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| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Secondary School EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Integrating Skills in their Assessment Methods: Machakel Woreda in Focus

Kume Tewabe Alehegn[1] and Omar Ayed Al Qudah[2]
[1] *Mizan Tepi University, Ethiopia*
[2] *University of Canberra, Australia*
Corresponding Author: Omar Ayed Al Qudah, **E-mail**: Omar.AlQudah@canberra.edu.au

| **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to examine how EFL teachers perceive and implement skill integration in their classroom assessments, with a focus on Grades 9 and 10 in four secondary schools located in Machakel Woreda. Specifically, it investigated how teachers incorporate multiple language skills into both formative and summative assessments. The study employed a descriptive research design with a mixed-methods approach used solely for data collection purposes. Out of a population of 22 English teachers, all 22 were selected as the sample through a comprehensive sampling method. The instruments used for data collection included questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis. These instruments were designed to explore English teachers' perceptions and practices concerning skill integration in classroom assessments. The findings of the study revealed that teachers held strong perceptions and a solid understanding of the principles of integrated skills assessment. However, they rarely practiced skill-integrated language assessments in either classroom assessment of learning (summative assessment) or assessment for learning (formative assessment) in EFL classes. The study also indicated that classroom English language assessments primarily consisted of grammar items and, occasionally, vocabulary content, with little to no skill integration. Furthermore, the study identified key challenges hindering classroom language assessment practices, which were related to students, teachers, and school administration. Based on the findings, it was concluded that EFL teachers focused mainly on summative assessments (assessment of learning) without integrating language skills, and they did not successfully implement integrated skills assessments. Instead, they relied heavily on assessments targeting isolated skills and grammar content. Several key recommendations were proposed, based on the major findings of the study, to improve EFL teachers' classroom assessment practices.

1. Introduction

For many years, the word "assessment" mainly referred to evaluating the effectiveness of instructional activities after they were completed. A good classroom assessment helps identify specific areas where the class or individual students struggle (Heaton, 1988). It also allows the teacher to determine which parts of the language program are challenging, helping them evaluate the syllabus, methods, and materials they use. Wolf (1979, as cited in Simachew, 2012) mentions that the tests in the educational system across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels assess both processes and outcomes. Consequently, institutions and teachers rely on these assessments continuously. Skills are the foundation and essential components of the language learning process. Integrating skills is an excellent strategy for simplifying and enhancing this complex process. The four language skills are rarely used separately in everyday life. Integration helps language learners develop the ability to combine two or more of the four skills, both inside and outside the classroom. According to Selma and Selen (2010), all language skills are necessary, and their combination positively impacts student achievement.

Students' English language learning performance can be evaluated in various ways. One approach is integrated skills assessment, which involves connecting the macro language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) with language elements (grammar and vocabulary) during the assessment process. This method is widely practiced in many countries worldwide today (Oxford et al., 1994). In this context, Snow, as cited in Celce-Murcia (1991:313), emphasizes: "In the past decades we have seen a movement away from narrow methods to broader, integrated approaches in language teaching that encourage the teaching of all four skills within the general framework of using language for learning as well as for communication."

In natural language learning, skills integration is inevitable, and the language classroom skills need to be practiced in integrative ways. According to Cunnings (1984), in actual language use, one skill is rarely used in isolation; that is, various communicative situations in real life involve integrating two or more language skills at a time. For example, to speak effectively, we need to listen, and in order to listen, we must have good knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Likewise, to write effectively, we need to read, listen, and have good vocabulary and grammar knowledge.

Since the 1970s, important philosophical and practical differences have remained between the objectives of integrated language teaching and the methods of language assessment. That is, if the goal of communicative language teaching is to enable learners to communicate meaningfully and appropriately in various contexts, discrete-point tests are inadequate and unsuitable for measuring learners' communicative ability (Hinkel, 2004). As a result, integrative assessment was proposed in the 1970s to challenge the discrete-point approach by arguing that not only recognizing the individual elements of language, but also understanding how they relate to each other, is necessary during language processing (Oller, 1979). Oller (1979) further states that integrative language tests assess language learners' ability to use multiple language skills at the same time. However, discrete items attempt to assess knowledge of language one bit at a time. Hughes (1989) similarly states that integrative testing requires candidates to combine many language elements in the completion of a task. This test emphasizes the simultaneous evaluation of the test takers' multiple linguistic competences from various perspectives.

Apparently, as observed by the researcher in the classroom, Grade 9 and 10 secondary school English teachers face different problems in assessing students. One of the most crucial problems that motivated the researcher was the issue of EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the integration of skills in their assessment. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore EFL teachers' perceptions and practices of integrating skills in their assessment methods at four secondary schools in EFL classes, especially in Grades 9 and 10.

Research Questions
This study tried to answer the following research questions.
1. How do secondary school English language teachers perceive integrated language skills in their assessment in EFL classes?
2. To what extent do English teachers use integrative skill assessment in EFL contexts?
3. What challenges (if any), do the EFL teachers face when implementing integrated skills assessment?

Objectives of the Study
    General Objective
The main objective of the study was to explore English language teachers' perceptions and practices of integrated language skills in their assessment in EFL class at four Secondary Schools in Machakel woreda.
  Specific Objectives
Based on the main objective, the research is intended to achieve the following specific objectives:
1. To find out English teachers' perception of language skills integration in their assessment.
2. To examine the extent to which English teachers implement integrated language skills in their assessment.
3. To identify the major factors that hindered the implementation of language skills' integration in their assessment in English as a Foreign Language class.

    2. Materials and Methods
 2.1 Research Design
In this research, a descriptive type of research design, which involves both qualitative and quantitative approaches, was employed. This design was chosen as it is used to describe or state the existing perceptions and practices of teachers towards integrative skill assessment. In this research, a mixed research approach was employed. This approach was selected because the researcher believed that employing a mixed methods approach strengthens the study by minimizing the weaknesses of one approach and utilizing the strengths of another.

2.2 Sources of Data and Target Population of the Study

The sources of data were English language teachers at four secondary schools: Amanuel, Girakidamin, Degasegn, and Shelel. According to information from the schools, in the 2013 academic year, there were 22 English language teachers teaching grades nine and ten (12 in Amanuel, 4 in Degasegn, 4 in Girakidamin, and 2 in Shelel). Therefore, these 22 English language teachers were taken as the target population of the study.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The total number of English language teachers teaching grades 9 and 10 in the selected schools was 22. Thus, the researcher selected all teachers for this study through a comprehensive sampling technique in order to obtain adequate, valid, and reliable data, and because they were manageable. All of them are B.A. holders with 8–25 years of teaching experience. Questionnaires, observations, interviews, and document analyses were conducted with all grade nine and ten EFL teachers in the schools. Sample summative and formative assessment tests were also selected randomly from these schools for document analysis.

3. Data Gathering Instruments

3.1 Questionnaire

Sharma (2000) and Kothari (2006) state that a questionnaire enables a researcher to collect data from large groups of individuals within a short period of time, and it is also easy to administer to a number of subjects in one place at a time. The items of the questionnaire were designed based on the research questions. Thus, a set of closed and open-ended questions for teachers was prepared, guided by the objectives of the study and a review of related literature.

3.2 Classroom Observation

According to Allwright (1988), observation provides a primary account of the situations under study; and when combined with other data collection tools, it allows for a holistic interpretation of those situations. To gain a clear picture of how teachers actually integrate skills in their classroom assessment practices, how EFL teachers implement skill integration, and how EFL learners engage in integrated skill assessment to improve their language skills and competence, the researcher employed classroom observation as a data collection tool.

3.3. Interview

According to Nunan (1992), interviews are suitable for studies of this kind for two reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, it is a descriptive study in which interviews can be used to secure relevant data. Second, the number of subjects interviewed was small, making interviews appropriate. Thus, a semi-structured interview was prepared by the researcher based on the objectives of the study and the reviewed literature.

3.4 Document Analysis According to Best and Kahn (1989), documents are important sources of data for qualitative research. The researcher examined and analyzed sample summative and formative assessments such as quizzes, assignments, and mid- and final examinations. The researcher then evaluated whether these sample assessments demonstrated skill integration and examined the ways in which integration was applied to the designed test items.

4. Data Collection Procedures

First, a questionnaire was constructed and administered to the selected sample of 22 EFL teachers. Second, observations were conducted with eight randomly selected teachers from the 65 sections, taking one section each from grade nine and grade ten in each school. Third, interviews were conducted with four selected teachers to allow for elaboration on issues covered in the questionnaires and classroom observation checklists. Lastly, document analysis was conducted on sample summative and formative assessments to determine whether teachers designed examinations with skill integration.

5. Methods of Data Analysis

To analyse the data, information was first collected through four instruments regarding EFL teachers' perceptions and practices of skill integration in classroom assessment. After collecting the relevant data, the researcher categorized it appropriately for analysis and interpretation. To organize and facilitate analysis of the questionnaire responses, the researcher tallied and tabulated the responses under each item using simple descriptive statistics such as mean and percentage (quantitatively). Meanwhile, data obtained from interviews, classroom observations, and document analyses were analyzed qualitatively through narration, explanation, and thematic analysis.

6. Results and Discussions
6.1 Teachers' Response for Closed-Ended Questions

Table 1: Teachers' Responses about their Perceptions of how Language Skills can be integrated in their Assessment in EFL Class

No	Statements	Rating Scale										Mean
		SA(5)		A(4)		HI(3)		DA (2)		SDA(1)		
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	Language skills should be integrated in classroom tasks.	-	-	20	90	1	5	1	5	-	-	3.86
2	Language skills should be integrated in summative assessment forms.	1	5	18	82	-	-	1	5	-	-	3.68
3	Integrated language skill assessment enables the students to be successful in their current and future academic learning.	20	90	2	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.91
4	EFL teachers' skill integration assessment develops students linguistic, strategic and discourse competence.	2	10	20	90	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.09
5	Integrated language skill assessment creates positive student-to-student and teacher-to-student interaction in the classroom.	19	86	3	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.81
6	Teaching integrated language skills enhances students' communication competence.	20	90	2	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.91
7	Integrated language skill assessments empower students to utilise several language skills in their daily communication.	20	90	2	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.91
8	I understand that I am responsible for constructing an integration skills assessment that provides opportunities for students to create authentic learning.	2	10	18	82	1	5	1	5	-	-	3.95
9	I recognize that language skill integration assessment provides an opportunity for students to use the language naturally in English as a Foreign Language class	2	10	18	82	1	5	1	5	-	-	3.95

Key: SA=Strongly Agree. A=Agree. HI=Have no Idea. DA=Disagree. SDA= Strongly Disagree

Table 1 shows teachers' perceptions about how language skills can be integrated into their assessment and its use in the EFL classroom. In this regard, items 1 and 2 were designed to ask whether teachers understood that language skills should be integrated in classroom tasks and in summative assessments. Accordingly, as can be observed in Table 1 above, the mean values of 3.86 and 3.68 for items 1 and 2 respectively imply that the respondents agreed with the claim that "language skills should be integrated around a classroom task and in summative assessment forms." One can conclude from this that, regarding their perceptions and understanding of integrated-skills assessment principles—in terms of how skills are integrated in classroom tasks and summative assessments, ways of integrating language skills in different assessment forms, as well as the overall use of integrated-skills assessment—the subjects demonstrated a high level of awareness of integrated-skills assessment assumptions.

Table 1 also demonstrates that the mean values of 4.91, 4.09, 4.81, 4.91, 4.91, 3.95, and 3.95 for items 3 to 9 respectively reveal that the respondents *strongly agree*, *agree*, *strongly agree*, *strongly agree*, *strongly agree*, *agree*, and *agree* with the issues raised in these items. This indicates that almost all the respondents have a strong understanding of the importance of skill integration in assessment. Accordingly, items 3 to 9 were used to determine the respondents' awareness of the various uses of integrated language skills assessment. One can conclude from Table 1 that teachers have strong perceptions of English language

integrated-skills assessment principles in terms of how skills are integrated in classroom tasks and summative assessments, the different ways of integrating language skills into assessment forms, and the overall application of integrated-skills assessment.

Table 2: Teachers' Response about their Perceptions for the use of Language Skill Integration Assessment in EFL Classes.

No	Statements	Rating Scale										Mean
		SA(5)		A(4)		HI(3)		DA(2)		SDA(1)		
		No	%	No	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	
10	I understand that I am responsible to administer and score integration skill assessment that provides opportunity for students to create real situations in group.	10	45	12	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.45
11	I know English as a foreign language teacher can assess students' language skills in integrative ways individually, in pair or in group.	2	10	20	90	-	-		-	-	-	4.09
12	I understand English as a foreign language teachers' skill integration assessment is a difficult task for the teacher but it has positive effect on students' success.	20	90	2	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.91
13	I know students English language skills should be assessed in integrative ways continuously in the class room.	1	5	15	68	3	14	2	10	1	5	3.59
14	I understand English as a foreign Language skill integration assessment should have techniques and students should be aware of it.	-	-	20	90	1	5	-	-	1	5	3.82
15	I know implementing the assessment of the four language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) and other micro skills in an integrated manner in the EFL classroom create authentic learning environment..	2	10	17	77	2	10	1	5	-	-	3.91
16	I have full awareness integrative language skill tasks like dictation, cloze tests, essay writing etc.	-	-	17	77	2	10	3	14	-	-	3.71

Key: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, HI=Have no Idea, DA=Disagree, SDA= Strongly Disagree

Table 2 shows teachers' perceptions about the use of language skills integrative assessment in EFL classes. From this table, the mean values of item 10 (4.45) and item 11 (4.09) reveal that the respondents agreed with the claim: *"I understand that I am responsible for administering and scoring integrative skill assessments that provide opportunities for students to create real situations, and I know that, as an English as a foreign language teacher, I can assess students' language skills in integrative ways— individually, in pairs, or in groups,"* respectively. As indicated in item 12 of Table 2, the majority of respondents—20 (90%)— replied that they understand English as a foreign language skill integration assessment is a difficult task for the teacher, but it has a positive effect on students' success.

In addition, in Table 2, items 13 and 14 show that most of the respondents—15 (68%) and 20 (90%), respectively—agreed with the claims: *"I know students' English language skills should be assessed in integrative ways continuously in the classroom,"* and *"I understand that English as a Foreign Language skill integration assessment should have techniques, and students should be aware of them."*

One can conclude that language skills assessment is underpinned by the assumption that there are four macro language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), along with language elements (grammar and vocabulary). These language skills and elements should be integrated in language skills assessment. To this end, item 15 was designed to ask about teachers' perceptions of language skills integration assessment practices in EFL classes. In response to this item, 17 respondents (77%) said that language, consisting of macro skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) and language elements (grammar and vocabulary), could be assessed in an integrated manner. Finally, in the same table, the mean value of the last item, item 16 (3.71 or 77%), indicates that the respondents have full awareness of integrative language skill tasks such as dictation, cloze tests, essay

writing, etc. Generally, as can be observed from Tables 1 to 19 above, the data collected from the teachers show that they had good perceptions of language skills integration assessment assumptions in EFL classes—specifically, regarding ways of integrating language skills in classroom tasks, in summative assessments, and the advantages of integrated language skills assessment.

Table 3 Teachers' Responses Regarding their practices in practicing different forms of Integrative English language Sills in their Assessment

No	Practice	Rating scale										Mean
		5		4		3		2		1		
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	In assessing students' language ability, I give them cloze tests that integrate vocabulary, grammar, and written discourse skills	-	-	1	5	1	5	1	5	19	86	1.27
2	I make my students to practice reading comprehension questions with writing language skills.	1	5	2	10	12	55	3	14	4	18	2.68
3	I get the students to have dictation practices which measures the students' spelling, writing, listening, grammar and over all textual comprehension ability.	1	5	1	5	2	10	2	10	16	73	1.59
4	I give my students chance to write essays in order to evaluate their spelling, punctuation, grammar, and text organization.	1	5	-	-	1	5	18	82	2	10	2.09
5	I adapt tasks and activities from other materials for integrated skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) assessment purposes in the classroom.	-	-	1	5	-	-	2	10	19	86	1.23
6	I often use the activities designed in the students' text book to practice and assess the students' language assessment competencies.	16	73	-	-	1	5	5	23	-	-	4.23
7	I use only summative assessment when I assess my students in EFL classes.	21	95	-	-	1	5	-	-	-	-	4.91

Key: 5= Always 4=often 3= Sometimes 2= Rarely 1= Never

As indicated in Table 3, the mean values of 1.27, 2.68, 1.59, 2.09, and 1.23 for items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively reveal that teachers rarely practice cloze tests, reading comprehension, dictation, essay writing, and adapting integrative assessment tasks. This means that teachers face challenges in using cloze tests, reading comprehension, dictation, and essay writing, as well as in adapting integrative assessment tasks to assess language skills in an integrated manner. As shown in the above table, 19 respondents (86%) indicated that teachers never give cloze tests to students to assess their general linguistic ability. The responses to item 2, on the other hand, show that 55% of the respondents reported that teachers sometimes make students practice reading comprehension questions. Despite its importance, passage comprehension is not sufficiently practiced in EFL classes. Furthermore, the responses obtained in item 3 revealed that the majority of respondents (73%) stated there is poor implementation of dictation.

Moreover, the data illustrate that there is a serious problem in the practice of essay writing. As indicated in the table above, the mean value for item 4 (2.09) shows that teachers acknowledged essay writing is rarely practiced. In item 5, 16 respondents (73%) confirmed that they always use students' textbooks when designing language assessment items and activities to evaluate students' integrated language skills. However, item 6 shows that 86% of the respondents reported teachers never adapt tasks and activities from other materials for integrated skills assessment. Finally, in item 7, almost all respondents 21 (95%) reported that they always use only summative assessment when evaluating their students in EFL classes. From the above data analysis, it is possible to conclude that EFL teachers hardly implement various forms of integrative language assessment. Although teachers sometimes have students practice passage comprehension, they rarely use cloze tests, dictation, or essay writing. These types of assessments are essential for the effective implementation of integrative classroom assessment practices concerning language skills. However, EFL teachers do not design such integrative language assessments in English language classrooms. In contrast to

this, Oller (1979) stated that integrative language assessment forms evaluate learners' capacity to use multiple language skills simultaneously.

Table 4 Teachers' Practices of Skill Integration Assessment Techniques in EFL Classes.

No	Practice	Rating Scale										Mean
		5		4		3		2		1		
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
8	1 give tasks used to assess students Language skills in integrative manner in EFL classroom.	1	5	-	-	1	5	2	10	18	82	2.09
9	I construct an integration skill assessment task that provides opportunity for students to create authentic learning.	1	5	1	5	1	5	18	82	1	5	2.23
10	I show the students how language skills are integrated by using some techniques.	1	5	2	10	3	14	2	10	14	64	1.82
11	I assess students' language skill integration individually, in pair, or in group work.	1	5	1	5	1	5	15	68	4	18	2.09

Key: 5= Always 4=often 3= Sometimes 2= Rarely 1= Never

Table 4 shows teachers' practice of skill integration assessment techniques in EFL classes. As indicated in this table, the mean values of 2.09, 2.23, 1.82, and 2.09 for items 8, 9, 10, and 11 respectively show that the respondents rarely practice constructing and administering integrative skill assessment tasks using various techniques, as well as rarely assessing students' language skill integration individually, in pairs, or in group work. As indicated in item 8, the majority of respondents 18 (82%) replied that they never give tasks designed to assess students' language skills in an integrative manner in the EFL classroom. In item 9, most respondents 18 (82%) reported that they rarely construct an integrative skill assessment task that provides opportunities for students to engage in authentic learning. In addition, the mean value of item 10 (1.82) indicates that the respondents never show students how language skills are integrated using specific techniques. Finally, the mean value of 2.09 for item 11 shows that respondents reported they rarely assess students' language skill integration individually, in pairs, or in groups. This implies that teachers are not effectively practicing the construction of skill integration tasks, are not demonstrating to students how language skills are integrated using techniques, and are unable to assess students' language skill integration individually, in pairs, or in group work.

Table 5: Teachers' Response about students' attitude towards Skill Integration in Classroom assessment Practices.

No	Practice	Rating scale										Mean
		5		4		3		2		1		
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	In my English class, students have positive attitude toward the assessment of listening skill integrated with vocabulary.	-	-	1	5	3	14	16	73	2	10	2.14
2	In my English class, students have positive attitude toward the assessment of speaking skill integrated with other skills.	1	5	2	10	1	5	17	77	1	5	2.32
3	In my English class, students have positive attitude toward the assessment of reading skills with vocabulary and writing at the same time.	3	14	1	5	2	10	16	73	-	-	2.59
4	In my English class, students have positive attitude toward the assessment of writing skill integrated with grammar and vocabulary.	-	-	4	18	1	5	17	77	-	-	2.41

5	In my English class, the students are not interested in taking listening assessment integrated with writing.	2	10	18	82	1	5	1	5	-	-	4.09
6	In my English class, the students have lack of interest in taking speaking assessment with reading at the same time.	3	14	18	82	1	5	-	-	-	-	4.09
7	In my English class, the students have lack of interest in taking writing assessment with grammar and vocabulary at the same time.	1	5	15	68	2	10	2	10	2	10	3.50
8	In my English class, the students have lack of interest in taking writing assessment with grammar and vocabulary at the same time.	2	10	15	68	1	5	2	10	2	10	3.59

Key: 5 = strongly agree 4 = Agree 3=undecided 2 = Disagree 1=strongly disagree

The responses in Table 5 illustrate the challenges related to learners that hinder the proper implementation of integrative classroom assessment in EFL classes. As can be observed in Table 7, the mean values of items 1, 2, 3, and 4 are 2.14, 2.32, 2.59, and 2.41, respectively. This indicates that students have negative attitudes toward integrative skill assessment. Furthermore, in items 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the same table, a large number of respondents indicated that learners face difficulties in taking integrated language skills assessments. It can be concluded that items 1, 2, 3, and 4 show learners do not have a positive attitude toward the assessment of language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar) when integrated. In each of these items, a large number of respondents (71% and above) disagreed with the idea that students have a positive attitude toward integrated language skills assessment. This clearly indicates a significant problem regarding the assessment of integrated language skills in EFL classes from the learners' side.

Moreover, the mean values for items 5 (4.09), 6 (4.09), 7 (3.50), and 8 (3.59) in Table 7 reveal that respondents agreed students are not interested in taking assessments that integrate listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary in EFL classes. It is shown that students have low interest in taking integrative language skills assessments, which in turn leads EFL teachers to give less attention to this assessment approach. Students are also not interested in engaging with assessment tasks that evaluate language skills in an integrated manner. In addition, students' attitudes toward learning different language areas strongly influence EFL teachers' assessment practices. If students are not interested in learning integrated language skills, teachers may shift their focus to areas that interest the learners instead. Generally, the analysis indicates that poor student attitudes toward language skills assessment and a lack of interest in integrative tasks are major challenges that hinder the implementation of integrated classroom assessment in EFL classes. Regarding this issue, Heaton (1998) and Brown (1994), cited in Alemayehu (2008), stated that learner-related factors such as lack of motivation and lack of language proficiency may hinder the application of integrated language assessment and instruction.

6.2 Analysis of Classroom Observational Data
The classroom observation checklist contained five items focused mainly on English language teachers' assessment practices in an integrated manner, as well as the factors affecting the integration of language skills. This tool was designed to address two specific research objectives or questions in the study. With regard to formative assessment (assessment for learning), it was observed that teachers did not apply a continuous classroom assessment process. During classroom observations, the researcher found that the majority of teachers placed more emphasis on discrete-point assessments, such as language structure (grammar) tests. English language teachers were not seen using a variety of tools to assess integrated language skills. Instead, they typically relied on oral question-and-answer participation with their students. The observed teachers generally taught one skill at a time and did not incorporate activities like dictation or cloze tests.

During class observations, the researcher also noted that English teachers did not encourage student participation through diverse activities, beyond the usual classwork in groups. Most of the time, teachers used only the activities found in the students' textbooks to practice and assess language competence. It was evident that they rarely adapted integrative language tasks from other materials. Teachers relied heavily on the students' textbook and were seldom observed organizing students into different groups or encouraging them to express their ideas or perform at their best. Similarly, in all the observed lessons, teachers did not mention that students could practice or learn integrated language skills as part of the daily lesson. Many teachers also failed to follow clear instructional procedures or steps that would enable students to assess integrated language skills effectively. This suggests that teachers rarely plan, implement, or evaluate lessons that reflect integrated skills assessment when teaching language. For example, regarding vocabulary and grammar instruction, the researcher observed the following: One teacher (T4)

was teaching vocabulary on "Compound Words" in a Grade 10 class, following two lessons in the Students' Book. However, the vocabulary exercises were not consciously integrated with speaking or other macro skills. The tasks remained at the sentence level, and students were not seen using the new vocabulary in meaningful speaking, writing, reading, or listening tasks. Two other teachers (T2 and T6) were observed teaching grammar. T2 was teaching "The Present Simple Tense," and T6 was teaching "Improbable and Impossible Conditionals." T2 focused on forms and uses of the tense, without integrating other skills. Similarly, T6 explained the conditional structures using sentence-level examples, but did not integrate grammar with listening, speaking, or writing tasks. Other skills were taught in a similarly isolated fashion, without deliberate integration of the English language skills.

As a result, students were not seen using grammar at the discourse level in listening, speaking, reading, or writing tasks. Many ELT scholars, including Brown (1994), Heaton (1988), and Spolsky (1989), emphasize the interrelated nature of language teaching and language testing. This implies that integrated-skills teaching necessitates integrative tests that assess learners' performance across two or more language skills simultaneously. In addition, classroom observations revealed that many students did not participate actively in class activities. Teacher-dominated lesson delivery negatively impacted students' motivation to ask questions or engage in discussions. This is largely because teachers were not effectively fulfilling their classroom management roles as advisors, monitors, organizers, or facilitators during assessments. The classroom observation results also confirmed that teachers rarely used diverse instructional materials or equipment when assessing integrated language skills. Across all observations, none of the teachers used authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, films, flashcards, audio cassettes, or DVDs relying solely on the textbook.

Therefore, it can be concluded that if teachers were to incorporate varied instructional materials and tools, the practice of integrated language skills assessment could become more meaningful and effective. In large classrooms, however, teachers struggle to assess students' language proficiency through integrative assessments. Administering and developing integrative assessment tasks in such settings is challenging. The researcher also observed that there was insufficient time allocated for implementing integrative classroom assessment in EFL classes.

6.3 Analysis of Teachers' Responses for Interview Questions

The third instrument used in this study was an interview. Most of the interview items were similar to those in the questionnaire. The results of the interviews conducted with selected teachers, which are related to EFL teachers' perceptions and practices of skill integration in classroom assessment, are presented below.

In this section, the analysis and findings of the data collected from four EFL teachers through interviews are presented. For analysis purposes, the interviewed teachers were coded from T1 to T4. The interview data were analyzed under four sections (See Appendix C). The first part concerns English language teachers' perception of integrated classroom assessment; the second part focuses on teachers' classroom assessment development experiences; the third part addresses the focus areas and techniques of integrated English language classroom assessment; the fourth section discusses the challenges faced in practicing integrative language assessment; and the final section is about improving integrated assessment forms in EFL classes. Another interview item was designed to elicit information from teachers on whether they assign various project works that require learners to collect, organize, analyze, and present information to practice two or more language skills simultaneously. When asked the extent to which they assign such tasks, teachers responded that they usually use project work involving simple language structures. However, they acknowledged that these are not used as techniques to help students practice integrated language skills.

In addition, teachers were asked: "To what extent do you plan lessons that integrate language skills, implement them, and evaluate their effectiveness?" All four teachers responded that they do not deliberately plan lessons that integrate language skills in their assessment methods. This suggests that while they assign work on simple language structures, they do not intentionally use these assignments to promote integrated skills practice.

Challenges in the Practice of Integrative Language Skills Assessment

In this part, the data obtained from interviewees about the challenges faced in the practice of integrated skills assessment in EFL classes were analysed. T1 stated that students are generally uninterested in practicing integrated skills assessments. According to T1, the challenges stem from students' lack of interest and background knowledge in skill integration. T2, on the other hand, identified several challenges: large class sizes, lack of student interest, and insufficient school resources for practicing integrated skills assessments. Moreover, T3 and T4 highlighted a lack of teacher interest, stating, "We teachers, first of all, have no interest to practice integrative language assessments." They also pointed to students' limited language ability as another obstacle.

In addition to the challenges mentioned by T1 and T2, other issues included a lack of in-service training, insufficient authentic materials, and time constraints—all of which were seen as hindrances related to school administration. In general, the interviewed teachers confirmed that the main challenges to integrating language skill assessment were lack of student and teacher interest, lack of background knowledge, inadequate training and materials, large class sizes, and time limitations.

6.4 Document Analysis

Mid and final exams, quizzes, and assignments are the main sources teachers use to assess students in the teaching and learning process. The purpose of including document analysis in this study was to determine whether the documents allowed for effective assessment of English language skills in an integrated manner. Krippendorff (1980) notes that document analysis is a research method used to make valid inferences from existing data in context, offering insights, representative facts, and guidance for action. In contexts like Ethiopia, where exams such as midterms and finals can determine assessment practices, the researcher analyzed quizzes, assignments, and mid and final exams prepared in 2013 E.C. to assess the integration of language skills in EFL classes. A sample quiz from Amanuel Secondary School and an assignment from Shellel Secondary School were selected using available sampling. Two midterm exams were randomly selected from Amanuel and Degsegn high schools, and two final exams were analyzed from Girakidamin and Shellel high schools.

Analysis of Quiz and Assignment

Most secondary school teachers do not regularly prepare quizzes, though it is a criterion in continuous assessment. A few teachers implement quizzes to assess students without fully understanding their purpose. Additionally, teachers frequently assign individual or group assignments to evaluate student performance. To obtain valid and reliable data on EFL skill integration assessment, one sample quiz and one assignment were analyzed. The first analyzed summative assessment was a quiz prepared for Grade 10 students at Amanuel Secondary School. It consisted of two parts: three grammar-based multiple-choice questions and two vocabulary questions asking for antonyms without real context (See Appendix F1). The second analyzed assessment was an assignment from Shellel Secondary School, which involved explaining grammar forms, uses, comparisons, and examples— again, without skill integration (See Appendix F2). These findings suggest that teachers do not design quizzes and assignments with integrated language skills in mind, focusing instead on isolated language structures. Teachers should develop assessments that integrate language skills to foster authentic communication.

Analysis of Mid and Final Exam Samples

Regarding the assessment of integrated language skills, two English midterm exams were analyzed. The first was a second-semester Grade 10 exam from Degsegn Secondary School. It contained two parts: ten grammar-focused multiple-choice questions and a vocabulary-matching section. No skill integration was evident (See Appendix F3). The second was a first-semester Grade 9 exam from Amanuel High School. It included 12 grammar-based multiple-choice questions and three short-answer questions requiring sentence correction using punctuation and capitalization again, without integrated skill use (See Appendix F4). These exams focused exclusively on grammar and vocabulary, employing discrete-point tests that do not promote integrated skills or communicative competence. Oller (1983) argues that while discrete-point tests isolate language knowledge, integrative tests assess a learner's ability to use various language components simultaneously. This finding aligns with Heaton (1988), who notes that discrete-point testing may negatively impact the assessment of integrated skills.

The second part of the document analysis focused on 2013 E.C. first-semester final exams for Grades 9 and 10 from Girakidamin and Shellel High Schools. The Grade 9 exam from Girakidamin included four sections: vocabulary matching, grammar-focused multiple-choice questions, verb conjugation exercises, and sentence transformation. Again, no skill integration was evident. The Grade 10 final exam from Shellel High School contained 32 questions across three sections: vocabulary matching, grammar-based multiple-choice questions, and fill-in-the-blank grammar exercises (See Appendix F4). These exams, like the others, focused on discrete items, assessing grammar and vocabulary only, and ignoring skills like reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Overall, all exam questions focused on grammar and vocabulary without integrating other language skills. According to Oller (1979), while discrete-point tests isolate linguistic elements, integrative tests assess the simultaneous use of multiple components and skills. This aligns with Heaton (1988), who noted the potential negative washback of discrete-point tests on integrated assessment practices.

In support of this, 82% of teacher questionnaire respondents admitted to using segregated language assessments, with more than half acknowledging a focus on grammar over comprehensive skill assessment. As a result, teachers did not emphasize the integrated assessment of language skills in summative evaluations. This suggests that mid and final exams do not encourage the integration of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Additionally, classroom observations confirmed that none of the teachers were observed consciously integrating vocabulary and grammar instruction with macro skills.

Therefore, teachers should design quizzes, assignments, and exam questions that integrate language skills to develop learners' communicative competence and pragmatics. This type of assessment emphasizes testing multiple linguistic competencies simultaneously. For example, teachers could give a reading passage and ask questions on grammar, vocabulary, and writing based on the same text. Effective integrated assessment might include cloze tests, dictation, translation, essays, oral interviews, conversations, and extended text tasks.

7. Conclusion

Secondary school English teachers have strong perceptions regarding the integration of language skills in classroom tasks and summative assessments. They also demonstrate a good understanding of the advantages of language skill integration, largely

due to their learning experiences in evaluation and assessment courses during their extensive training programs. However, English language teachers rarely implement skill-integrated assessments for learning purposes (formative assessment) effectively in EFL classes. Instead, they predominantly focus on assessment of learning (summative assessment) without integrating language skills. Continuous classroom assessment with integrated skills is not practiced appropriately. Although teachers hold positive perceptions about integrative classroom language skills assessment, they do not apply this understanding in EFL classes. There are limitations in both designing and implementing integrative language skill assessments, and teachers often fail to evaluate students' language performance across two or more skills simultaneously. Classroom assessment practices tend to be non-integrative and are largely entered on grammar. This indicates that teachers' classroom language assessments are generally based on discrete-point approaches. From this, it can be inferred that discrete-point assessments are frequently used at the expense of integrated skills assessments in classrooms. Integrated language assessment, in contrast, involves a variety of assessment forms such as dictation, essay writing, passage comprehension, cloze tests, and oral interviews that enable the evaluation of multiple language skills simultaneously.

Furthermore, teachers place limited emphasis on teaching language skill integration in the classroom, focusing heavily instead on isolated grammar instruction. This suggests that English teachers' methods of instruction directly influence their approach to integrated language skills assessment. Additionally, English teachers seldom use supplementary printed materials such as newspapers and magazines, or audiovisual resources, to support the practice of integrative assessments in the classroom. Consequently, this has contributed to the lack of success in implementing integrated assessment practices in EFL classrooms. With regard to the challenges hindering the practice of integrated skills assessment, three key sources were identified: students, teachers, and school administration. Student-related challenges include a lack of interest in integrative language assessment, low English language proficiency, and a negative attitude toward assessing the four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teacher-related challenges include a lack of interest and training in developing integrated assessments, insufficient commitment and skills to implement such assessments, limited experience in designing them, and minimal attention to integrated skills instruction.

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