

Exploring EFL Teachers' First Experience with Online Assessment at Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif-2 University

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Abstract:

The current study aims to explore teachers' experience with online assessment. It seeks to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions, practices and challenges of online assessment at Mohammed Lamine Debaghine University- Setif2. To achieve the purpose of this study, an exploratory design is followed. For data collection, a semi-structured adapted questionnaire is administered to 34 EFL teachers who are selected based on a convenience sampling technique. The data are analyzed quantitatively using SPSS.22 and qualitatively via thematic analysis. The results reveal that teachers have positive perceptions of using online assessment to evaluate students' progress. However, the findings indicate that online assessment practices are not well implemented; and teachers tend to focus on open ended practices with written assignments and research projects as the major strategy for their online assessment practice. Another finding reveals that teachers are facing a number of challenges when implementing online assessment among which are: the potential risk of students cheating, the poor or absence of internet connection, the difficulty of assessing students online in listening or speaking classes and teachers' unfamiliarity with ICT's. Accordingly, a number of pedagogical implications is offered.

Keywords: Online assessment, EFL teachers, Perceptions, Practices, Challenges

1. Introduction

The 21st century has been characterized by the increasing interest in the use of technology-based learning, which has highly been encouraged by the Ministry of Higher Education. The rapid outspread of Covid19 pandemic, since March, 2020, has affected higher education all over the world, and due to social distancing, universities were forced to compulsorily shift from face to face learning to online

learning in order to keep the education process in progress (Moorhouse, 2020). This sudden shift to online learning has heightened the need of using the online medium for instruction purposes and triggered online assessment from being an optional practice to an obligatory complement of learning assessment. This situation has left teachers unprepared to go through this new virtual experience and created several challenges including the

ones related to online assessment. In this regard, teachers have been expected to adapt their assessment practices to the online medium, and quickly design appropriate lesson and virtual assessment management plans. This in turn created more challenges and difficulties for teachers, especially in the EFL classroom.

1.1 The Nature of Online Assessment

Assessment, in general, is a crucial component of learning which aims to shape students' understanding of the curriculum and track the quality of their progress. In this regards, online assessment is usually defined as an electronic assessment, in which all assessment procedures should be accomplished electronically. This means that the design, test implementation, recording the response and providing the feedback are all completed using ICTs (Alruwais, Willis & Wald, 2018; Horton, 2011). Another definition of online assessment is stated by Abduh (2021) as "the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to deliver or test information in the field of education where teachers and learners are separated by distance, time, or both" (p.3). However, during Covid19 pandemic, online assessment acquired a new definition, and it is simply defined as an electronic version of activities that have been commonly used in face to face classroom to evaluate students' achievement and give feedback such as quizzes, exams and essays (Mirza, 2021). Accordingly, online assessment is different from traditional assessment in the medium of delivery. In face to face traditional assessment, students' physical attendance

is obligatory; whereas, in online assessment, an ICT device and the internet connection are the necessary materials.

1.2 Types of Online Assessment

Similar to face to face assessment, online assessment has two types in terms of the time allocated for assessment to take place. It can be either formative or summative.

Formative Online Assessment: is usually implemented before and during the online learning process. It is called "assessment for learning" and is applied in online classes as a means of ongoing feedback to improve teaching and learning (Hargreaves, 2008). Formative online assessment consists of a range of formal and informal activities which are inserted by teachers to monitor learning and track learners understanding. It provides a constant feedback for learners to help them identify their strengths and weaknesses until the desired level of knowledge is achieved (Abduh, 2021). In this regard, "students can use feedback from formative assessments to help them know what they have not yet mastered and what they need to study on further" (Bransford, Vye, & Bateman, 2002, p. 174). On the other hand, formative online assessment can provide guidance to the teacher through providing feedback about the quality of their instruction. According to Popham (2008), "formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students' status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures, or by students to adjust their current learning tactics" (p. 6).

Summative Online Assessment: is known as "assessment of learning" and aims to measure what students have learned at the

end of an instructional unit, the end of a course, or after a specific period of time. Accordingly, "summative assessment evaluates the mastery of learning whereas its counterpart, formative assessment, measures progress and functions as a diagnostic tool to help specific students" (States, Keyworth & Detrich, 2018, p. 1). In this respect, Challis (2009) (cited in Abduh, 2021, p.6) claims that summative assessment is used to ensure that the desired learning outcomes have been met or certifies that the required levels of competence have been achieved. Thus, formative assessment is designed to monitor learners' progress and summative assessment is used to evaluate students learning outcomes. In a nutshell, online assessment includes the different design and implementation of formative and summative assessment activities to measure students learning progress, provide appropriate feedback and insure academic integrity (Keans, 2012). In the current research, the summative end term evaluation is kept through the paper-pen traditional exam, and online assessment is mainly formative and applied only in tutorial sessions and courses of continuous evaluation.

1.3 Online Assessment Practices

A variety of online assessment practices are available to evaluate students learning. These assessments are classified as:

Question-based practices: are the proctored or time-constrained exams which need to be completed in a short span of time (maximum 3 hours). Time bounded assessment includes: Multiple choice questions, True/false questions, Matching

questions, Fill in the gaps questions, Selection questions and Short open ended questions. (Guangul et al, 2020; Mirza, 2021). Teachers need to have some experience with ICT and online assessment design to succeed in implementing appropriately the question-based practices along with the auto-correction and the immediate feedback if necessary.

Assignment or project based practices: are the open-ended exams which need to be completed in a long span of time 1 to 4 weeks such as Written Assignments, Reports, Summaries, Research Projects, Open book-take home Exams, Presentations and E-portfolios (Guangul et al, 2020; Mirza, 2021; Yuilianto & Mujtahid, 2021). These project-based practices are mostly used to target students' higher order thinking skills and critical analysis. However, they tend to be difficult to score or assign appropriate or immediate feedback. Other assessment practices include self-assessment, peer assessment, performance evaluation and journals (Kearns, 2012; Tuparove et al, 2015).

1.4 Advantages of Online Assessment

Online assessment was adopted in universities as an alternative to face to face traditional assessment in order to introduce a faster, more accurate and better solution to assess students (Alruwais, Wills & Wald, 2018). Online assessment has many advantages for students, teachers and university institutions. For teachers, online assessment helps teachers save time and energy. It assists the teacher to improve the quality of the feedback provided to

students, which can be delivered through recorded videos or audios, written remarks or immediately on live meeting (Ridgway, McCusker & Pad, 2004). Accordingly, the immediate online feedback helps teachers deal with students' misconceptions and scaffold their learning process to help them enhance their learning outcomes while preparing for Final exams (Ellaway & Masters, 2008; Joshi et al, 2020). Another benefit lies in using online assessment to help the teacher handle the assessment of large classes especially with question-based practices which requires auto-correction (Nicol, 2007; Mirza, 2021). In addition, the absence of the physical barriers makes teachers handle online assessment with more accessibility and flexibility (Lei & Gupta, 2010). For students, online assessment provides more control and friendly atmosphere for students (Ridgway, McCusker & Pad, 2004). The immediate feedback provided by teachers help improving learning in general and preparing for exams in particular (Joshi et al, 2020; Chinyere, 2021). Furthermore, online assessment helps increasing students' motivation since it provides flexibility for students to have their examination (Ridgway, McCusker & Pad, 2004; Weleschuk, Dyjur & Kelly, 2019). For university institutions, online assessment helps decreasing the cost of assessing students since it saves time and paper (Gilbert, 2011). In addition, online assessment helps preventing cheating since it includes identification checking and password verification along with providing different versions of the same exam (Crews & Curtis, 2010). This helps granting the assessment more validity and reliability.

1.5 Challenges of Online Assessment

Despite the various advantages of online assessment, a number of challenges for both teachers and students are detected. First, the accessibility of internet and the poor infrastructure especially in most developing countries (Alruwais, Wills & Wald, 2018), makes both teachers and students struggle to complete the assessment process. In addition, teachers and students unfamiliarity and lack of experience with the use of ICTs makes it even more difficult to hold an online assessment (Mirza, 2021, Donovan, Mader & Shinsky, 2007; Jordan & Mitchel, 2009). Another challenge is the lack of financial support to set up well-functioning online assessment system and technology equipment for teachers and students (Alruwais, Wills & Wald, 2018). In addition, the difficulty of assessing students in the absence of physical interactions and the difficulty of providing appropriate feedback especially for open-ended questions (Kearns, 2012) makes the situation more challenging. Furthermore, teachers are not trained on how to design, implement and score online assessment tests (Abduh, 2021), which threatens the validity and reliability of the whole testing system. Moreover, the possibility of violating academic integrity due to teachers' little control over students in online assessment (Kearns, 2012; Abduh, 2021), created further challenges for the success of the online assessment process. Finally, other challenges mentioned in the literature include the difficulty of assessing group projects and online discussions, issues of time management, the difficulty

of assessing the speaking skill, technical issues, the difficulty of addressing students' higher order thinking skills, students' anxiety, both teachers' and students' negative perceptions of online assessment and students' lack of commitment and motivation (Kearns, 2012; Alruwais, Wills & Wald, 2018; Chinyere, 2021; Abduh, 2021; Mirza, 2021).

1.6 Previous Related Research about Teachers' Perceptions, Practices and Challenges of Online Assessment

Empirical research focusing on the different issues of the teachers' perceptions, practices and challenges of online assessment is emerging and expanding (Kearns, 2012; Tuparova et al, 2015; Guangul et al, 2020; Yoestara et al, 2020; Perwitsari et al, 2020; Abduh, 2021; Zhang, Yan & Wang, 2021; Chinyere, 2021; Mirza, 2021; Yuliyanto & Mujtahid, 2021). It has revealed a considerable amount of data concerning the experience of teachers with online assessment.

To start with, Kearns (2012) conducted a research to explore both teachers' practices and challenges of online assessment. For data collection, syllabi from 24 online courses were reviewed in order to identify the types of online assessment practices being used to assess student. In addition, a focus group and interviews with eight teachers are used to discuss challenges faced with online assessment. The findings reveal that written assignments, online discussion, fieldwork, quizzes, and presentations are the main used practices for online assessment. The challenges faced by teachers include the teaching workload, the time management issues,

and the difficulty of providing feedback. Another study was conducted by Tuparova et al (2015) to explore teachers' practices and attitudes towards online assessment. A survey was administered to 255 Bulgarian secondary school teachers. The results reveal that teachers hold negative attitudes towards online assessment; they prefer the traditional assessment practices such as tests and project based practices. On the other hand, portfolios and online discussion are found to be the least used. Teachers' unfamiliarity with ICTs is the reason for neglecting the computer-based practices.

Guangul et al (2020) conducted a study to explore the practices and challenges of online assessment in higher education institutions. For data collection, a questionnaire was designed and administered to 50 teachers from different faculties. The results reveal that teachers tend to focus on project-based practices rather than question based ones with reports and open book home assignment as the major assessment practices. Another finding indicates that the main challenges identified in online assessment are the academic integrity violations, the poor infrastructure, and commitment of students to submit assessments. In addition, Yoestara et al (2020) explored pre-service English teachers' perception towards online assessment system. For data collection, a questionnaire was distributed to 82 teachers via google form. Data were analyzed using Excel and percentage formula. The findings indicate that teachers tend to have positive perceptions towards online assessment as they agree with all the positive statements

in favor of online assessment practices. They believe that online assessment is more interesting than traditional assessment and is easy to design and implement, and reduces exam anxiety and cheating.

Moreover, Perwitasari, Baiti and Atmogo (2020) conducted a study to explore teachers' benefits and challenges of online assessment in Indonesia. A survey was sent online to 6632 teachers throughout Indonesia. The findings reveal that the most widely used online media by teachers are WhatsApp, Google Classroom, and Google Forms. Teachers are found to face a number of challenges among which are: the unstable internet network, the lack of funds for internet quota needs, the ICTs illiteracy, the difficulty of providing appropriate feedback and the limited suitable electronic devices. The benefits during online learning are the increased teacher commitment, empathy for students, increased experience with online media, and improvement of time management skills. Another research was established by Abduh (2021) to explore teachers' perceptions, practices and challenges of online assessment in full-time e-learning in a Saudi EFL context. A questionnaire was administered to 26 teachers using Google form. Interviews were held utilizing What's Up application to collect explore the challenges of online assessment. The results reveal that EFL teachers expressed moderate perceptions of online assessment. Most of the statements related to teachers' perceptions of techniques and methods used in online assessment were positive. Another finding

reveals that teachers face many challenges when assessing students online such as technical and internet disconnections, the difficulty of assessing speaking courses, cheating and plagiarism, and assessing large classes. Moreover, the study revealed that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers regarding online assessment.

A further study is introduced by Zhang, Yan and Wang (2021) to explore EFL teachers' practices of online assessment during Covid19 in China. The study aims to explore how those practices differ from traditional face to face paper pen assessment. For data collection, a semi structured interview is held with six EFL teachers. The results reveal that teachers tend to shift more to formative assessment using more discussion, open book home exams, and written home-works. The lack of appropriate online assessment training and time management issues are mentioned as the major challenges for teachers. On the other hand, Chinyere (2021) conducted a study to determine teachers' perceptions of the challenges and solutions to online assessment. For data collection, a Digital Literacy Test and a structured questionnaire were administered to teachers using Google forms. The findings reveal that teachers are facing challenges which include: the poor internet connectivity, students struggle with technology, the possibility of violating academic integrity and cheating, difficulty of correcting questions with open-ended responses. As a solution, teachers suggest that administrators should organize

workshops for students and professional training for teachers about the use of online assessment.

Mirza (2021) conducted a study to explore the online assessment practices and perceptions of Lebanese teachers during Covid19 lockdown. Data were collected online through individual interviews with 10 participants from different departments. The findings reveal that teachers tend to use projects, oral presentations, reflection papers, and performances as assessment the main online assessment practices. The results reveal that teachers receive limited training on how to conduct classes online and assess their students. Consequently, teachers are reported to hold negative perceptions of online assessment and prefer final exams to be through the traditional paper-pen evaluation. In addition, teachers reported the main challenges of online assessment to be: technical issues and poor infrastructure and the lack of online assessment training for both teachers and students. Finally, Yulianto and Mujtahid (2021) conducted a study to examine teachers' perspectives and assessment practices of online assessment during Covid19 pandemic. For data collection, an open-ended questionnaire and an online interview were used. The results reveal that teachers think that online assessment is useful but have negative perspectives due to difficulties during implementation. They reveal a number of challenges while conducting the assessment test such as: the internet connection, the validity of the assessment, the ICTs illiteracy, and the low of students' enthusiasm.

1.7 Statement of the Problem

Despite the existence of an intensive research (Kearns, 2012; Tuparova et al, 2015; Guangul et al, 2020; Yoestara et al, 2020; Perwitsari et al, 2020; Abduh, 2021; Zhang, Yan & Wang, 2021; Chinyere, 2021; Mirza, 2021; Yuliyanto & Mujtahid, 2021) about teachers' perceptions, practices and challenges of online assessment during the pandemic, the Algerian teachers' case is not well investigated. Therefore, in the context of the shift from face to face assessment to online assessment, and aiming to fill a gap in the literature, the Algerian EFL teachers' situation needs to be explored.

1.8 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore EFL teachers' experience with online assessment. It aims to identify teachers' perceptions, practices and the corresponding challenges of online assessment in the English department at Mohammed Lamine Debaghine University- Setif2, in which online assessment is opted for in tutorial sessions' evaluation or courses of continuous evaluation with keeping end-semester evaluation through the traditional pen paper exam.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Questions

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the following research questions are to be answered:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of online assessment?
2. What are the practices of online assessment implemented by EFL teachers?

3. What are the challenges faced by EFL teachers when implementing online assessment practices?

2.2 Participants

This research was conducted with 34 teachers from the English department at Mohammed Lamine Debaghine University-Setif2, Algeria. They are 29 females and 5 males with teaching experience of 1 to 20 years. Participants are specialized in applied linguistics, civilization, or literature. The majority of teachers (32) teach modules which require continuous evaluation for assessment. This means that they should have an idea about or have applied online assessment before. The participants in this research were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate, following a convenience sampling technique.

2.3 Instrument

The instrument used for data collection is an adapted semi-structured questionnaire from Toestara et al (2020) and Chinyere (2021); it consists of four major sections. The first section is about the background information of participants concerning gender, academic rank, teaching experience, teachers' specialty, and course evaluation requirements. The second section is about teachers' perceptions of online assessment. It consists of ten items that can be measured on a five point Likert-scale, structured as "strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree". The third section is about the online assessment practices used by teachers. They are subdivided into two lists: Question-based practices requiring short

span of time and Assignment based practices of long- span of time. Teachers are requested to tick the practices implemented for their online assessment. At the end of this section, an open ended question is provided for teachers to mention any other practices. The fourth section is concerned with the different challenges faced by teachers when implementing online assessment. It consists of 12 items measured on a five point Likert-scale, structured as "strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree". Again, an open ended question is inserted for teachers to mention any further challenges.

2.4 Procedures

The questionnaire was created as a google form and sent to teachers via email or Viber application. Thirty Four (34) teachers completed the questionnaire. For data analysis procedures, the responses to close-ended questions are analyzed quantitatively using SPSS.22 through frequencies, means, percentages and ranks. The answers to the open-ended questions are analyzed qualitatively through thematic analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings are organized and analyzed under three sub-headings related to the three research questions: Teachers' perceptions of online assessment, teachers' practices of online assessment and the challenges of implementing online assessment.

3.1 Teachers Perceptions of Online Assessment

This section is to provide the answer to the perceptions of online assessment. first research question about teachers'

Table 1: Teachers Perceptions of Online Assessment

Items	Mean	Percent	Response Level	Rank
1. Online assessment is more practical than traditional paper-based assessment.	2.95	56.4	Neutral	6
2. Online assessment eases the assessment process	3.34	66.8	Neutral	5
3. Online Assessment is easy to design	2.41	48.2	Disagree	9
4. Online Assessment is easy to implement	3.48	64.6	Neutral	4
5. Online Assessment saves time	3.91	78.2	Agree	1
6. Online assessment facilitates marking and recording grades	3.51	70.2	Agree	3
7. Online assessment is appropriate for all students	2.44	48.8	Neutral	8
8. Online assessment reduces exam stress	3.88	77.6	Agree	2
9. Online assessment measures accurately students' learning outcomes	2.5	50	Neutral	7
10. Online assessment can replace traditional testing	2.12	42.4	Disagree	10
Total	3.05	61	Agree	

As indicated in table 1, in general, teachers seem to have positive perceptions of online assessment with a total mean value of (3.05). The majority believe that online assessment saves time, reduces exam stress and facilitates marking and recording grades with mean values of (3.91), (3.88) and (3.51) respectively.

This finding agrees with the ones of Yoestara et al (2020) and Abduh (2021) in which teachers are found to hold positive perceptions of online assessment. On the other hand, it disagrees with the ones from Tuparove et al (2015), Mirza (2021), and Yulianto and Mujtahid (2021) in which teachers are reported to have negative perceptions towards online assessment

with preference to the traditional paper pen assessment.

However, despite having positive perception of online assessment, most teachers think that online assessment is not easy to design and cannot replace traditional testing with mean values of (2.41) and (2.12) respectively. This finding means that teachers might lack appropriate training of how to design an online test and

doubt the possibility of online assessment replacing the traditional paper-pen exam.

3.2 Teachers' Practices of Online Assessment

In this section, the second research question, - What are the practices of online assessment implemented by EFL teachers? - will be addressed

Table 2: Teachers' Practices of Online Assessment

Question-based Methods (Short Span of Time)	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
1. Multiple choice questions	6	17.64	4
2. T/F questions	9	26.47	2
3. Matching questions	1	2.94	6
4. Fill in the gaps questions	7	20.58	3
5. Selection questions	5	14.70	4
6. Open-ended questions	22	64.70	1
Assignment/Project-based Methods (Long Span of Time)			
1. Written Assignment	21	61.76	1
2. Reports	3	8.82	4
3. E-portfolio	0	0	5
4. Summary	14	41.17	3
5. Research project	18	52.94	2
Others			
1. Sharing opinion in discussion forums or online media	4	11.76	2
2. Online Presentation	6	17.64	1

Table 2 reveals that among assignment based assessment practices, teachers use written assignments (61.76 %), research projects (52.94 %) and summaries (41.17

%) as the major practices. For teachers who opted for question-based assessment, they relied on short open ended questions (64.70 %) for their practice. On the other

hand, E-portfolio (0%), matching questions (2.94 %), reports (8.82%), selection questions (14.70 %), and multiple choice questions (17.64 %) are mentioned to be the least used practices. Few teachers used online presentations (17.64 %) and discussion forums (11.76 %).

The findings of this section go hand in hand with results from Kearns (2012), Tuparova et al (2015), Guangul et al (2020), Mirza (2021) and Zhang, Yan & Yang (2021). In all these studies, teachers are reported to mainly use project-based assessment practices and neglect question-based practices.

In this study, teachers preference of assignment-based assessment practices might be justified due to teachers' trying to avoid the challenging nature of the question-based assessment with its demanding design; and to provide learners with relatively enough time to avoid any kind of technical issues which may hinder the assessment process and affect its reliability. On the other hand, the assessment practice is based on the type of

module and students number per class. Teachers' limited use of online assessment practices might be the result of teachers' unfamiliarity with using this new mode of assessment.

Findings from the open-ended question reveal that audio recording is another online assessment practice used by teachers. In addition, some teachers used question-based tests for a long span of time, uploading their paper-pen exams to the platform with no real design of an online test.

3.3 The Challenges of Implementing Online Assessment

Teachers' implementation of online assessment is influenced by a number of constraints. The majority of teachers claim that they face numerous difficulties when trying to implement online assessment in the EFL classroom. This section is devoted to the third research question about online assessment challenges.

Table 3: Teachers' Challenges with Online Assessment

Item	Mean	Percent	Response Level	Rank
1. The poor internet connection or the absence of internet network in students' home area.	4.58	91.6	Strongly Agree	2
2. Teachers' lack of control over the assessment process (the teacher cannot control how students do assignments and whether they do the assignments by themselves)	4.09	81.8	Strongly Agree	5
3. The difficulty of providing appropriate feedback to students	3.73	74.6	Agree	9

4. Some teachers' struggling with ICTs during online assessment	4.12	82.4	Strongly Agree	4
5. The difficulty of conducting peer or group assessment online.	3.75	75	Agree	8
6. The difficulty of assessing students online in listening or speaking classes	4.22	84.4	Strongly Agree	3
7. The difficulty of assessing continuous evaluation activities in large classes.	4.08	81.6	Strongly Agree	6
8. Some students' failure to submit the assignment on time due to their poor technical capabilities	3.91	78.2	Agree	7
9. The potential risk of students cheating (high percentages of plagiarism/ The possibility that students may copy each other's assignments)	4.69	93.8	Strongly Agree	1
10. Students' postponing the submission of the assignments.	3.62	72.4	Agree	11
11 Students' failure to understand the test instructions	3.56	71.2	Agree	12
12. The difficulty of reading and grading online written assignments	3.64	72.8	Agree	10
Total	3.99	79.98	Agree	

As indicated in table 3, in general, teachers seem to face a variety of challenges when implementing online assessment practices with a mean value of (3.99) indicating that teachers agree with all the 12 items for challenges. The majority believe that the potential risk of students cheating, the poor or absence of internet connection, the difficulty of assessing students online in listening or speaking classes, and teachers' struggling with ICT's (technology experience) are the major potential challenges with mean values of (4.69), (4.58), (4.22) and (4.12) respectively.

These findings are similar to findings from Tuparova et al (2015), Perwitasari, Baiti & Atmogo (2020), Guangul et al (2020); Yulianto & Mujtahid (2021), Abduh (2021), Chinyere (2021) and Mirza (2021). In all of these studies, the poor infrastructure, violating academic integrity, teachers' struggle with technology are found to be the major challenges facing teachers with online assessment. However, the difficulty of providing appropriate feedback is reported to be a major challenge in previous research, which is not the case in this study as it ranked among the least faced challenges with mean value of (3.73).

In response to the open-ended question, teachers mentioned other challenges which are: lack of knowledge for designing online tests and using interactive utilities of Moodle platform. Another teacher thinks that online assessment is time consuming when obliged to acknowledge the receipt and download the files sent by students in the computer.

4. Conclusions

The findings from this study reveal that teachers have positive perceptions of using online assessment to evaluate students. They believe that online assessment saves time and facilitates the scoring system. However, the findings indicate that online assessment practices are not well implemented; and teachers tend to focus on long span of time projects as the major strategy for their online assessment practice, neglecting the question based practices due to the different challenges related to online assessment. Another finding reveals that teachers are facing a number of challenges when implementing online assessment among which are: violating academic integrity through cheating, the poor internet connection, teachers' struggle with ICTs and the difficulty of assessing speaking and listening. In a nutshell, teachers seem to have positive perceptions of online assessment. However, their practice is very limited due to the challenges they face when trying to implement it. Accordingly, a number of pedagogical implications is offered.

5. Pedagogical Implications

In accordance with the results of this research, the following pedagogical

implications are suggested. First, teachers should be professionally trained on how to use ICTs, Moodle platform and other online tools to design valid and reliable assessment tests. Second, concerning the poor technical infrastructure related to the poor internet connection and coverage, the government should provide a full technical equipment and good internet access and connection for a better functioning of the online assessment system. Third, teachers should consider the validity and reliability of assessment rather than the easiness of the assessment practice and try to design effective online assessment practices. Fourth, in order to make sure that the test is done by students and minimize academic integrity violations, teachers can implement online oral presentations, questions and discussions and provide conceptual questions that are not easily answered from the internet or textbooks to avoid plagiarism. In addition, teachers should focus on students' high order thinking as the major goal of online assessment to prevent cheating. Fifth, for the module of oral expression, teachers should seek the presence of the learners for assessment in the classroom or through virtual meetings.

6. Suggestions for Future Research

Future researchers may replicate the same study with students to explore their perceptions and challenges of online assessment. In addition, experimental research may tackle the effect of online assessment on students' grades in comparison to paper pen exams. Furthermore, researchers may tackle the gender differences in relation to online assessment perceptions and practices.

Finally, researchers are invited to replicate the same study in relation to a specific course to investigate the perceptions, practices and challenges of EFL teachers with online assessment in the different modules.

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