

## PERCEIVED FAIRNESS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT: INSIGHTS FROM EFL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

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| Article Info                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Abstract                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <b>Article History</b><br>Received: May 2025<br>Revised: August 2025<br>Accepted: September 2025<br>Published: October 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>This paper examines perceptions of fairness in English language assessment from both students' and teachers' perspectives through a descriptive literature review of five recent peer-reviewed studies. The review followed Snyder's (2019) framework for literature reviews, encompassing the design, selection, analysis, and synthesis phases. Studies were selected based on their focus on fairness in the classroom and large-scale assessments, representation of both student and teacher perspectives, and publication within the last five years in reputable journals. The analysis synthesized findings across dimensions of distributive, procedural, and interactional fairness, as well as the influence of cultural and institutional contexts. The review reveals that students often value traditional assessment methods for their perceived learning support, yet express concerns about bias, transparency, and cultural relevance. Teachers, while generally aware of fairness principles, display variations in assessment literacy and implementation depending on training, experience, and organizational structures. The findings underscore the importance of strengthening Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), promoting culturally responsive assessment practices, and fostering Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to bridge gaps between teacher and student perceptions. These insights carry practical implications for teacher education, institutional policy, and the design of fairer and more inclusive English language assessments.</i> |
| <b>Keywords</b><br>Fairness;<br>Language assessment;<br>Teachers' perception;<br>Students' perception;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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### INTRODUCTION

The concept of fairness in educational assessments, particularly in the context of English Language Assessment (ELA), has garnered increasing attention in recent years due to its significant implications on both students and teachers. Fairness in assessment is not merely a technical issue but also an ethical one, impacting educational outcomes and the broader socio-emotional environment of the classroom. The importance of this topic is underscored by its potential to affect students' academic performance, motivation, and overall perception of the educational system (Elnegahy et al., 2022; Rasooli et al., 2021). The rationale for examining fairness in ELA arises from the critical role these assessments play in determining students' academic trajectories and opportunities.

In the global education landscape, English language proficiency assessment is a critical pillar, shaping academic trajectories, career opportunities, and societal integration for millions of individuals worldwide. As English continues to assert its dominance as the lingua franca of academia, business, and international communication, the accuracy and fairness of English language assessment become increasingly paramount. However, beneath the surface of

standardized tests and proficiency benchmarks lies a complex web of perceptions, biases, and inequities that can profoundly impact the educational experiences and outcomes of students and educators' teaching practices (Rezai, 2022). English language assessments are often high-stakes, influencing decisions related to student progression, placement, and even citizenship in some contexts (McNamara & Ryan, 2011). Given this high impact, it is essential to ensure that these assessments are perceived as fair by all stakeholders, including students and teachers. Research indicates that perceptions of fairness can be influenced by various factors, including emotional states and contextual elements, which underscores the complexity of achieving true fairness in assessment (Butucescu & Iliescu, 2022; Rasooli et al., 2023).

Fairness in English language assessment is not merely an academic abstraction but a pressing concern with tangible implications for individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Whether it be students striving to demonstrate their language skills for educational advancement or teachers endeavoring to accurately evaluate and support their students' language development, the concept of fairness permeates every facet of the assessment process (Tofighi & Safa, 2023). Consequently, understanding and addressing the factors contributing to perceptions of fairness in English language assessment is essential and urgent in fostering inclusive, equitable, and effective educational practices.

Furthermore, the perception of fairness in English language assessment is intricately linked to the authenticity and relevance of assessment tasks and materials. Assessments that fail to reflect real-life language use and meaningful communicative contexts may be perceived as artificial and disconnected from students' language learning experiences. This disconnect can undermine the motivation, engagement, and confidence of test-takers, leading to skewed assessment results and missed opportunities for genuine language development. Additionally, the clarity and transparency of assessment instructions and criteria are pivotal in shaping perceptions of fairness among students and teachers (Rasooli et al., 2023). Ambiguous or poorly communicated instructions can create confusion and anxiety, hindering students' ability to perform to the best of their abilities. Similarly, inconsistent or subjective grading practices can undermine the credibility and reliability of assessment results, eroding trust in the assessment process and its outcomes.

Moreover, the power dynamics inherent in the assessment relationship between students and teachers warrant careful examination. Teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and biases regarding language learning and proficiency can influence their perceptions of students' abilities and performance, potentially leading to disparities in assessment practices and outcomes (Tofighi & Safa, 2023). Additionally, students' perceptions of teachers' fairness and impartiality in assessment can significantly impact their motivation, engagement, and self-efficacy in learning English (Wallace & Qin, 2021).

Fairness in English language assessment is both pertinent and multifaceted, given the challenges and complexities involved. While past studies have explored fairness from either the student or teacher perspective, this review synthesizes both viewpoints, emphasizing the role of cultural, institutional, and professional development factors in shaping fairness perceptions. Additionally, it provides practical insights into using Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) and organizational structures to promote equity, broadening the discourse from technical validity to justice and inclusivity. Accordingly, this paper is guided by the following research question: How do students and teachers perceive fairness in English language assessment, and what implications do these perceptions hold for developing fairer and more inclusive assessment practices?

Theoretically, this study enriches the growing body of research on fairness in language assessment by integrating distributive, procedural, and interactional dimensions within a dual-perspective framework. This synthesis contributes to a more holistic conceptual understanding of fairness, bridging the gap between student experiences and teacher practices. Practically, the

findings inform teacher education, institutional policy, and classroom practice by underscoring the need to strengthen LAL, design culturally responsive assessments, and build supportive structures such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These insights can guide educators, test designers, and policymakers in creating assessment systems that are both equitable and conducive to meaningful learning.

### **Literature Review**

The perception of fairness is subjective and can be influenced by various factors, including cultural background, socioeconomic status, and educational experiences. Two studies have explored students' perceptions of fairness in English language assessment, highlighting concerns regarding test content, scoring criteria, and testing conditions. Wallace & Qin (2021) investigated students' perceptions of language classroom assessment fairness. The research examined how second language learners perceive fairness in a classroom language test and whether these perceptions influence their judgments about the fairness of their language program. The fairness of the test was seen as having several dimensions: how well the test scores reflect performance (distributive fairness), how consistently test procedures are applied (procedural fairness), and how respectful the communication is between students and teachers during the test (interactional fairness). 192 Chinese students studying English as a foreign language at a university in Macau participated by completing an online questionnaire after a single test. They generally felt that the test administration was fair regarding procedures and interaction, but they were neutral regarding whether the scores accurately represented their performance. Analysis showed that students' judgments about the fairness of their language program were influenced by how respectfully teachers communicated during the test (interactional fairness) and how accurately their scores reflected their performance (distributive fairness).

Another study by Yuniarti & Limbong (2022) investigated EFL students' perceptions of fairness in classroom assessment. Employing a descriptive approach, the research utilized purposive sampling to involve 75 EFL students from three distinct types of institutions: a religious university, education company-sponsored programs, and an open university. Data on students' perceptions of fairness in classroom assessment were gathered through questionnaires and interviews while classroom assessment processes were observed. The findings revealed diverse perceptions among students regarding assessment practices. A majority expressed dissatisfaction with these practices, feeling they were biased against certain participants and lacked relevance, particularly concerning socio-economic status. Furthermore, it was emphasized that the interpretation of teaching assessments should adhere to established standards of measurement and evaluation, taking into account students' socio-economic backgrounds. The paper's concluding section suggests implications for issues in second language acquisition, as it delves into various facets of first language acquisition and students' diverse backgrounds.

Meanwhile, teachers' perceptions also play a significant role in shaping assessment practices and student experiences. Studies have shown that teachers' beliefs about assessment fairness can impact their instructional strategies and how they interpret assessment results. Moreover, teachers' awareness of potential biases in assessment can lead to more inclusive and equitable practices in the classroom.

The fairness of English language assessment from teachers's perspective was carried out by Tofighi & Safa (2023). The researchers focused on developing and validating a Classroom Assessment Fairness Scale (CAFS), drawing on relevant literature and employing a critical incident technique. It underwent expert review and modifications to establish the scale's validity and reliability, followed by pilot testing with a group of 250 teachers. Subsequently, the collected data underwent exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses as well as measures of internal consistency. The validated scale was then administered to 120 Iranian EFL teachers.

Descriptive analyses revealed that these teachers were acquainted with fairness principles in classroom assessment practices. They recognized the importance of factors such as the opportunity to learn, the opportunity to demonstrate learning, the no-harm principle, fostering a constructive classroom environment, and transparency as integral elements of fairness in classroom assessment practices. However, the same level of familiarity and awareness was not observed for score pollution. Additionally, the results indicated that teachers' gender, educational background, teaching experience, and teaching context significantly influenced their attitudes toward fairness in classroom assessment.

Given the increased emphasis on equity in contemporary schools and the pivotal role of assessment in addressing educational equity, scholars have recently delved into empirically examining teachers' perceptions of fairness in classroom assessment. Rasooli et al., (2023) They added to this burgeoning body of literature by utilizing interview data from 27 experienced high school teachers to gain deeper insights into the factors shaping their notions of fairness. The findings revealed that teachers' conceptions of fairness in classroom assessment are shaped by three main themes: (a) individual mechanisms, (b) social mechanisms, and (c) the dynamic interplay between individual and social mechanisms. These themes highlight how teachers' philosophies and experiences intersect with the broader social contexts of society, schools, and classrooms, influencing their perceptions and practices of fairness in classroom assessments. These findings stimulate discussions regarding the integration of fairness education into both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs.

While there has been growing attention to fairness in assessment practices recently, there has been a lack of a comprehensive questionnaire designed and validated to measure it from a psychometric standpoint. Therefore, Rezai (2022) seeks to develop and validate a questionnaire with strong psychometric properties for assessing fairness in classroom assessment. Utilizing random sampling, two groups of male and female university students were selected for the initial pilot ( $n = 128$ ) and the subsequent pilot ( $n = 360$ ) from Ayatollah Borujerdi University and Lorestan University. Based on existing literature, a set of items ( $n = 118$ ) was identified and underwent a rigorous 12-step systematic procedure, which included content analysis, sampling, item bank creation, initial pilot testing, formation of item pool one, expert evaluation of sub-scales, interviews, and think-aloud protocols, assessment of internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha, second pilot testing, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, further Cronbach's alpha assessment, creation of item pool two, expert review, and translation with quality assurance. The outcome of this process was a 110-item questionnaire encompassing ten subscales: learning materials and practices (18 items), test design (24 items), opportunities to demonstrate learning (8 items), test administration (21 items), grading (11 items), provision of feedback (6 items), interpretation of test results (5 items), decisions based on test results (3 items), consequences of test results (4 items), and students' beliefs and attitudes related to fairness (10 items).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive literature review design, which is appropriate for synthesizing insights from existing studies and identifying emerging patterns in the field (Snyder, 2019). The review process followed four phases: (1) designing the review, (2) conducting the search, (3) analyzing and synthesizing findings, and (4) writing up the review.

The review focused on peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2019 and 2023 that explicitly examined fairness in English language assessment from either students' or teachers' perspectives. Only studies written in English and published in reputable, indexed journals (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science, or equivalent) were included. Conference proceedings, book chapters, and opinion papers were excluded to ensure the credibility of the data. The literature search was conducted across several databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar, using keywords such as *fairness in language assessment*, *English*

*language assessment fairness, students' perceptions of assessment fairness, and teachers' perceptions of assessment fairness.*

From an initial pool of 45 studies, five articles were purposively selected as the core focus of this review. These five were chosen because they represent diverse cultural and institutional contexts, provide balanced insights from both students and teachers, and employ rigorous empirical methods such as validated questionnaires, interviews, and large-scale surveys. The five studies were prioritized because they (1) directly addressed the multidimensional nature of fairness (distributive, procedural, and interactional), (2) provided empirical data from distinct educational settings, and (3) offered transferable implications for assessment design and teacher training. Together, they provide a representative picture of current debates and practices regarding fairness in English language assessment.

Data extracted from the selected studies consisted of reported findings on perceptions of fairness, factors influencing these perceptions, and implications for practice. The findings were synthesized thematically, guided by fairness dimensions (e.g., validity, reliability, bias, accessibility) and by stakeholder perspective (student vs. teacher). Comparative synthesis was then employed to highlight convergences and divergences across contexts, enabling a more nuanced understanding of fairness in assessment.

Table 1  
Summary of Reviewed Studies on Fairness in English Language Assessment

| Author(s) & Year          | Context / Participants                           | Focus of Study                                                | Method / Data Source                              | Key Findings on Fairness                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wallace & Qin (2021)      | 192 Chinese university EFL students (Macau)      | Students' perceptions of classroom test fairness              | Online questionnaire                              | Students perceived procedural and interactional fairness positively but were neutral on distributive fairness (accuracy of scores).             |
| Yuniarti & Limbong (2022) | 75 EFL students from 3 institutions in Indonesia | Fairness in classroom assessment from student perspective     | Questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation | Many students perceived bias and irrelevance, especially linked to socio-economic status. Standards and contextual sensitivity needed.          |
| Tofighi & Safa (2023)     | 120 Iranian EFL teachers                         | Development of Classroom Assessment Fairness Scale (CAFS)     | Scale development, surveys                        | Teachers valued fairness factors (transparency, opportunity to learn, constructive environment) but showed less awareness of score pollution.   |
| Rasooli et al. (2023)     | 27 high school teachers (Iran)                   | Teachers' conceptions of fairness in classroom assessment     | Semi-structured interviews                        | Fairness shaped by individual beliefs, social context, and interplay between both; highlighted need for fairness education in teacher training. |
| Rezai (2022)              | 488 university students (Iran)                   | Development of fairness in classroom assessment questionnaire | Psychometric validation (pilot testing, CFA, EFA) | Produced a validated 110-item questionnaire across 10 fairness subscales, providing a comprehensive tool for assessing fairness perceptions.    |

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

This review synthesized five core studies on fairness in English language assessment, focusing on both student and teacher perspectives (see Table 1). The findings reveal three major

thematic clusters: students' perceptions, teachers' perceptions, and comparative insights across contexts.

From the student perspective, two studies (Wallace & Qin, 2021; Yuniarti & Limbong, 2022) show that learners view fairness as a multidimensional construct involving distributive, procedural, and interactional elements. Wallace & Qin (2021) found that students generally perceived procedural fairness—such as consistency in test administration—and interactional fairness—respectful teacher–student communication—positively. However, they were more neutral when judging distributive fairness, or the accuracy of test scores in representing performance. Meanwhile, Yuniarti and Limbong (2022) revealed that students' fairness perceptions were strongly shaped by contextual factors, particularly socio-economic status and institutional setting. Many students reported dissatisfaction with classroom assessments, perceiving them as biased or irrelevant, which underscores the importance of cultural and social sensitivity in assessment practices. Overall, these findings suggest that for students, fairness is experienced both as a technical issue of accuracy and as a social issue linked to equity and inclusivity.

From the teacher perspective, three studies (Rasooli et al., 2023; Rezai, 2022; Tofighi & Safa, 2023) highlighted how fairness is shaped by professional competence, assessment literacy, and institutional context. Tofighi and Safa (2023) developed and validated a Classroom Assessment Fairness Scale (CAFS) and found that teachers valued principles such as transparency, opportunities to learn, and constructive classroom environments, though they were less familiar with technical issues like score pollution. Rasooli et al. (2023) further demonstrated that teachers' fairness conceptions were influenced by individual mechanisms (beliefs, experiences, philosophies), social mechanisms (societal norms and institutional expectations), and the interplay between both. Complementing these perspectives, Rezai (2022) developed a comprehensive questionnaire that identified ten subscales of fairness in classroom assessment, including test design, grading, feedback, and consequences of assessment decisions. Together, these studies show that teachers' perceptions of fairness are shaped not only by their assessment literacy but also by the organizational and cultural structures in which they work.

When compared, the perspectives of students and teachers reveal both convergences and divergences. Both groups emphasized the importance of transparency, respect, and procedural consistency as essential components of fair assessment. However, while students tended to foreground issues of bias and socio-economic inequity, teachers focused more on their own professional competence, institutional structures, and the development of assessment literacy. Cross-cultural differences also emerged across the studies, with fairness perceptions influenced by educational traditions and societal expectations, particularly in exam-oriented systems in Asian contexts such as China, Iran, and Indonesia. These findings indicate that fairness in assessment cannot be understood in isolation from its cultural and institutional contexts. Bridging these differences requires strengthening Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), implementing culturally responsive assessment practices, and fostering Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that encourage dialogue between teachers and students.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this review demonstrate that fairness in English language assessment is a multidimensional construct shaped by the perceptions of both students and teachers, as well as by broader cultural and institutional contexts. By organizing the discussion around three thematic clusters—students' perspectives, teachers' perspectives, and comparative insights—this section connects the results to broader theoretical debates and highlights practical implications for assessment design, teacher education, and educational policy.

Fairness in English language assessment is essential, especially in today's globalized world, where English proficiency is often a prerequisite for academic and professional success.

However, ensuring fairness in these assessments is not straightforward, as it involves considering various factors such as cultural background, socioeconomic status, and linguistic diversity. In this article, we will delve into the perceptions of both students and teachers regarding fairness in English language assessment, exploring the challenges and opportunities for improvement in this crucial area.

Fairness in English language assessment encompasses several dimensions: validity, reliability, bias, and accessibility. Validity refers to the extent to which a test accurately measures what it intends to measure. At the same time, reliability pertains to the consistency of test results over time and across different administrations. Bias refers to any systematic error that disadvantages certain groups of test-takers, while accessibility concerns the ease with which individuals can access and complete the assessment.

### **EFL Students' Perceptions of Fairness**

Students' perceptions of fairness in English language assessment vary widely depending on their experiences and backgrounds. For many students, particularly those from non-native English-speaking backgrounds or marginalized communities, concerns about bias and accessibility are paramount. They may feel that the assessment does not accurately reflect their linguistic abilities or that they are at a disadvantage compared to their peers from more privileged backgrounds. (Wallace & Qin, 2021; Yuniarti et al., 2022).

Moreover, students may perceive specific test formats or content as unfair, especially if unfamiliar with the cultural references or contexts embedded within the assessment. For example, a listening comprehension task that relies heavily on accents or dialects unfamiliar to the test-takers may be perceived as unfair. Similarly, writing prompts that assume a certain level of cultural knowledge or experience may alienate students who do not share those experiences. The concept of fairness in English language assessment is multifaceted, particularly when considering students' perceptions. Their experiences and language backgrounds deeply influence these perceptions. Research indicates that fairness in educational assessment is not merely a technical concern but fundamentally a sociocultural issue. (Stobart, 2005). This implies that fair assessment practices must account for students' diverse cultural and educational contexts.

In multicultural societies, fairness extends beyond the technical quality of tests to include the recognition of different student experiences and cultural diversity. (Stobart, 2005). This recognition is crucial because students from varied backgrounds may interpret and respond to assessment tasks differently based on their prior knowledge, cultural context, and language proficiency. Consequently, an assessment system that aims to be fair must accommodate these differences to provide equitable opportunities for all students. One approach to evaluating fairness in language assessments is through score equity assessment (SEA), which examines whether test scores are influenced by test-taker background characteristics such as gender, age, educational background, language exposure, and previous experience with the assessment. (Elnegahy et al., 2022). Research using SEA has shown that the statistical and psychometric methods employed in producing test scores should not disproportionately affect any subgroup, thereby supporting the comparability and validity of test scores across diverse groups of test-takers (Ashktorab et al., 2023).

Moreover, fairness in language assessment can be compromised if the difficulty levels of different test forms are not equated. Equating test scores ensures that students taking different versions of a test are assessed on a comparable scale, which is essential for maintaining test fairness. (Yoo et al., 2019). Without such equating, students' perceptions of fairness may be negatively impacted, mainly if they believe that their performance is judged against inconsistent standards. Additionally, the concept of fairness is closely linked with justice. While fairness refers to the technical quality of the test, justice encompasses its values and social implications. (McNamara & Ryan, 2011). For instance, in the context of the Australian

citizenship test, the distinction between fairness and justice becomes evident. While the test may be technically fair, its social and political implications raise questions about justice, particularly concerning cultural diversity and inclusivity (McNamara & Ryan, 2011).

Students' perceptions of fairness are also influenced by their personal experiences and how they relate to the test content. For example, machine learning practitioners evaluating text classification models have found that fairness assessments often involve considering both individual and group fairness, taking into account personal experiences and identity factors. (Ashktorab et al., 2023). This perspective can be applied to language assessment, where students' individual experiences and identities play a significant role in how they perceive the assessment's fairness.

### **EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Fairness**

Teachers also play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of fairness in English language assessment. They are often responsible for preparing students for these assessments and may have firsthand experience with their students' challenges. Teachers may perceive certain assessment practices or policies as unfair if they disproportionately disadvantage certain groups of students or fail to measure the full range of linguistic abilities adequately.

Furthermore, teachers may be concerned about the impact of high-stakes English language assessments on their teaching practices. They may feel pressure to prioritize test preparation over meaningful language learning experiences, leading to a narrowing of the curriculum and a focus on test-taking strategies rather than language proficiency development (Tofighi & Safa, 2023; Rasooli et al., 2023). This can exacerbate inequalities and undermine the overall fairness of the assessment process. Understanding teachers' perceptions of fairness in English language assessment requires an analysis of their roles, experiences, and the dynamics of various assessment methods. Multiple factors, including the mechanisms of assessment, the organizational structure of educational institutions, and the social and cultural context of learners, influence teachers' perceptions.

### **Teachers' Role in Assessment**

Teachers play a pivotal role in the assessment process, not only as evaluators but also as facilitators of learning. In the context of Teacher-Student Collaborative Assessment (TSCA), teachers are actively involved in guiding students through self-assessment and peer-assessment processes. This approach allows teachers to balance different modes of assessment, creating a more comprehensive evaluation system (Ishihara, 2012). Teachers' involvement in this collaborative process can enhance their perception of fairness, as it distributes the responsibility of assessment and makes the process more transparent.

Teachers play a pivotal role in the assessment process, especially within the context of English Language Assessment. Their roles can be understood through several key aspects: assessment literacy, perception of assessment practices, and cultural influences. Teachers' assessment literacy, often referred to as Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), is a crucial component of their professional expertise (Kremmel & Harding, 2020). LAL encompasses the knowledge and skills required to design, implement, and interpret assessments effectively. According to recent studies, LAL is both a generic and discipline-specific construct, requiring teachers to amalgamate general assessment principles with language-specific requirements. (Su, 2019; Nimehchisalem et al., 2019). Teachers' ability to effectively apply their LAL in classroom settings can significantly influence their perceptions of fairness. A study that analyzed assessment artifacts created by teachers demonstrated that while generic assessment features were partially employed, the application of language-specific components was less consistent. This highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of both general and language-specific assessment principles (Su, 2019).



Teachers' perceptions of assessment practices are shaped by their understanding of what constitutes fair and effective assessment. Research has shown that teachers often view assessment primarily as a means of measuring student performance through tests and scores. However, there is a growing recognition of the need for formative assessment practices that support learning rather than merely evaluating it (Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2020; Weng & Shen, 2022; Vogt et al., 2020). For instance, a needs analysis survey conducted across four European countries revealed that both learners and teachers favored traditional assessment methods, such as discrete-point tests and extended writing. However, feedback practices were often limited to marks and brief comments, indicating a gap between the potential benefits of formative assessment and its practical application. (Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2020).

Teachers' social and cultural backgrounds also play a significant role in shaping their assessment practices and perceptions of fairness. A study comparing native English-speaking teachers and native Chinese-speaking teachers in an interpreting classroom found that their assessment behaviors were influenced by their cultural and pedagogical beliefs. Native Chinese-speaking teachers tended to employ more notating, while native English-speaking teachers used post hoc marking more frequently (Weng & Shen, 2022). These differences were attributed to their respective social and cultural backgrounds, including institutional expectations and cultural sensitivity (Benu et al., 2022; Supartini et al., 2024). Such findings underscore the importance of considering cultural factors when examining teachers' roles in assessment.

Moreover, the transition from centralized tests to school-based assessments in countries like Malaysia and Iran highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of assessment practices within specific cultural contexts. Teachers in these settings are more concerned with standards and validity, whereas students may view assessment as a motivator or a source of anxiety, leading to behaviors such as cheating (Vogt et al., 2020). This divergence in perceptions between teachers and students further complicates the pursuit of fairness in assessment.

EFL teachers' roles in English language assessment are multifaceted, involving the application of assessment literacy, the adoption of effective assessment practices, and the consideration of cultural influences. Enhancing teachers' LAL through targeted training and professional development is essential for promoting fair and effective assessment practices. Additionally, acknowledging and addressing the cultural dimensions of assessment can help bridge the gap between teachers' and students' perceptions, ultimately fostering a more equitable assessment environment.

### **Experience with Different Assessment Methods**

Teachers' experiences with various assessment methods significantly shape their perceptions of fairness. For instance, in the assessment of pragmatic competence, reflective writing, rubrics, role-plays, and self/peer assessment have been shown to be effective in eliciting learners' pragmatic skills and fostering a deeper understanding of language use. (Schminke et al., 2000; Kana et al., 2023) Teachers who utilize such diverse methods may perceive the assessment process as fairer because it encompasses multiple dimensions of language proficiency and provides a holistic view of student performance.

In contrast, traditional teacher assessments may sometimes be perceived as less fair due to the potential for bias and the limited scope of evaluation. The study on peer versus teacher assessment highlights that learners often trust teacher feedback more than peer feedback due to issues of trust and psychological safety (Bøhn & Tsagari, 2021). This trust in teacher feedback suggests that teachers' perceptions of fairness are linked to their ability to provide reliable and unbiased evaluations.

### **Impact of Organizational Structure**

The organizational structure of educational institutions also plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' perceptions of fairness. Centralization and organizational size have been found to negatively impact perceptions of procedural and interactional fairness. (Elnegahy et al., 2022). In highly centralized institutions, teachers may feel that their autonomy in the assessment process is restricted, leading to perceptions of unfairness. Conversely, in more decentralized structures, teachers might perceive the assessment process as more equitable, as they have greater control and input.

The impact of organizational structure on teachers' perceptions of fairness in English language assessment is multifaceted, encompassing various dimensions such as training, systemic procedures, and individual mechanisms.

Firstly, the level of training in language assessment is a critical factor influencing teachers' perceptions of fairness. As highlighted in the study on Colombian teachers, the disparity in perceptions of fairness significantly correlates with the teachers' level of training in language assessment. Teachers with more comprehensive training are better equipped to design and implement assessments that engage and motivate students, thereby enhancing learning outcomes. (Rasooli et al., 2023). This underscores the importance of providing robust training in language assessment for prospective teachers, which can be seen as an essential component of the organizational structure within educational institutions.

Moreover, organizational structures that incorporate systematic use of models like the Rasch model can significantly enhance the fairness of language assessments. The Rasch model provides a robust framework for investigating and improving various aspects of test fairness, including rater effects, test design, differential group performance, and standard-setting (Elnegahy et al., 2022; Lin & Gao, 2020). By integrating such models into the organizational structure, educational institutions can ensure more equitable assessment practices.

The organizational environment, including the culture and procedural strategies, also plays a crucial role. A study on fairness in medical education assessments found that fairness is influenced by environmental factors such as articulated learning outcomes, a supportive culture, and stakeholder agency (Mendoza & Arandia, 2009). These elements, when embedded within the organizational structure, create a conducive environment for fair assessments. This insight applies to language assessment as well, where clear communication of learning objectives and a supportive educational culture can positively influence teachers' perceptions of fairness (Benu, 2025).

Additionally, individual and social mechanisms within the organizational structure influence teachers' perceptions of fairness. Teachers' philosophies and experiences, in conjunction with their interactions with the social conditions of their schools and classrooms, shape their conceptions and practices of fairness in assessments. (Valentine et al., 2023) This interplay suggests that organizational structures should be flexible and adaptive to accommodate teachers' diverse backgrounds and experiences, promoting a more nuanced understanding of fairness.

Finally, emotional factors also interact with organizational structures to impact perceptions of fairness. A study on the role of affect in educational assessment found that both positive and negative emotions before and after assessments significantly influence perceptions of fairness (Butucescu & Iliescu, 2022). Organizational structures that promote positive affective states among teachers and students—such as through supportive policies and practices—can enhance the perceived fairness of assessments.

### **Social and Cultural Context**

The social and cultural context of learners is another critical factor influencing teachers' perceptions of fairness (Benu, 2018; Sulasmini & Astina, 2018). Assessment methods that align with the learners' cultural and social backgrounds are more likely to be perceived as fair. For example, the preference for teacher feedback over peer feedback in specific cultural contexts

underscores the importance of considering cultural sensitivities in the assessment process. (Bøhn & Tsaigari, 2021). Teachers who are attuned to these cultural nuances can design and implement assessment methods that are perceived as fairer by their students.

The social and cultural context of learners is a critical factor influencing teachers' perceptions of fairness in English language assessment. This influence is multifaceted, encompassing individual mechanisms, social mechanisms, and the dialectical relationships between these mechanisms.

Firstly, teachers' individual philosophies and experiences play a significant role in shaping their conceptions of fairness. According to a study on teachers' conceptions of fairness in classroom assessment, individual mechanisms are a major theme in understanding how teachers perceive fairness (Young & Jackman, 2014). These individual mechanisms include personal beliefs, values, and previous experiences that teachers bring into the classroom. For instance, teachers who have had diverse teaching experiences or who have been exposed to various educational philosophies may have a broader understanding of what constitutes fair assessment practices.

Secondly, social mechanisms, including the broader societal and cultural context, also significantly impact teachers' perceptions of fairness. The research highlights that societal norms, expectations, and cultural values permeate the school environment and influence teachers' assessment practices (Young & Jackman, 2014). For example, in contexts where standardized testing and academic performance are highly regarded, teachers might feel pressured to conform to these norms, potentially at the expense of what they consider fair.

Moreover, the dialectical relationship between individual and social mechanisms suggests that teachers' perceptions of fairness are not formed in isolation but are continually shaped by their interactions with the social environment. This interaction can lead to a dynamic and sometimes conflicting understanding of fairness. Teachers must navigate the tension between their personal beliefs and the external pressures exerted by societal expectations, school policies, and cultural norms (Young & Jackman, 2014).

Studies on assessment practices in different educational settings further highlight the influence of social and cultural contexts. For instance, in the context of practical-aesthetic subjects in Norwegian lower secondary schools, teachers' perceptions are influenced by the lower status attributed to these subjects compared to theoretical knowledge subjects (Oltedal et al., 2016). This status disparity often leads to inconsistencies in grading and a higher number of complaints, reflecting a perceived lack of fairness in assessment.

In addition, the mismatch between teachers' and students' perceptions of assessment practices can be attributed to varying social and cultural backgrounds (Supartini et al., 2024). A study on Assessment for Learning (AfL) practices found that high teacher efficacy and low student language proficiency were associated with incongruent perceptions of AfL practices (Pat-El et al., 2015). This incongruity may stem from differences in cultural expectations and educational experiences between teachers and students, further complicating the quest for fairness in assessments.

Furthermore, the integration of formative assessment strategies in Grenadian lower secondary schools reveals how teachers' perceptions of fairness are influenced by their training and the cultural context of the educational system (Rasooli et al., 2023). Trained teachers exhibited more positive perceptions and attitudes towards formative assessment than their untrained counterparts, indicating that professional development and cultural exposure can play crucial roles in shaping teachers' fairness perceptions.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This review highlights that fairness in English Language Assessment (ELA) is a multidimensional construct shaped by both student and teacher perceptions, as well as the organizational and cultural contexts in which assessments take place. Students emphasized

issues of transparency, bias, and socio-economic inequity, while teachers focused more on professional competence, institutional structures, and assessment literacy. These perspectives converge on the importance of transparency, respect, and procedural consistency, underscoring the ethical as well as technical dimensions of fairness.

The study contributes to the literature by synthesizing student and teacher perspectives within a comparative framework, offering a more holistic understanding of fairness in assessment. It extends the discussion beyond technical validity to highlight justice, inclusivity, and the role of organizational structures in shaping fair practices. By doing so, it reinforces the significance of strengthening Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), fostering Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and embedding culturally responsive practices within teacher training and institutional policy.

Practically, this review suggests several actionable steps for educators and policymakers. Institutions should prioritize comprehensive teacher training programs that integrate LAL and fairness principles, encourage collaborative platforms such as PLCs for ongoing professional reflection, and adopt organizational structures that support teacher autonomy and responsiveness to diverse student needs. Policymakers can further contribute by embedding fairness benchmarks into assessment standards and accreditation systems, ensuring alignment between classroom practices and broader educational policies.

Future research could explore longitudinal studies that track how teacher training in LAL influences classroom fairness over time, comparative investigations across different cultural and institutional contexts, and empirical testing of specific frameworks (e.g., the Rasch model or fairness scales) in diverse educational systems. Such work would not only deepen theoretical insights but also provide practical frameworks for institutions striving to design fairer and more inclusive assessments. By integrating these recommendations, educators, policymakers, and researchers can collectively move toward assessment systems that not only measure language proficiency reliably but also uphold equity, inclusivity, and justice for all learners.

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