both pre-service and in-service teacher training courses in order to prepare the Iranian EFL teachers to implement technologies in their real language teaching contexts.

6. Implications

In Discussion, it was explicitly mentioned that in Iran, there is a great need for significant improvement in EFL teacher

education programs and recruitment system in order to resolve the Iranian EFL teachers' lack of competence and preparation for writing assessment.

Moreover, the findings of this study have some implications for the supervisors of English language institutes. Some of the previous studies have revealed some serious problems regarding the supervisory system in the context of English language teaching in Iran. For example, the participating Iranian EFL teachers in Moradi, Sepehrifar, and Parhizkar (2014)'s study believed that supervision is not able to guide them in finding solutions to their problems in the classroom. Some studies even revealed that in Iran, supervision serves to decrease EFL teachers' motivation and confidence though it is expected to be an important element of in-service training for the professional development of teachers (Moradi et al., 2014; Navidinia, Kiani, Akbari, & Samar, 2014). Further, Rahmany, Hasani, and Parhoodeh (2014) stated that

In some institutes and English Language Centers [in Iran], there is no observation system and the teachers (especially novice teachers) are faced with many problems in classes while they have passed TTC. In some other institutes ..., [supervision] is restricted to a paperwork job rather than a tool for teaching and hence learning improvement (pp. 348-349).

Consequently, the supervisory system in the context of English language teaching in Iran also needs considerable improvement in order to reduce the EFL teachers' writing assessment training needs.

7. Limitations and Delimitations

The current study had a survey design, so it is not exempt from problems pertaining to such design. For example, some respondents might indicate what they should believe rather than what they really believe. Further, this study suffers from the problems inherent in small-scale research; the study included 146 EFL teachers and thus is not a representative sample of all Iranian EFL teachers, so this limits the generalizability of the results. Gu (2016) truly warned that as questionnaire research is exploratory, the findings of such study should be treated with considerable caution.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as Nemati et al. (2017, p. 15) also argued, an essential need exists for teacher training and teacher education courses paying close attention to writing instruction, and assessment. Finally, considering the current research limitations and delimitations, more research is needed to know how to improve the quality of writing instruction in Iranian classroom context.

References

- [1]. Ahmadi, A., & Mirshojaee, S. B. (2016). Iranian English language teachers' assessment literacy: The case of public school and language institute teachers. *The Iranian EFL Journal*, 12(2), 6-32. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohammad_Amini_Farsani3/publication/303443511_Iranian_EFL_Learners'_Noticing_of_Morpho-Syntactic_Corrective_Feedback_Recast_Types_and_Uptake/links/574c286d08ae538af6a50e2c.pdf#page=6
- [2]. Akbari, R., & Yazdanmehr, E. (2011). EFL teachers' recruitment and dynamic assessment in private language institutes of Iran. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 3(8), 29-51. Retrieved from http://elt.tabrizu.ac.ir/article_612_150.html
- [3]. Aliakbari, M., & Ghoreyshi, M. (2013). On the evaluation of master of arts program in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) at Ilam university. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*, 2(2), 545-558. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0014-4827\(83\)90414-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0014-4827(83)90414-7)
- [4]. Beh-Afarin, S. R. (2003). *ELT teacher education evaluation: Assessment of needs, pedagogical constraints, and objective setting in EFL teacher education programs (TEPs)* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Tehran: Islamic Azad University.
- [5]. Boyles, P. (2006). Assessment literacy. In M. H. Rosenbusch (Ed.), *New Visions in Action: National Assessment Summit Papers* (pp. 18-23). Iowa, US: Iowa State University. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.883.1970&rep=rep1&type=pdf#page=18>
- [6]. Crookes, G. (1993). Action research for second language teachers: Going beyond teacher research.

Applied Linguistics, 14(2), 130-144. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/14.2.130>

[7]. Crookes, G., & Chandler, P. M. (2001). Introducing action research into the education of postsecondary foreign language teachers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34, 131-140. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2001.tb02818.x>

[8]. Crusan, D., Plakans, L., & Gebril, A. (2016). Writing assessment literacy: Surveying second language teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices. *Assessing Writing*, 28, 43-56. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2016.03.001>

[9]. Dashtestani, R. (2014). Computer literacy of Iranian teachers of English as a foreign language: Challenges and obstacles. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 9(1), 87-100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18334105.2014.11082022>

[10]. Dempsey, M. S., Pytlkzillig, L. M., & Bruning, R. H. (2009). Helping preservice teachers learn to assess writing: Practice and feedback in a web-based environment. *Assessing Writing*, 14(1), 38-61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2008.12.003>

[11]. Forouzandeh, E., Riazi, A. M., & Sadighi, F. (2008). TEFL program evaluation AT master's level in Iran. *Teaching English Language and Literature Society of Iran (TELLSI)*, 2(6), 71-100. Retrieved from <https://www.sid.ir/En/Journal/ViewPaper.aspx?ID=135337>

[12]. Ghaemi, M., Naderi, E., & Naraghi, M. S. (2015). Investigate the role of implemented teacher education curriculum on the teacher qualifications, of teacher who are graduated from Universities in the province of Razavi Khorasan in order to evaluate and improve mentioned Curriculum (2014-2015). *Cumhuriyet University Faculty of Science*, 36(3), 3566-3571. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.876.7443&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

[13]. Gu, P. Y. (2016). Questionnaires in language teaching research. *Language Teaching Research*, 20(5), 567-570. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168816664001>

[14]. Hashemian, M., & Azadi, G. (2014). EFL teachers' understanding of the teaching portions of INSET programs. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), 62-76.

Retrieved from http://rals.scu.ac.ir/article_10738_05c1d7e967e2a30a9681197bedb2032a.pdf

[15]. Hatch, E., & Lazaraton, A. (1991). *The research manual: Design and statistics for applied linguistics*. Boston, US: Heinle & Heinle.

[16]. Jahanban-isfahlan, H., Tamjid, N. H., & Seifoori, Z. (2017). Educational technology in Iranian high schools: EFL teachers' attitudes, perceived competence, and actual use. *Education Research International*, 2017, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/9738264>

[17]. Karmivand, P. N., Hessamy, G., & Hemmati, F. (2014). The place of post method pedagogy in teacher education programs in EFL language centers of Iran. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics (IJAL)*, 17(2), 59-91. Retrieved from <https://ijal.khu.ac.ir/article-1-2247-fa.html>

[18]. Karimi, M. N. (2011). Variations in EFL teachers' pedagogical knowledge base as a function of their teaching license status. *The Journal of Teaching Language Skills (JTLS)*, 30(3), 83-114. Retrieved from jtls.shirazu.ac.ir/ml/article_379_6ccac0606c1d0033615189cac5dc52c2.pdf

[19]. Malone, M. E. (2013). The essentials of assessment literacy: Contrasts between testers and users. *Language Testing*, 30(3), 329-344. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480129>

[20]. Mede, E., & Atay, D. (2017). English language teachers' assessment literacy: The Turkish context. *Dil Dergisi*, 168(1), 43-60. Retrieved from <http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/27/2188/22675.pdf>

[21]. Mehrani, M. B. (2014). Real-life research: Bridging the gap between research and practice: Voice of mediators. *Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 18(2), 21-38. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1051324.pdf>

[22]. Mehrani, M. B. (2015). English teachers' research engagement: Level of engagement and motivation. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 3(1), 83-97. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1127337.pdf>

[23]. Mehrani, M. B., & Behzadnia, A. (2013). English teachers' research engagement: Current barriers and

future strategies. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 2(4), 17-2. Retrieved from jfl.iaun.ac.ir/article_10579_2774670561a1095e54317d0abb72a977.pdf

[24]. Mellati, M., & Khademi, M. (2018). Exploring teachers' assessment literacy: Impact on learners' writing achievements and implications for teacher development. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(6), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v43n6.1>

[25]. Mertler, C. A. (2009). Teachers' assessment knowledge and their perceptions of the impact of classroom assessment professional development. *Improving Schools*, 12(2), 101-113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480209105575>

[26]. Moghaddas, B., & Zakeri, J. (2012). English teacher education in Iran. *ELT Voices – India*, 2(4), 1-13.

[27]. Mohsenian, M., Rezai, A., & Abdolmanafi-Rokni, S. J. (2015). An Investigation into the criteria for selecting teachers in English language institutes in Iran. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2(5), 215-230. Retrieved from www.jallr.com/index.php/JALLR/article/download/113/pdf113

[28]. Moivaziri, M., & Razmjoo, S. A. (2016). Teachers-to-be voices: A grounded theory approach towards challenges facing Iranian EFL M.A. candidates. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 7(1), 54-74. <https://doi.org/10.22055/raals.2016.11777>

[29]. Moradi, K., Sepehrifar, S., & Khadiv, T. P. (2014). Exploring Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions on supervision. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Vol. 98, pp. 1214-1223). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.536>

[30]. Navidinia, H., Kiani, G. R., Akbari, R., & Samar, G. R. (2014). EFL teacher performance evaluation in Iranian high schools: Examining the effectiveness of the status quo and setting the groundwork for developing an alternative model. *International Journal of Humanities*, 21(4), 27-53. Retrieved from ijmpp.modares.ac.ir/article-27-6297-en.pdf%0A%0A

[31]. Nemat, M., Alavi, S. M., Mohebbi, H., & Masjedlou, A. P. (2017). Teachers' writing proficiency and assessment ability: The missing link in teachers' written corrective

feedback practice in an Iranian EFL context. *Language Testing in Asia*, 7(1), 21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-017-0053-0>

[32]. Norton, L. S. (2009). *Action research in teaching and learning: A practical guide to conducting pedagogical research in universities*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

[33]. Nunan, D. (1997). Developing standards for teacher-research in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(2), 365-367. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588053>

[34]. Pallant, J. (2013). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS* (5th. ed.). Berkshire, England: Open University Press.

[35]. Rahmani, E. (2016). The nexus between EFL teachers' assessment literacy and their professional success. *International Journal of Research in Linguistics, Language Teaching and Testing*, 1(2), 74-85. Retrieved from <http://ijrltt.com/fulltext/paper-24092016091317.pdf>

[36]. Rahmany, R., Hasani, M. T., & Parhoodeh, K. (2014). EFL teachers' attitudes towards being supervised in an EFL context. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5(2), 348-359. <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.5.2.348-359>

[37]. Razi, N., & Kargar, A. A. (2014). Evaluation of in-service foreign language teacher education program in Iran. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World (IJLLALW)*, 5(1), 221-236. Retrieved from www.ijllalw.org/finalversion5118.pdf%0A%0A

[38]. Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

[39]. Sarlak, N., & Vafaeimehr, R. (2014). Iranian EFL teachers' reflection on current teacher training programs. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World (IJLLALW)*, 6(1), 47-58. Retrieved from www.ijllalw.org/finalversion615.pdf

[40]. Soleimani, H., Ravari, M. R., & Jafarigohar, M. (2017). Computer, information and multimedia literacy among EFL teachers: Construction and validation of a scale. *Quarterly Journal of Iranian Distance Education (IDEJ)*, 1(1), 43-54. Retrieved from http://journals.pnu.ac.ir/article_

4204_44992c0c54347fa2619ede2a28cd86ea.pdf

[41]. Soltanpour, F., & Valizadeh, M. (2017). Iranian EFL teachers' perspectives on SLA research and EFL pedagogy: Do majors matter? *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 6(5), 90-106. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.6n.5p.90>

[42]. Somekh, B. (2006). *Action research: A methodology for change and development*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.

[43]. Stiggins, R. (2014). Improve assessment literacy outside of schools too. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 96(2), 67-72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721714553413>

[44]. Talebinejad, M. R., & Moattarian, A. (2015). Second language acquisition research and language pedagogy: A critical view. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 7(4), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v7i4.7826>

[45]. Vogt, K., & Tsagari, D. (2014). Assessment literacy of foreign language teachers: Findings of a European study. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 11(4), 374-402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2014.960046>

[46]. Webb, N. L. (2002). Assessment literacy in a standards-based urban education setting. In *Annual Meeting of the*

American Educational Research Association (pp. 1-20). New Orleans, Louisiana. Retrieved from http://facstaff.wceruw.org/normw/AERA_2002/Assessment_literacyNLW_Final32602.pdf

[47]. Weigle, S. C. (2007). Teaching writing teachers about assessment. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(3), 194-209. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2007.07.004>

[48]. Weigle, S. C. (2014). Considerations for teaching second language writing. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Rinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th Ed.) (pp. 222-237). Boston, MA: Heinle Cengage Learning.

[49]. White, E. (2009). Are you assessment literate? Some fundamental questions regarding effective classroom-based assessment. *OnCUE Journal*, 3(1), 3-25. Retrieved from <http://jaltcue.org/files/OnCUE/OCJ3-1/articles/OCJ3-1-White-pp3-25.pdf>

[50]. Zolfaghari, S., & Ashraf, H. (2015). The relationship between EFL teachers' assessment literacy, their teaching experience, and their age: A case of Iranian EFL teachers. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(12), 2550-2556. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0512.16>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Fatemeh Soltanpour is currently working as a University Lecturer in Kar Higher Education Institute, Qazvin, Iran. She holds MA in TEFL from Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran. She has also been teaching EFL since 2003. She has published several research papers in different scholarly Journals. Her areas of interest include Corrective Feedback, Classroom Interactions, Individual Differences in Language Learning, CALL, Learner Autonomy, Teacher Education and Development, and Psycholinguistics.



Mohammadreza Valizadeh is currently pursuing his PhD at Gazi University, Ankara, Turkey. He holds an MA in TEFL from University of Tehran, Iran. He is also currently teaching English at School of Foreign Languages at Istanbul Gelisim University, Istanbul, Turkey. He has published several articles in different scholarly journals. His areas of interests include Corrective Feedback, Psycholinguistics, Learning Strategies, Learner Autonomy, Task-Based Language Teaching and Individual Differences in Language Learning.

