EFL IN-SERVICE TEACHERS' SELF-REPORTED PERSPECTIVES ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT[1]

PERSPECTIVAS AUTOREPORTADAS DE PROFESORES DE INGLÉS RESPECTO A LA EVALUACIÓN DEL IDIOMA

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Abstract:
The purpose of the following quantitative non-experimental and cross-sectional research study is to examine in-service teachers' perceived views, skills, and practices towards the assessment of the English language. A sample of 315 in-service Chilean teachers took part in this study and data was collected through the Classroom Assessment Practices and Skills (CAPS) scale. Descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis were used to analyze the results. Findings indicated that in-service teachers perceived monitoring students´ learning as the purpose of assessment and agreed on the importance of diagnostic exams. Participants also considered making sure tests included all content taught and the use of assessment results for planning, as strong skills. Finally, the in-service teachers´ most frequent practices were associated with the design and feedback of assessment instruments.

Keywords*:* in-service teachers´ perceptions, language assessment literacy, English language assessment, assessment skills, classroom assessment practices.

Resumen:
El siguiente estudio de investigación cuantitativa no experimental y transversal busca examinar las opiniones, habilidades y prácticas percibidas de profesores respecto a la evaluación del idioma inglés. Participaron 315 profesores chilenos, cuyos datos se

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recogieron usando la escala Classroom Assessment Practices and Skills (CAPS). Se utilizó estadística descriptiva y análisis factorial exploratorio para el análisis de datos. Los resultados indicaron que los profesores percibían el monitoreo del aprendizaje como el propósito de la evaluación y estaban de acuerdo en la importancia de la evaluación diagnóstica. Los participantes también consideraron como fortalezas el asegurarse de que los exámenes incluyeran todo el contenido enseñado y el uso de los resultados de la evaluación para planificación. Por último, las prácticas más frecuentes de los profesores estaban asociadas al diseño y la retroalimentación de los instrumentos de evaluación.

Palabras clave: percepciones de los profesores, alfabetización en evaluación, evaluación de la lengua inglesa, habilidades de evaluación, prácticas de evaluación en el aula.

1. Introduction

Language assessment has always been a familiar duty for EFL teachers, and it is a concept whose views have been evolving over time. This current study analyzes Chilean in-service teachers´ perceived views, skills, and frequent practices regarding assessment. In this regard, Black and William define assessment as "all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (8). Cheng and Fox (1-2) remark that this definition of assessment is relevant because of two reasons. The first reason is that an assessment activity engages the teacher and a student, or a group of students. The second reason is that assessment ranges from daily assessment, classroom tests, and international English language tests. In addition, Bachman and Damböck (10) argue that even though the terms "assessment", "measurement" and "tests" may refer to the activity of collecting information, it is important to consider language assessment as a process. Bachman and Damböck emphasize assessment as a "process of using the results of an assessment to arrive at interpretations about students´ language ability, and to make decisions in order to help bring about beneficial consequences for students, teachers, the school, and perhaps other individuals and institutions" (10).

Since this study focuses on in-service teachers' self-declared assessment knowledge, skills and practices, it is very likely that findings, as literature (Gan, He, and Liu 784) has shown, will unfold formative and summative approaches to language assessment, which will either incline towards a view of assessment that is centered on the learning process or a view which emphasizes the learners' final product. Following this line of thought, assessment can be classified according to its function, namely into formative and summative assessment (Scriven 5). On the one hand, the summative function of assessment is characterized for providing evidence of learner achievement at the end of a learning period, in which the learner´s performance is evaluated against a standard or norm and given a score or grade (DeBoer and Leontjev 4). On the other hand, Black and William describe the formative function of assessment to be related to "the extent that evidence about students´ achievement is elicited, interpreted and used by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better" (9). Thus, formative assessment focuses on the process and decision-making to improve learning, while summative assessment, which is carried out at the end of the learning cycle, is achievement and performance-oriented. Similar interpretations of assessment can be found in literature, such as assessment *for* learning (A*f*L) and assessment *of* learning (A*o*L). DeBoer and Leontjev define assessment *for* learning, based on Black et al. (10) as follows:

> Any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to promote students´ learning. To elaborate, the purpose of assessment … is to improve learning by yielding insights into learners´ abilities, with the intention to promote learners´ and assessors´/teachers´ understanding of where learners need to go next and how they can be directed in their development. (5)

Even though this definition of assessment *for* learning is very similar to the idea of formative assessment, DeBoer & Leontjev (5) argue that the main difference lies in that assessment *for* learning emphasizes not only the purpose of classroom assessment but also the specific assessment activities that are continuously feeding into this process. Hence, assessment *for* learning "becomes an iterative process where the previous assessment informs teaching and learning, which in turn, inform the following assessment, e.g. during a course, a semester or a school year" (5).

On the contrary, Cheng and Fox refer to assessment *of* learning as "assessments that happen after learning has occurred, to determine whether learning has happened" (4). The authors note that this type of assessment is used to make statements about a student's learning status at a specific point in time. Therefore, it could be said that A*f*L emphasizes the iterative cycle of assessment informing learning and vice-versa, while A*o*L focuses on the learners´ achievement at any given period throughout the learning process. Furthermore, DeBoer and Leontjev, drawing on Davison and Leung (6), propose that classroom-based assessment could be considered as a culture, either assessment *of* learning (A*o*L) *culture* or assessment *for* learning (A*f*L) *culture*, explained as follows:

> In assessment of learning culture, summative and formative assessments are seen as having both different form and function. The roles of the teacher and the assessor are, too, separate. In assessment for learning culture, regardless of their form (e.g. a test) and function (e.g. planned for grading), classroom-based assessment activities should give learners feedback that guides learning. Considering the prior argument that summative and formative are to be seen as functions, we, building on the understanding of classroom-based assessment as a culture, take the stance that assessment activities in the classroom should rather have either only the formative or both formative and summative functions. (5)

This explanation offers several points worthy of reflection about classroom assessment, such as its function and form, the type of feedback that is being delivered to students through assessment, and the assessment culture or stance that is currently being adopted by in-service teachers nowadays. Keeping that in mind, the present study seeks to answer the following research question:

- What are the Chilean in-service teachers´ perceived views, skills, and frequent practices regarding assessment?
  In order to answer this question, two research aims have been proposed:
- Research aim 1: Identify the participants´ perceived views about assessment.
- Research aim 2: Inquire about the in-service teachers´ self-reported assessment skills and frequent practices.

Learning about how in-service teachers perceived assessment, their skills, and frequent practices may also reflect aspects of their assessment literacy. In the context of English teaching, language assessment literacy (LAL) is defined by Girado who elaborates:

> LAL represents the different levels of knowledge, skills, and principles required to engage in language assessment, either from a development perspective (i.e., designing and evaluating language assessments) or from a knowledge perspective, that is, understanding and using scores from assessments to make decisions about people's language ability. (190)

Hence, Giraldo´s appreciation of LAL integrates the knowledge, skills and understanding principles required for designing assessment, and the proper interpretation of the results of an assessment to inform decisions. Likewise, Lanteigne, Coombe and Brown add a relevant insight to this concept, by describing that being assessment literate (Fulcher 125) involves "having the required knowledge and skills, understanding of principles of language assessment, and awareness of the historical and social background of language testing" (1). Therefore, assessment literacy requires not only teachers knowledgeable and skilled in assessment and its principles, but also the ability for them to adapt their teaching and assessment to its proper educational context. In fact, Lanteigne, Coombe and Brown (1) argue that teachers having assessment literacy appropriate for their context is an actual need, sought out by numerous organizations. Hidri (5) also emphasizes the importance of language assessment literacy (LAL) for assessors, as it stands as a significant milestone in any successful language teaching program.

1.1. Empirical studies

Research on teachers´ self-perceived views, skills and frequent practices regarding assessment has contributed to understanding the manner and effectiveness of how assessment is implemented in the classroom. For instance, Ndalichako (326) examined Tanzanian high school teachers´ perceptions on assessment through a questionnaire. Results indicated that 50.7% of teachers considered the purpose of assessment was making decisions on teaching and learning. Participants also either agreed or strongly agreed on

items related to the role of assessment in helping students focus their efforts in learning, making students confident during their final examinations, and the usefulness of feedback in improving students' performance. Moreover, Raudiene (514) explored Vilnius teachers´ classroom assessment practices, as part of the school initiative to introduce the System of Assessing Child's Individual Progress (SACIP), through informal online interviews. The thematic analysis of the participants´ responses, revealed that teachers maintained strong commitments to professional standards, were keen on negotiating equity and fairness in assessment and used formative assessment intuitively. In addition, teachers expressed their anxiety regarding external assessments such as standardized tests. Furthermore, Saeed, Tahir and Latif (115) analyzed the teachers´ perceptions about the use of classroom assessment techniques at elementary and secondary schools in Lahore. Data was collected using the Classroom Assessment Practices and Skills (CAPS) scale and results indicated that most teachers from primary and secondary schools used summative assessment to assess their learners. In particular, both male and female teachers used summative assessment in their teaching process, though male teachers had also used formative assessment as well. To conclude, it is relevant to consider all these findings as aspects to deepen teachers´ reflection about assessment. Doing so will undoubtedly help innovate their teaching practice and, more importantly, improve their classroom-assessment culture and promote student learning further.

Lopez and Bernal (56) found that in-service teachers with no training tend to have more negative views on language assessment and they do not use it as a tool to enhance learning but just as a means to provide grades or make negative judgments on learners. Fulcher (125) suggests an assessment literacy approach for language teachers that can integrate assessment knowledge, skills, and principles from a procedural perspective, with a clear distinction of the learners' contextual background. In addition, Özdemir-Yılmaze and Özkan (327) conducted a study whose aim was to describe in-service teachers' classroom assessment practices. Their findings showed that teachers frequently assessed grammar, reading, and writing, whereas the least frequently assessed skills were speaking and listening. Overall, the study showed that productive skills, particularly speaking, were neglected in classroom assessment as a result of grammar dominant exit tests.

De Jesús-García (53) concluded that the most recurring assessment strategies are the use of exams, quizzes, assignment revision, and class participation. Exams and quizzes are used as summative strategies because results on student learning can be obtained immediately. The exams participants employed were bits and pieces of standardized international exams to assess learners' performance; hence, students' backgrounds and contexts were not taken into consideration at the moment of assessment. Araujo (100), on the other hand, established that the type of assessments that teachers used the most to assess their students' English learning were written tests, followed by oral tests, individual work, group work, and essays. Participants revealed that the least used assessment methods were guided and free presentations, and interestingly, they concluded that the use of rubrics represented balance, justice and equity mechanisms of assessment for them to be as objective as possible.

Gan, He, and Liu (789) studied classroom assessment practices and identified six types in EFL classes in China: 1) students' self-assessment; 2) performance-oriented assessment; 3) in-class diagnostic assessment; 4) teacher scaffolding; 5) teacher monitoring; and 6) interactive-informal assessment. Performance-oriented assessment was the most often used assessment practice; in-class diagnostic assessment, teacher scaffolding, and interactive-informal assessment were moderately used; whereas student self-assessment and teacher monitoring were used less often. This means that although teacher-controlled performance-oriented assessment was most used in the EFL classroom, teacher-student interactive-informal assessment and student self-assessment emerged as best predictors of students' intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes toward EFL courses.

2. Methodology

The present study follows a quantitative, non-experimental, and cross-sectional design. The sample included 315 Chilean in-service teachers, of which 76.5% were female participants and 23.5% were male. According to the sample age range, 50.8% of the teachers were between 20-30 years old, 30.1% between 31-40 years old, and 19.1% were 41 years old or older. Regarding years of teaching experience, 43.2% of participants indicated to have between 0-5 years of service, 42.9% had between 6-20 years of service,

and 14% stated to have 21 years of service or more. All of the participants work from 5th to 12th grades at the school level in Chile. To become a teacher of English in Chile, candidates must sit for a university entry exam on Math and Spanish as compulsory subjects among other subjects depending on the selected teacher preparartion program. They study at the university level between 4 and 5 years, in which they follow a curriculum that addresses the linguistic, pedagogical, practicum and generic preparation of a teacher. By the end of their university training, they should reach an advanced level of English and should be prepared to teach English from 5th to 12th grades in the school system. They must have also been exposed to progressive practicum experiences throughout their training and they end up being supervised by a mentor teacher during their final professional practice. Candidates also sit for a compulsory exit exam that assesses their pedagogical content knowledge before they finish university. All teacher preparation programs in Chile must be compulsorily accredited by the National Accreditation Commission.

Participants' data was collected through the Classroom Assessment Practices and Skills (CAPS) scale, which was adapted from Zhang and Burry-Stock (323). The instrument was elaborated in Spanish, it was peer-reviewed by 10 experienced scholars, and administered online. The scale was submitted online to 500 in-service school teachers in the city of Concepción in Chile, and only 315 consented to answer the scale. The scale was made of three subscales. Subscale 01 aimed at inquiring about the participants' demographic data and their perceived views about assessment, and it comprised 19 items. Subscale 02 consisted of 29 items that focused on the in-service teachers´ self-reported views about assessment skills. Subscale 03 was also made of 29 items and elicited the participants´ perceived frequency of assessment skills.

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, namely, mean scores and standard deviation. Additionally, exploratory factor analysis was carried out to reduce a large number of the scale items to a few factors and analyze the relationship among the items.

3. Findings

The analysis of the results of this quantitative research was organized into three main sections based on the in-service teachers´ perceived views, skills, and frequent practices regarding assessment.

3.1. In-service teachers´ perceived views of assessment

In terms of perceived views about assessment, as portrayed on Table 1, the scale items that participants agreed the most were related to the purpose of assessment being monitoring students´ learning progress, the importance of a diagnostic exam before teaching a topic or skill, and providing personalized feedback about student learning being more important than grading. On the contrary, the items participants agreed the least were associated with either grading or preparing students for standardized tests as being the purpose of assessment, and that students should consider grades as rewards for their good work. In addition, results also indicated that participants agreed on the need for further training on assessments, exams, and measurement of learning.

Table 1
Sample of descriptive statistics about in-service teachers´ perceived views about assessment

	N	Mean	Standard deviation
1. My undergraduate training on assessment was adequate.	290	3,10	1,126
3. It is important to carry out a diagnostic exam before teaching a topic or skill.	290	4,30	1,076
4. The purpose of classroom assessment is grading.	289	1,91	1,001
7. Exams help me focus on the skills/knowledge my students need.	290	3,87	0,941
8. The purpose of classroom assessment is to prepare students for standardized tests.	289	2,41	1,146
9. Students should consider grades as rewards for their good work.	287	2,49	1,191
12. The purpose of classroom assessment is to monitor students´ learning progress.	290	4,40	0,883
14. Providing personalized comments about students´ learning is more important than grading.	290	4,04	1,042
16. Students should consider grades as feedback to improve.	288	3,75	1,117
18. I need more training on assessment, exams, and measurement of learning.	290	4,05	1,031

Note. 1= Strongly disagree   2= Disagree   3= Neutral   4= Agree   5= Strongly agree

In addition, an exploratory factor analysis (a model about how the variables are related and where variation comes from in the data) was conducted with the method of maximum likelihood using the Oblimin rotation method, which allows to get a simple structure while allowing the factors to be correlated one another. From the analysis, two factors were identified. Factor 1 was related to **assessment as a resource for the learning process**, while factor 2 was associated with **assessment for performance on standardized testing.** As shown in Table 2, in-service teachers´ self-reported views tended to converge more with subscale items related to factor 1, rather than factor 2.

Table 2
Sample of in-service teachers´ exploratory factor analysis about perceived views of assessment

Factor	Items	Factor loading
Factor 1: **Assessment as a resource for the learning process** Mean: 3,82 SD: 0,590 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,762	12. The purpose of classroom assessment is to monitor students´ learning progress.	0,684
	7. Exams help me focus on the skills/knowledge my students need.	0,598
	14. Providing personalized feedback about student learning is more important than grading.	0,540
	2. The purpose of classroom assessment is to determine whether students master the learning outcomes.	0,525
	16. Students should consider grades as feedback to improve.	0,499
	3. It is important to carry out a diagnostic exam before teaching a topic or skill.	0,485
	10. The purpose of classroom assessment is to make students responsible for their own learning.	0,426
	17. The purpose of classroom assessment is to motivate students.	0,412
	13. Students´ effort should be considered when grading.	0,327
Factor 2: **Assessment for performance on standardized testing** Mean: 2,40 SD: 0,862 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,739	8. The purpose of classroom assessment is to prepare students for standardized assessment.	0,743
	4. The purpose of classroom assessment is grading.	0,630
	11. Teaching for testing is alright as long as the test is well designed.	0,612
	9. Students should consider grades as rewards for their good work.	0,577
KMO test= 0,78; Bartlett´s test: 0,00; Total explained variance: 41,8%.		

Furthermore, the sample for this factor analysis seems to be acceptable based on the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test result (a measure to determine how suited the data is for factor analysis and sampling adequacy for each variable in the model). The Barlett test value (it is used to test samples from populations with equal variances) indicated that the sample presented a homogenous variation. However, the total variance of the sample could be vaguely explained by the factors identified. Lastly, the Cronbach's Alpha values (a measure of internal consistency) obtained indicate that the subscale items presented an acceptable level of correlation.

3.2. Participants´ self-reported assessment skills

Regarding self-reported assessment skills, participants´ responses indicated that in-service teachers considered themselves more competent in items related to making sure the test included all content taught in class, using results of assessment to plan lessons, and assigning grades fairly to every student. However, participants perceived as the weakest skills items related to calculating variance (standard deviation), calculating central tendency measures (mean, median, and mode), and carrying out analysis of activities (according to difficulty or discrimination) for tests.

Table 3
Sample of descriptive statistics about self-reported assessment skills

	Classroom assessment skills		
	N	Mean	Stand. Deviat.
2. Formulates open questions.	290	4,04	0,782
4. Explains scores of standardized tests to others.	290	3,40	1,143
5. Calculates central tendency indicators (mean, median, and mode) for tests.	290	3,03	1,166
6. Carries out analysis of activities (difficulty or discrimination) of test items.	287	3,32	1,019
8. Assesses individual student participation during the class.	290	4,05	0,843
10. Assesses through the use of a portfolio.	287	3,37	1,117
13. Uses assessment results to plan a lesson.	289	4,17	0,699
14. Communicates assessment results to others.	288	3,99	0,959
19. Makes sure that the test includes all the content taught in class.	290	4,18	0,774
24. Assigns grades fairly to every student.	290	4,14	0,832
29. Calculates variance (standard deviation) when designing a test.	287	2,84	1,174

Moreover, exploratory factor analysis was carried out using the method of extraction of maximum likelihood with the oblimin rotation method, to identify emerging factors related to the perceived assessment skills of the in-service teachers. As presented in Table 4, three factors emerged: Factor 1 **design and feedback of assessment instruments**, factor 2 **analysis and communication of parametric results**, and factor 3 **skill to integrate student effort and progress**. The sample for this analysis was adequate according to the KMO test. Bartlett´s test indicated that the variation of the data was uniform, despite that the total variance association to the factors identified was weak. In terms of reliability, the subscale items presented a high level of consistency and correlation in all three factors based on the Cronbach's Alpha values.

Table 4

Sample of exploratory factor analysis about in-service teachers´ perceived assessment skills

Factor	Items	Factor loading
Factor 1: **Design and feedback of assessment instruments** Mean:3,93 SD: 0,495 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,89	21. Grades answers to open questions fairly and consistently.	0,707
	25. Uses assessment results to evaluate the improvement of the class.	0,665
	13. Uses assessment results to plan a lesson.	0,650
	12. Determines why students make specific mistakes.	0,565
	24. Assigns grades fairly to every student.	0,565
	23. Constructs rubrics to assess students objectively.	0,561
	14. Communicates results of assessment to others.	0,470
	27. Formulates true or false items.	0,458
	28. Provides written feedback when delivering grades.	0,355
Factor 2: **Analysis and communication of parametric results** Mean: 3,28 SD: 0,725 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,80	6. Carries out analysis of activities (difficulties or discrimination) of test items.	0,745
	5. Calculates central tendency indicators (mean, median or mode) of tests.	0,672
	29. Calculates variance (standard deviation) when designing tests.	0,632
	10. Assesses through the use of a portfolio.	0,379
Factor 3: **Skill to integrate student effort and progress** Mean: 3,60 SD: 0,867 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,84	16. Considers student effort when grading.	-0,848
	15. Considers student progress when grading.	-0,835
KMO test= 0,88; Bartlett´s test: 0,00; Total explained variance : 43,7%.		

In sum, in-service teachers perceived themselves as relatively skilled in the sets of assessment skills identified, however, the participants' strongest skills were oriented towards factor 1 **design and assessment of assessment instruments**.

3.3. In-service teachers´ perceived frequent practices

According to the participants´ self-reported assessment practices, as shown in Table 5, the most frequent practices had to do with communicating assessment results to others, assigning grades fairly to every student, and making sure the test includes all content taught in class. Therefore, the mean scores of the perceived frequent practices are very similar and consistent with the mean scores from the perceived assessment skills from Table 3.

Table 5
Sample of descriptive statistics about self-reported frequent assessment practices

Items	Frequency of classroom assessment practices		
	N	Mean	Stand. Deviat.
2. Formulates open questions.	284	3,81	0,968
4. Explains scores of standardized tests to others.	282	3,02	1,255
5. Calculates central tendency indicators (mean, median and mode) for tests.	280	2,64	1,276
6. Carries out analysis of activities (difficulty or discrimination) of test items.	282	2,85	1,220
8. Assesses individual student participation during the class.	283	3,88	0,984
10. Assesses through the use of portfolio	280	2,80	1,363
13. Uses assessment results to plan a lesson.	281	4,00	0,874
14. Communicates assessment results to others.	282	4,39	0,858
19. Makes sure that the test includes all content taught in class.	279	4,25	0,846
24. Assigns grades fairly to every student.	279	4,36	0,819
29. Calculates variance (standard deviation) when designing a test.	273	2,39	1,267

Likewise, participants´ least frequent practices perceived were directly connected to the in-service teachers´ weakest skills portrayed in Table 3. These practices are calculating variance (standard deviation), calculating central tendency measures (mean, median, mode), and carrying out analysis of activities (difficulty or discrimination) of test items.

The perceived frequency of assessment practices was analyzed considering the three factors that emerged from the exploratory factor analysis performed earlier, as shown on Table 6.

Table 6
Descriptive statistics of frequency of in-service teachers´ self-reported assessment practices.

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Frequency of design and feedback of assessment instruments	266	3,88	0,55
Frequency of analysis and communication of parametric results	269	2,93	0,90
Frequency of skill to integrate student effort and progress	279	3,52	1,05

Frequency: 1=Never 2=Occasionally 3= Sometimes 4= Often 5= Very often

Consequently, it was observed that in-service teachers´ most frequent practices are directly connected to factor 1 **design and feedback of assessment instruments**. Such a finding matches the in-service teachers´ perceived skills since their strongest skills are related to the same factor. Hence, teachers frequently carry out the assessment practices they perceived themselves as better at. Conversely, participants´ least frequent practices are related to factor 2 **analysis and communication of parametric results**, which is also their self-reported weakest skill set.

4. Discussion

This quantitative, non-experimental, and cross-sectional study has endeavored to provide an answer to the question: What are the Chilean in-service teachers´ perceived views, skills, and frequent practices regarding assessment? In order to do so, the discussion of findings has been organized into three parts. The first two parts focus on the analysis of each specific objective of this research, integrating statistical evidence and theoretical support. The last part deals with implications for in-service teachers´ training.

4.1. Specific Objective 01: Identify the participants´ perceived views about assessment

Findings revealed that in-service teachers perceived to be more in agreement with the following subscale items, according to its mean score:

a) Item 12: The purpose of assessment is to monitor students´ learning process (4.40)
b) Item 3: It is important to carry out a diagnostic exam before teaching a topic or skill (4.30)
c) Item 18: I need more training on assessment, exams, and measurement of learning (4.05)
d) Item 14: Providing personalized comments about students´ learning is more important than grading (4.04)

The fact that most of the participants agreed with item 12, regarding monitoring student learning as the purpose of assessment may hint at that in-service teachers´ perceived views are in tune with contemporary views of assessment as a process, such as the one provided by Bachman & Damböck (10). Additionally, the participants´ understanding of assessment can be connected to being more oriented towards formative assessment (Scriven 5) and assessment for learning (A*f*L) as described by DeBoer & Leontjev (5), given the agreement with the relevance of feedback expressed in item 14, and also the use of formative assessment in the teaching process. Furthermore, there is consistency among these inferences because of the results of the exploratory factor analysis, in which the in-service teachers´ self-reported views converged on factor **assessment as a resource for the learning process**, instead of factor **assessment for performance on standardized testing**. Accordingly, in-service teachers disagreed the most with subscale items such as item 9: Students should consider grades as rewards for their good work (2.49), and item 8: The purpose of classroom assessment is to prepare students for standardized assessment (2.41). The in-service teachers´ disagreement about assessment for the performance in standardized tests is not an unpopular school of thought. Raudiene (514) reported teachers as being anxious and upset about external assessment and standardized testing and the pressure associated with it.

Thus, it could be inferred that in-service teachers´ perceived views are directed towards monitoring student learning, which is connected to the use of formative assessment, and assessment *for* learning culture (DeBoer & Leontjev 5) in their classroom, given the importance of feedback that teachers place in order to guide learning. A compelling contrast is made when comparing the Chilean in-service teachers' self-reported views and the Tanzanian teachers´ perceptions about assessment (Ndalichako 326). The

main difference is that Chilean participants may be focused more on assessment as a process through monitoring students´ learning, while Tanzanian teachers prioritize decision-making about teaching and learning as the purpose of assessment. Last but not least, it is necessary to highlight that the participants still believed that more training on assessment, exams, and measurement of learning is needed. This is clearly a call for more training and professional development on language assessment literacy.

4.2. Specific Objective 02: Inquire about the in-service teachers´ self-reported assessment skills and frequent practices

Considering participants´ perceived assessment skills and practices, it is possible to affirm that both are related to the factor **design and feedback of assessment instruments.** On the one hand, in-service teachers reported that their strongest assessment skills were related to the following subscale items according to their mean score:

a) Item 19: Making sure the test included all content taught in class (4.18).
b) Item 13: Using assessment results to plan lessons (4.17).
c) Item 24: Assigning grades fairly to every student (4.14).

The relatively high mean scores that item 19 and 24 presented is very favorable as it may be considered a good indicator of teachers' commitment towards complying with the different assessment principles, such as reliability, validity, and washback, and therefore, trying to ensure que quality of the assessment process. Moreover, such professional commitment and concern for fairness and assessment equity have also been argued by Raudiene (514). However, it is always important to remember that all teachers bring their own biases and beliefs to the act of language assessment. These biases and beliefs operate at unconscious or conscious levels, and they do have an impact on the way teachers conceive assessment, testing, teaching and learning. There is always a reasonable difference between what teachers claim and self-report they do when they assess students and what they actually do when assessing in the classroom. In addition, participants´ agreement with item 13 implies in-service teachers´ perceived skills follow a view of assessment in which the gathering of learners´ data and consequent judgment "provide information to be used as

feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (Black & William 8). In contrast, based on the low mean scores obtained, participants perceived themselves as not being very proficient at calculating variance or standard deviation (2.84), and calculating central tendency measures, including the mean, median, and mode (3.03).

On the other hand, in-service teachers´ frequent practices included the ones described earlier in items 24, 19, and also item 14: communicating assessment results to others, which was the most frequent of all. As a result, teachers´ perceived assessment skills which they felt more confident about, were in fact the practices they carried out more often. Correspondingly, in-service teachers' least frequent practices were related to their weakest skills, namely, calculating variance (item 29) and central tendency indicators (item 5). Therefore, it is highly likely that the participants' perceived view of needing further training expressed is related to their deficiencies identified in the factor of analysis and communication of parametric results. Nevertheless, by paying attention to these statistical skill needs, in-service teachers might be able to improve their level of language assessment literacy (LAL), particularly improving the aspects related to the knowledge perspective defined by Giraldo (190). As a result, teachers would be able to understand and use the scores from assessment, develop more insight into their students´ learning, and inform better decisions (Black and William 8, Bachman and Damböck 10, DeBoer and Leontjev 5).

4.3. Implications for in-service teachers´ training

Regardless of the educational level, the type of school and courses that are usually taught, teachers´ views, skills and practices about assessment can never be taken for granted. Despite participants' perceived assessment as a resource for the learning process, and self-reported skills and frequent practices related to assessment and feedback of assessment instruments, their professional development is not over yet. The need for further training on assessment, exams, and measurement of learning expressed by the in-service teachers through the sub-scale cannot be taken lightly. As stated earlier, a better understanding of parametric results would greatly benefit in-service teachers because it would enable them to have a more accurate insight about their students' learning, needs and

deficiencies, and consequently, make better decisions about learning, for example planning a remedial lesson or reviewing and redesigning assessment instruments. Then, how could teachers access training courses on assessment? There is a myriad of viable options for the short term such as enrolling in free or paid courses online, pursuing a postgraduate program, requesting assessment workshops from employers, and simply asking for statistical support from colleagues. Nonetheless, in the long term, a more practical proposal would be to encourage teachers to start progressively conducting action research in their own classroom, even informally. That would provide an authentic reason for teachers to overcome their parametric result analysis weaknesses and start methodically improving the different problems they find regarding their students' learning.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of the present quantitative, non-experimental, and cross-sectional was to inquire about Chilean in-service teachers´ perceived views, skills, and frequent practices about classroom assessment. Findings revealed that participants' perceived views of assessment were associated with the factor **assessment as a resource for the learning process** and considered monitoring students´ learning as its main purpose. In addition, in-service teachers emphasized the relevance of carrying out a diagnostic exam before teaching a topic or skill, and the provision of personalized feedback as being more important than grading itself. Moreover, results from both self-reported assessment skills and frequent practices were connected to the factor **design and feedback of assessment instruments**, given that the in-service teachers´ strongest skills were intersected by their most frequent practices sharing a similar nature.

In contrast, participants disagreed with perceived views which promoted grades as a reward for students' good work or the preparation for standardized testing as the purpose of assessment. In-service teachers also expressed the need for further training on assessment, exams, and measurement of learning. Such a concern may be connected to the participants´ weakest skills and least frequent practices, for instance, calculating variance and central tendency indicators. These skills and practices were related to the factor **analysis and**

communication of parametric results that emerged from the exploratory factor analysis performed.

To conclude, conducting research addressing how in-service teachers perceive assessment, their own skills, and practices should be encouraged further by primary, secondary, and higher education institutions to understand more teachers' and students´ motivation, struggles, and hopes. Research allows teachers to reflect upon their unique and diverse micro-universes inside their classroom, question and challenge their methods and as a result, bring forth innovation for the sake of students´ learning even beyond the classroom.

5.1. Limitations

This study provided a great opportunity to learn about the Chilean in-service teachers´ perceived views about assessment, their strengths, weaknesses, and common practices. However, this process was not without some drawbacks. The first setback experienced was the lack of contact with participants in a face-to-face modality, due to the current Covid-19 pandemic crisis and the traveling restrictions that ensued worldwide. To address such limitations, the assessment instrument was administered online, and participants submitted it through the same means of communication. The second disadvantage was the in-service teachers that lived in the most remote rural areas encountered conditions of poor internet connection and access, which proved the contact and follow-up between research and participants more difficult than anticipated. Also, the submission of the data collection instrument was less prompt due to the same connectivity problems. Finally, a serious dilemma encountered was the decrease of the initial total number of participants. This was due to the fact that some of them were made redundant as a consequence of the change in the teaching conditions during the pandemic, especially in 2021. Unfortunately, this led to some participants drastically losing their motivation and ending up quitting the project. Nevertheless, despite the difficulties and problems encountered throughout the research process, the study managed to come to fruition, and it overcame its challenges successfully. More importantly, several lessons (especially in

adaptability) were learned and surely will contribute to perfecting research practice for future projects.

5.2. Further research and recommendations

Teaching and research may be considered as two aspects of the same coin. In many cases, teaching is shaped by breakthroughs in modern research. In others is teaching which provides compelling topics, inspires, and challenges research through the diverse situations and dilemmas found in the classroom. This quantitative study is not an exception, and it was triggered by the need to understand how teachers perceived assessment, their own skills, and frequent practices. Though an answer was found, it can be certainly complemented by being researched further. This study encourages researchers to continue examining teachers' perceived views on assessment at primary, secondary, and higher education levels and contrast their findings considering the participants' gender, age, years of service, and type of institutions. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to do follow up on the in-service teachers who participated in this study, to analyze if the way they understand assessment has changed or remains the same, and to see if they were able to find a solution to overcome their weakest skills and less frequent practices related to analysis and communication of parametric results. Another appealing route for future research would be to conduct a similar type of research on pre-service teachers of English and compare and contrast their perceived views, skills, and common practices with the ones of in-service teachers, such as the participants of this project. Finally, this study encourages teachers to continue reflecting on their own practice, dare to innovate, and improve their methods by integrating research gradually into their classroom and benefit immensely from the consideration of their students´ views, feelings, and feedback on assessment and their own teaching style.

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