

ENHANCING ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING: THE INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT LITERACY ON INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS' WRITING

^{1*}**Entika Fani Prastikawati, ²Samantha Curle, ³Pryla Rochmahwati, ¹Maria Yosephin Widharti Lestari, ¹Lusia Maryani Silitonga, ⁴Raveenthiran Vivekanantharasa**

¹English Education Department, Faculty of Language and Art Education, Universitas Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia Semarang, Indonesia

²Department of Education, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 7AY, United Kingdom

³English Education Department, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Ponorogo, Indonesia

⁴Secondary and Tertiary Education, Faculty of Education, Open University, Sri Lanka

*Corresponding Author Email: entikafani@upgris.ac.id

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of enhancing Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) on Indonesian EFL students' writing development through Assessment as Learning (AaL) practices. Unlike most research that emphasizes teacher-focused LAL, this study shifts attention to learners, exploring how assessment knowledge, particularly through rubrics, can promote metacognitive awareness, autonomy, and improved writing outcomes. A mixed-methods design was employed with 84 senior high school students randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Results showed no significant differences between groups prior to the intervention. However, post-test scores indicated a significant advantage for the experimental group ($M = 16.69$) compared to the control group ($M = 8.91$), with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = .82$), confirming the effectiveness of LAL-based pedagogy. Qualitative interview data revealed that students' attitudes toward LAL strongly shaped its classroom integration. Although learners initially reported limited experience, low confidence, and concerns about the reliability of peer assessment, they ultimately expressed positive perceptions of LAL, highlighting its role in clarifying writing expectations, supporting reflection, and fostering learner autonomy. These findings suggest that embedding LAL in EFL writing instruction can transform assessment into a learner-centered process that enhances both writing performance and self-regulated learning. Pedagogically, the study underscores the importance of scaffolding and supportive implementation of student-centered assessment practices. However, the study is limited by its short intervention period and context-specific sample.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the role of assessment in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has undergone a significant transformation. Traditionally viewed as a mechanism for measuring student achievement at the end of an instructional cycle, assessment was

primarily summative in nature, designed to assign grades, rank learners, or make high-stakes decisions (Lam, 2019; Tang et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2020). However, contemporary educational paradigms have shifted toward more formative, learning-oriented approaches that recognize assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. This evolving perspective is especially evident in writing instruction, where assessment is no longer confined to the evaluation of final products (Adeoye et al., 2025; Fitriyah et al., 2022). Instead, it is increasingly regarded as a dynamic tool to guide learning, support students' cognitive and metacognitive development, and enhance their ability to express ideas effectively in written form. By using assessment as a pedagogical intervention rather than a mere endpoint, educators can foster a reflective learning environment in which students become more engaged and responsible for their academic growth (Andrade & Beekman, 2023; Chan & Luo, 2020). This reconceptualization of assessment aligns with broader efforts to create learner-centered classrooms and encourages the cultivation of self-regulated learning strategies among EFL students.

Central to this pedagogical evolution is the concept of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), which encompasses the competence to design, implement, and interpret language assessments meaningfully. While LAL has traditionally been associated with teacher expertise, emphasizing the capacity of educators to assess student learning accurately and fairly (Fulcher, 2012; Hidayat, 2020), there is a growing recognition that learners themselves can also benefit from developing assessment literacy. When students acquire a foundational understanding of assessment criteria, they become more capable of evaluating the quality of their own work, interpreting teacher feedback, and identifying areas for improvement (Aslanoğlu, 2022; Chan & Luo, 2020; Giraldo & Murcia, 2019). In turn, this promotes greater transparency in the learning process and empowers students to take ownership of their academic progress. Furthermore, student engagement with assessment criteria encourages a shift from passive reception of grades to active involvement in learning decisions, thereby fostering learner autonomy (Mohammadi et al., 2024; Prastikawati et al., 2025). As learners begin to view assessment as a tool for personal growth rather than judgment, their motivation, confidence, and academic resilience are likely to improve.

One of the most effective ways to cultivate assessment literacy among students is through the implementation of Assessment as Learning (AaL). This approach positions learners at the center of the assessment process, emphasizing their active participation in monitoring, evaluating, and regulating their own learning. In the context of writing instruction, AaL practices often include the use of structured tools such as analytic rubrics, revision checklists, and guided peer feedback forms (Schellekens et al., 2021; Suteja & Setiawan, 2022). These instruments serve not only as evaluative tools but also as pedagogical aids that help students internalize the criteria for effective writing. When students are taught how to use rubrics to assess their own drafts or those of their peers, they become more aware of the elements that contribute to quality writing such as clarity of ideas, logical organization, vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, and appropriate mechanics (Dorri et al., 2024; Nuraini et al., 2025; Zou et al., 2018). This process of self- and peer-assessment fosters critical thinking and metacognitive awareness, enabling students to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and revise their work accordingly. Research by Fischer et al. (2024) has shown that consistent engagement with AaL practices leads to improvements not only in students' writing skills but also in their ability to approach writing tasks with increased independence and confidence.

Beyond its immediate influence on writing performance, Language Assessment Literacy holds significant long-term implications for students' academic development. When learners are consistently exposed to assessment criteria and actively involved in self- and peer-assessment, they gradually develop evaluative judgement, self-regulated learning

strategies, and a deeper understanding of quality in academic writing (Acar, 2023; Coombe et al., 2020). These competencies enable students to transfer assessment knowledge across tasks and learning contexts, reducing reliance on teacher feedback over time. In EFL writing, such long-term engagement supports sustained improvement through iterative reflection and revision, rather than short-term gains driven solely by instructional intervention (Yan & Fan, 2021). Consequently, LAL can be viewed as a foundational skill that equips learners with the capacity to monitor their own progress, adapt to diverse assessment demands, and maintain writing development beyond the classroom.

Although there has been a growing emphasis on Assessment as Learning (AaL) within language education, empirical investigations into students' own development of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), particularly in the context of writing, remain limited. Much of the existing scholarship continues to prioritize the role of teachers, focusing on their capacity to design, implement, and interpret assessment tools, while relatively few studies have explored how learners themselves engage with and benefit from assessment literacy (Butler et al., 2021; Moraes et al., 2025; Yan & Fan, 2021). This has resulted in an underrepresentation of student-centered perspectives in the broader discourse on language assessment, creating a critical gap in the literature. In contexts such as Indonesia, this oversight is especially significant, as classroom assessment practices continue to be largely summative and teacher-directed. Students frequently assume passive roles within assessment procedures, accepting grades and evaluative feedback while lacking comprehensive understanding of the specific performance criteria and standards employed in the evaluation of their academic work. Such practices limit opportunities for learners to develop metacognitive awareness and autonomous learning strategies that are crucial for academic success. Conversely, equipping students with assessment literacy through tools like rubrics and guided self-assessment tasks can enhance their ability to evaluate their own work critically and constructively. This shift toward learner involvement in assessment not only improves writing performance but also fosters ownership and responsibility in the learning process. As a result, integrating LAL into student learning experiences has the potential to transform classroom dynamics by making assessment a collaborative and developmental activity.

In the Indonesian EFL context, writing is a core focus of the national curriculum, yet challenges persist in fostering students' writing competence. Many students have limited exposure to formative assessment techniques that enable them to engage meaningfully with their writing development. Instruction often relies on teacher-led feedback with few opportunities for learners to reflect on and revise their work independently. While national policy increasingly encourages formative assessment, its implementation remains inconsistent across schools and classrooms. Integrating LAL into student learning may help address these challenges by enabling learners to understand assessment criteria, take ownership of their writing, and develop critical thinking skills.

One of the most effective methods for enhancing students' LAL is the use of rubrics. Rubrics clearly communicate performance standards and provide a framework for students to assess their writing. When used in conjunction with writing instruction, rubrics can demystify expectations, support self-evaluation, and guide revision. Teaching students how to interpret and use rubrics fosters both writing improvement and assessment literacy. (Andrade & Beekman, 2023) emphasize that rubric-referenced assessment not only helps students write better but also allows them to engage actively with the learning objectives embedded in their tasks.

Although theoretical arguments strongly support the value of student LAL and AaL, there is a clear need for empirical research that investigates their practical effects on learners' performance and engagement. Limited studies have explored how explicit LAL training can transform students' understanding of writing assessment and improve their writing outcomes.

This gap is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where the need for more learner-centered assessment practices has been recognized but remains underdeveloped in classroom settings. This study responds to these gaps by investigating the impact of LAL enhancement on Indonesian high school EFL students' understanding of writing assessment and their engagement with AaL practices. By focusing on learners rather than teachers, the study explores how students' exposure to assessment criteria, particularly through the use of rubrics, influences their ability to self-assess and revise their own writing. The research also considers students' attitudes toward the integration of assessment into their learning process, offering a holistic view of how LALE can support the development of both writing competence and learner autonomy.

The findings of this study have the potential to inform the design of writing instruction that prioritizes student agency and self-regulated learning. By demonstrating how LAL can be meaningfully integrated into Indonesian EFL classrooms, the study contributes to ongoing discussions about improving language education through assessment innovation. Ultimately, the research underscores the importance of shifting assessment paradigms from product-oriented evaluation to learner-centered development. The present study was guided by the following research questions:

To what extent does the enhancement of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) influence Indonesian EFL students' engagement with assessment as learning, as reflected in their writing performance, in comparison to students in the control group?

What are the attitudes of Indonesian EFL students toward the integration of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) within their classroom learning experiences?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively explore the influence of LAL on students' writing performance and attitudes toward Assessment as Learning (AaL) within Indonesian EFL classrooms. The use of a mixed-methods approach is essential when investigating complex educational phenomena, as it enables researchers to capture both the measurable outcomes and the nuanced, contextualized experiences of participants. According to Creswell & Inoue (2025), mixed-methods research provides a comprehensive methodological framework that facilitates enhanced understanding of complex phenomena by systematically combining the empirical rigor of quantitative data with the contextual depth and interpretive insights of qualitative approaches. The quantitative data provides generalizable evidence, while qualitative data offers rich, descriptive insights that uncover underlying mechanisms and learner perspectives. In the context of this study, relying solely on quantitative data would have limited the understanding to numerical improvements in writing, whereas the inclusion of qualitative data enabled the exploration of how and why students' engagement with LAL practices influenced their attitudes and writing behaviors.

The quantitative dimension of this investigation encompassed systematic analysis of student essay scores obtained during pre-intervention and post-intervention assessment phases, yielding empirically measurable data regarding writing competency enhancement subsequent to pedagogical treatment. The qualitative component involved the collection and analysis of data derived from semi-structured interview protocols administered to purposively selected participants from the experimental cohort. These interview instruments were specifically designed to elicit comprehensive insights into students' perceptual frameworks, experiential narratives, and attitudinal orientations concerning their participation in assessment-based learning activities, as well as the manner in which these experiences influenced their cognitive and behavioral engagement with writing tasks.

Research Participants

The research was carried out in a senior high school in Semarang, Indonesia, comprising male and female EFL students aged 16 to 18 years ($M = 16.7$, $SD = 0.94$). A preliminary cohort of 110 students was evaluated for participation. To guarantee uniformity in language proficiency, all students underwent the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). According to the test findings, 84 students whose scores were within one standard deviation above and below the mean were identified as intermediate-level English learners. Subsequently, the 84 participants were randomly allocated to either the experimental group or the control group, comprising 42 students in each group. All students and their guardians were apprised of the research procedures and aims, and signed agreement was secured from each participant prior to their engagement in the study.

Before the intervention, participants had minimal experience to self- and peer-assessment methodologies in their English lessons. Classroom assessment was mostly teacher-centric, with evaluation and feedback predominantly administered by educators and limited student participation in self-assessment or peer assessment. The majority of participants had not previously been provided with formal instruction regarding assessment criteria or the application of rubrics for writing evaluation. The limited prior experience with student-centered assessment procedures provide crucial context for comprehending learners' initial attitudes about Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) and the difficulties they faced when participating in self- and peer-evaluation during the intervention.

Instruments

To standardize the proficiency level of the participants, the Oxford Placement Test (Allan, 1985) was employed as a diagnostic tool. Recognized globally for its reliability and efficiency, the OPT is widely used to classify EFL learners across different proficiency levels. The test comprises listening and language-use sections and can be completed in approximately 60 minutes. In the present study, students who scored between 51 and 59 deemed the benchmark for intermediate-level proficiency were selected to participate in the intervention. This ensured a consistent language proficiency baseline across both the experimental and control groups.

Furthermore, to guide the writing instruction and assessment processes, the EFL Composition Profile developed by Zinkgraf (2014) was utilized. This scale is widely acknowledged for its validity in evaluating writing based on five key components: content, organization, vocabulary, language use (grammar), and mechanics. However, due to the abstract and technical nature of the original scale, the researchers adapted the tool to better align with the learners' needs. A simplified version of the profile was developed in the form of a pamphlet containing detailed explanations in Bahasa Indonesia. This included definitions, examples, and accessible interpretations of each writing component. In addition, the instructor provided verbal clarification and examples during the instructional sessions to ensure that students fully understood how to apply the criteria in self- and peer-assessment tasks. The adaptation process involved simplifying technical terminology, reducing linguistic complexity, and contextualizing descriptors to reflect the students' instructional level and classroom writing tasks. Each rubric component was rewritten using student-friendly language while maintaining alignment with the original construct definitions to preserve content validity.

Prior to the main intervention, the simplified rubric was piloted with a small group of students ($n = 12$) from the same school who did not participate in the main study. The pilot aimed to examine students' comprehension of rubric descriptors, clarity of instructions, and usability during self- and peer-assessment activities. Feedback from the pilot indicated that students were able to interpret the criteria accurately and apply them consistently. Minor revisions were subsequently made to wording and examples to enhance clarity.

Meanwhile, to explore learners' affective responses and perceptions of assessment activities, a semi-structured interview was developed by the researchers. The interview consisted of six open-ended questions aimed at examining students' attitudes both positive and negative toward Assessment as Learning practices introduced during the intervention. In addition, the interview questions were developed based on a review of previous studies on Language Assessment Literacy and Assessment as Learning, particularly those examining learners' perceptions of self- and peer-assessment. The protocol was designed to capture students' experiences before, during, and after engaging in LAL-based activities. To enhance content validity and clarity, the interview guide was reviewed by two experts in language assessment and piloted with two students outside the main sample, resulting in minor refinements to question wording.

In the interview section, it was carried out in a comfort and quiet place at school. This is to ensure the participation's comfortness and minimize the distractions. Each interview lasted in 20-25 minutes in Bahasa Indonesia. The use of bahasa Indonesia is intended to make sure that the participants can express their views freely and accurately. Probing questions were also utilized to clarify responses and explore deeper reflection on participants' experiences with self- and peer-assessment. Moreover, to maintain ethical integrity, participants were assured that their comments would be kept confidential and that they might withdraw from the interview at any point without repercussions.

Data Analysis

The data acquired from this mixed-methods study were evaluated utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to thoroughly address the research issues. The quantitative aspect was the statistical examination of students' writing scores from both the pre-test and post-test stages utilizing two main methodologies. An independent-samples t-test was used to examine the mean differences in writing performance between the experimental and control groups after the intervention. This test assessed whether the improvement of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) had a statistically significant impact on students' writing performance compared to those who did not get LAL-based instruction.

Concurrently, the qualitative component of the study involved analyzing data derived from semi-structured interviews with chosen students in the experimental group through content analysis. This approach involved a systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting the textual data to uncover recurring themes, patterns, and variations in students' attitudes toward Assessment as Learning (AaL). Initially, all interview transcripts were read multiple times to develop data familiarity and acquire a comprehensive grasp of participants' responses. Subsequently, open coding was performed to discern significant units pertaining to students' experiences, views, and obstacles in interacting with Assessment as Learning and LAL-oriented practices. The initial codes were further analyzed for similarities and differences and categorized into broader classifications. Through an iterative process of continual comparison, these categories were honed into broad themes that encapsulated repeating patterns throughout participants' narratives.

To enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis, inter-rater reliability was established. Two researchers independently coded 30% of the interview transcripts. The coding outcomes were subsequently compared and discussed to resolve discrepancies and reach agreement on code definitions and thematic interpretations. This collaborative coding process helped ensure consistency in data interpretation and strengthened the credibility of the identified themes. The integration of quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative thematic analysis enabled data triangulation, providing a more comprehensive understanding of both the measurable impact of LAL on students' writing performance and the learners' subjective experiences with LAL practices.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Effect of LanguageAssessment Literacy (LAL) on Students' Assessment as Learning of Writing Skill

The initial research question sought to ascertain whether the enhancement of language assessment literacy (LAL) would exert a statistically significant influence on Indonesian EFL students' ability to participate in assessment as learning (AaL) concerning writing skills, in contrast to students who did not receive this instructional intervention. Independent-samples t-tests were performed to compare the writing performance of students in the experimental group (who received LAL-based instruction) and the control group (who did not) at two time points: prior to and following the intervention. Table 1 displays the comparative results of these analyses.

Table 1
Result of Writing Pre-test in Experimental Class (EC) and Control Class (CC)

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EC	6.9	1.64	42
CC	7.0	1.7	42

As observed, the mean scores of both groups on the pre-test were relatively similar, indicating that students began the study with comparable levels of writing proficiency. This similarity supports the assumption of initial group equivalence, which is critical in assessing the true effect of the intervention. To statistically verify this assumption, an independent-samples t-test was conducted on the pre-test scores. The result confirmed that there was no significant difference between the two groups before the LAL instruction began, thereby strengthening the internal validity of the study. This analysis established a baseline from which changes in writing performance due to the LAL intervention could be accurately measured in the post-test phase.

Table 2
Result of Independent sample t-test for Pre-Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								lower	upper
Assumption of equal variances	.52	.49	1.88	79	.07	.8	.39	-.051	1.46
Assumption of unequal variances			1.88	76.6	.07	.8	.39	-.051	1.46

The writing proficiency of the experimental group and the control group before the intervention was compared using an independent-samples t-test. The study indicated no statistically significant difference between the pre-test scores of the LALE group ($M = 6.9$, $SD = 1.64$) and the control group ($M = 7.0$, $SD = 1.72$), $t(79) = 1.88$, $p = .07$, two-tailed (refer to Table 2). This outcome indicates that both groups commenced with a reasonably similar level of writing proficiency prior to the implementation of any instructional intervention. The lack of a substantial difference in their first ratings signifies that the groups were effectively matched for their writing talents at the beginning of the study. Establishing this baseline equality is crucial for assuring the internal validity of the study, as it verifies that any subsequent performance differences may be more reliably attributed to the instructional intervention rather than pre-existing disparities.

Following this, a second independent-samples t-test was performed to compare the post-test writing scores between the LAL group and the control group. This analysis aimed to evaluate the potential impact of LAL instruction on students' writing development after the intervention period. The findings from this post-intervention analysis offer insight into the effectiveness of the LAL approach in enhancing students' ability to assess and improve their own writing.

Table 3
Result of Writing Post-test in Experimental Class (EC) and Control Class (CC)

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EC	16.69	1.82	42
CC	8.91	1.82	42

The post-test results showed that the experimental group, which received Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) instruction, outperformed the control group in terms of writing performance (see Table 3). To find out if this difference was statistically significant, an independent-samples t-test was administered to review the post-intervention writing scores of both groups and determine the efficacy of the LAL instructional approach.

Table 4
Result of Independent sample t-test for Post-Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									lower	upper
Assumption of equal variances		.18	.05	21.82	79	.00	8.58	.41	7.48	9.36
Assumption of unequal variances				21.82	79	.00	8.58	.41	7.48	9.36

As presented in Table 4, the results of the independent-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in post-test writing scores between the experimental group, which received Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) instruction, and the control group. The experimental group obtained a substantially higher mean score ($M = 16.69$, $SD = 1.82$) compared to the control group ($M = 8.91$, $SD = 1.82$), with the t-test result yielding $t(79) = 21.82$, $p < .001$ (two-tailed). This highly significant outcome indicates that the writing performance of students who were exposed to LAL-based instruction improved markedly in comparison to those who did not receive such support. Furthermore, the effect size, as measured by eta squared, was calculated at .82, suggesting a large magnitude of difference between the groups. This large effect size provides compelling evidence that the intervention had a powerful influence on students' writing development. Overall, these results confirm that the integration of LAL into writing instruction significantly enhanced students' ability to apply assessment knowledge, engage in reflective practices, and demonstrate improved writing competence. These findings reinforce the importance of embedding assessment literacy into classroom practices as a means of fostering deeper learning and more autonomous engagement with writing tasks (Dhanarattigannon & Thienpermpool, 2022).

The Indonesian EFL Students' Attitudes toward the Integration of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) within their Classroom Learning Experiences

A qualitative content analysis was carried out on the interview data in order to answer the second research question, which centered on students' perspectives on assessment as a learning practice, specifically self- and peer-assessment. The analysis revealed three

prominent themes that shaped participants' perspectives on engaging with assessment practices. The first theme identified was a lack of prior experience and practice with self- and peer-assessment, which emerged as a significant barrier to student engagement. Many participants expressed unfamiliarity with these strategies, having rarely encountered them in previous classroom settings. The second theme involved students' lack of confidence in their ability to accurately and effectively carry out self- and peer-assessment tasks. This uncertainty often stemmed from limited exposure to assessment criteria and insufficient training in evaluative judgment. The third recurring theme concerned students' skepticism about the reliability and validity of self- and peer-assessment as legitimate forms of evaluation. Some learners questioned whether these methods could fairly reflect true performance or might be influenced by subjective bias. These thematic findings provide deeper insight into the psychological and instructional challenges that may hinder the successful implementation of assessment as learning in EFL contexts. To further illustrate these perspectives, each theme is elaborated in the sections that follow, supported by representative excerpts from students' interview responses.

The first emergent theme from the interview data highlighted a widespread lack of practice and exposure to self- and peer-assessment among participants. A significant majority of the interviewees (90.2%) expressed dissatisfaction with the extent to which these assessment practices were integrated into their English classes. Many participants reported that their classroom experience was predominantly teacher-centered, where the teacher assumed full control over evaluation and feedback, leaving minimal space for student agency in assessment. Within the traditional Indonesian EFL classroom context, the idea of students actively participating in the assessment process either by evaluating their own work or that of their peers remains largely absent. Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that nearly all students were unfamiliar with the concept and techniques of self- and peer-assessment, and had not received any prior instruction in language assessment literacy (LAL). Most students admitted that they had never been introduced to assessment rubrics or been informed about specific criteria used to evaluate writing. As a result, their understanding of how to assess written work, both their own and others', remained limited (Yastibaş & Takkaç, 2018). This lack of instructional experience contributed to a broader sense of disconnect between learners and the process of assessment as learning. The following excerpts from student interviews offer further insight into this theme and exemplify the absence of meaningful student engagement in classroom-based assessment practices.

We had no prior experience with self- or peer-assessment because we were never taught how to evaluate or grade our own or our classmates' assignments during lessons. In Indonesia, such practices are uncommon, as assessment is generally viewed as the teacher's responsibility. (Indonesian EFL Student 4, Interview)

In Indonesian EFL classrooms, students typically aren't permitted to assess or grade their peers, as the teacher is seen as the sole authority with the expertise to evaluate student work. Therefore, opportunities for us to engage in self- or peer-assessment are very limited. (Indonesian EFL Student 7, Interview)

The second theme that emerged from the interviews centered on students' lack of confidence in their capacity to effectively engage in self- and peer-assessment. Most participants reported that, prior to receiving any formal instruction, they perceived the teacher as the sole individual qualified and authorized to provide feedback and assign grades on students' writing. This perception contributed to their hesitancy and uncertainty about their own ability to accurately evaluate written work. The following two excerpts illustrate this sentiment among the learners.

I feel that my peers and I lack the necessary knowledge and skills to accurately assess, evaluate, or score our own or each other's writing, as it is a complex task requiring specialized expertise that we do not possess. (Indonesian EFL Student 2, Interview)

I neither have the confidence nor the ability to evaluate and grade my own work or that of my classmates. In my view, only the teacher is capable of providing accurate assessments and scores for student writing. (Indonesian EFL Student 5, Interview)

The third theme emerging from the interviews highlighted students' doubts regarding the reliability of self- and peer-assessment as valid measurement tools. Prior to instruction, many students expressed concerns about whether the scores they assigned to their peers or received from them were trustworthy and accurate. Additionally, participants reported feeling uneasy about critically evaluating and grading their classmates' written work, particularly because such assessments could expose personal identities and potentially cause embarrassment. This discomfort led students to avoid openly criticizing their peers' work in a public classroom setting. Consequently, there was a risk that students might either inflate or deflate scores, resulting in unreliable and inconsistent feedback. Some students even perceived peer feedback as unfair or biased. The following excerpt captures this concern in the words of one participant.

I do not like to point out my friends' mistakes, especially those I am close to, during class because I think it might embarrass or upset them. As a result, I tend to overlook some errors and give higher scores than deserved. Likewise, I do not want my classmates to know the extent of my mistakes, especially when I perform poorly on exams or assignments. Sometimes, my peers might give me scores that are higher than my actual performance. For these reasons, I believe self- and peer-assessment are unreliable and not effective assessment tools. (Indonesian EFL Student 3, Interview)

Discussion

This study sought to explore the extent to which enhancing language assessment literacy (LAL) could influence Indonesian EFL learners' understanding and application of assessment as learning (AAL), particularly in the context of writing. While a considerable body of literature in Indonesia and broader Asian educational contexts has concentrated on evaluating language assessment literacy from the teachers' perspective often analyzing it through demographic lenses such as age, gender, or teaching experience limited attention has been paid to how students themselves might benefit from targeted LAL instruction. Specifically, empirical investigations focusing on how LAL can be integrated into student learning to enhance their assessment awareness and writing performance are remarkably scarce. Furthermore, this study addresses that gap by examining the impact of LAL not only on learners' writing performance but also on their perceptions of assessment practices when exposed to structured LAL-oriented instruction. A distinctive and innovative feature of the current study is its focus on learners, shifting the typical lens away from teachers and offering insight into how students respond when equipped with the knowledge and tools typically reserved for educators.

The findings of this present study have revealed a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group's essay writing performance, underscoring the potential of LAL enhancement in fostering students' awareness of assessment criteria and promoting active engagement in self- and peer-assessment practices. According to Vogt et al. (2020), assessment as learning occurs when assessment is embedded within the learning process itself, serving as a mechanism through which students engage in metacognitive reflection and take greater ownership of their learning journey. In line with this perspective, students in the experimental group demonstrated increased familiarity with the components of effective writing such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics after being explicitly instructed using the EFL Composition Scale. This exposure enabled them not only

to understand what constitutes quality writing but also to apply this understanding in evaluating their own and their peers' work. By learning how to diagnose strengths and areas for improvement, learners began to internalize evaluative criteria, leading to more autonomous and strategic learning behaviors.

In other words, the enhancement of LAL encouraged students to provide constructive feedback, reflect on their learning processes, and monitor their progress over time (Tang et al., 2012; Zhu & Evans, 2024). These practices are integral to developing learner autonomy, a critical component of effective language education in the 21st century. From a pedagogical perspective, these findings suggest several concrete strategies for implementing Language Assessment Literacy in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to explicitly introduce assessment criteria through guided analysis of sample texts before engaging students in self- or peer-assessment. The use of simplified rubrics, exemplars, and teacher-led think-aloud demonstrations can help students internalize evaluative standards. Gradual scaffolding, beginning with low-stakes self-assessment tasks and progressing to peer assessment, may further support students' transition toward more active assessment roles.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of LAL enhancement in influencing students' understanding and application of assessment as learning (AaL) is closely tied to several critical factors, particularly learners' attitudes and perceptions toward self- and peer-assessment practices. Students' attitudes significantly shape the success of peer assessment activities, as these attitudes determine the quality of the feedback exchanged and the accuracy of peer-generated scores. In line with this, the current study explored whether LAL enhancement could positively influence Indonesian high school EFL students' attitudes toward AaL practices, particularly within the domain of writing instruction (Munasih et al., 2024; Prastikawati et al., 2024).

The findings indicated that, overall, Indonesian EFL students expressed positive perceptions regarding the potential benefits of self- and peer-assessment, particularly in improving their writing proficiency. However, despite this generally favorable view, some students reported reservations and concerns about the practicality and reliability of implementing these assessment methods in their classroom environments. Through content analysis of the interview data, three dominant themes emerged that encapsulate the students' nuanced attitudes: (1) lack of practice with self- and peer-assessment, (2) lack of confidence in their ability to perform assessments, and (3) doubts about the reliability of self- and peer-assessment as legitimate tools for evaluation.

Regarding the first theme (lack of practice), many students had little to no prior exposure to self- or peer-assessment tasks, contributing to their uncertainty and limited engagement. This finding is consistent with Prastikawati et al. (2024), who emphasized that increased frequency of participation in peer-assessment activities can significantly improve students' attitudes by making the process more familiar and meaningful. Incorporating peer-assessment into writing instruction not only promotes more positive student attitudes but also cultivates essential evaluative and reflective skills that are foundational for autonomous learning. As students gain more experience in assessing their peers' writing, they are better able to engage in critical thinking, self-revision, and refinement of their own written work. Furthermore, Jalilzadeh et al. (2023) argues that integrating peer-assessment as a routine classroom practice gradually mitigates students' initial negative attitudes, reinforcing the view that repeated exposure is key to attitude transformation.

The second theme is lack of confidence. According to the finding, it revealed that students often felt underqualified to assess their own or others' writing. This lack of self-assurance reflects findings from previous studies (Ashenafi, 2017; Buragohain, 2018), which highlighted students' skepticism about the quality and objectivity of peer feedback. Many students in the present study perceived assessment as a task reserved solely for teachers,

believing that they lacked the necessary training, expertise, or experience to carry it out effectively. As Nemati and Ghafoori (2017) observed, shifting responsibility for assessment from teachers to learners requires not only a change in practice but also a transformation in learners' self-conceptions as autonomous and capable evaluators. Without such a shift, learners may continue to view peer- and self-assessment with hesitation or mistrust.

To add, the third theme (uncertainty about the reliability of self- and peer-assessment) revealed students' discomfort with publicly assessing peers whose identities were known. Participants expressed concern that visible identities might lead to biased evaluations, inflated scores, or strained peer relationships, especially when negative feedback was involved. One practical solution suggested in both the literature and this study is the adoption of anonymous peer-assessment practices. Research by Dorri et al. (2024) found that students were significantly more willing to engage in peer assessment if anonymity was guaranteed, as it reduced personal discomfort and increased perceived fairness. Similarly, Zou et al. (2018) found that many students had prior experience with anonymous peer review in online platforms and generally viewed it as a fairer and more reliable system. Magaji (2025) also noted that learners unfamiliar with giving critical feedback might struggle to offer constructive comments often defaulting to superficial praise or hesitating to point out areas for improvement.

The aforementioned challenges faced by the students indicate the need for structured pedagogical support. These can be addressed by providing explicit training in evaluative judgment and by clarifying the aims of peer feedback as the process-based activity rather than grading mechanism. Regular and repeated practice will gradually improve students' trust in the assessment process and may reduce their anxiety associated with peers' evaluation.

Finally, this study's findings highlight the crucial significance of LAL improvement in improving Indonesian and Indonesian EFL learners' comprehension and application of assessment as learning, especially in writing instruction. The findings not only validated the beneficial effect of LAL on students' writing performance but also uncovered the attitudinal and psychological obstacles that may impede the effective implementation of self- and peer-assessment techniques. Addressing these challenges such as lack of prior practice, limited confidence, and concerns about assessment reliability requires systematic instructional efforts, including repeated exposure, scaffolded guidance, and the option of anonymity. Ultimately, cultivating students' assessment literacy empowers them to become more autonomous, reflective, and engaged learners, thereby aligning assessment practices more closely with the goals of learner-centered education.

CONCLUSION

This study reinforces the importance of integrating language assessment literacy (LAL) into EFL instruction while highlighting the need to address learners' psychological, affective, and contextual factors that influence their engagement in assessment practices. By focusing on students rather than teachers, it offers fresh perspectives on how assessment as learning can empower learners when they possess not only technical assessment knowledge but also confidence, self-efficacy, and supportive classroom environments. The findings demonstrate that when learners are explicitly introduced to assessment criteria and actively engaged in self- and peer-assessment, they show notable improvements in writing performance as well as deeper understanding of assessment processes. Based on these findings, several actionable recommendations can be proposed for educators and curriculum designers. English teachers are encouraged to integrate LAL explicitly into writing instruction by familiarizing students with assessment criteria, modeling evaluative judgment, and systematically incorporating scaffolded self- and peer-assessment activities. At the curriculum level, assessment-oriented learning outcomes can be embedded into writing syllabi to ensure that assessment functions

as an ongoing learning process rather than merely a summative tool. Such integration may support learner autonomy and sustained writing development across instructional contexts.

Although the study demonstrates notable improvements in learners' writing performance and assessment understanding, its short duration, limited participant scope, and specific cultural context constrain broader generalization. Future research should therefore explore the long-term sustainability of LAL interventions through longitudinal designs involving more diverse participants, while also examining how digital tools, teacher facilitation, and institutional support affect learner-centered assessment outcomes. Overall, this study underscores the transformative role of LAL in fostering autonomous, reflective, and empowered EFL learners, bridging the gap between teaching and assessment to promote more equitable and inclusive language classrooms.

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INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. By agreeing to take part, the participants acknowledge that they have been informed about the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data utilized in this study cannot be made publicly available due to strict adherence to privacy concerns and ethical obligations that safeguard participant confidentiality. This ensures compliance with ethical research standards and data protection regulations.

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