

Attitudes of EFL Iraqi University Teachers toward Online Assessment before, during, and after COVID -19 Pandemic



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Date of research submission :17/1 /2025

Date of publication acceptance : 27/2/2025

Date of publication :28/9/2025

FA/202509/29E/22/666



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Abstract

The global pandemic of the coronavirus illness 2019 (COVID-19) has had a disastrous effect on every industry. Furthermore, the education system is still suffering from the terrible consequences of lockdown. It caused colleges and universities to close for an extended period of time; as a result, traditional education quickly gave way to online instruction.

Despite the rapid shift to online learning and assessment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is limited understanding of how EFL (English as a Foreign Language) university teachers in Iraq perceive online assessments at different stages of the pandemic.

Therefore, the present study aims to explore EFL Iraqi teachers' attitudes toward using online assessment at pre, during, post pandemic. The researchers adopted a questionnaire which divided into three parts each part contains (10) items, in order to enhance the study, the researchers used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions which contains (5) items. The items of the questionnaire and interview designed specifically in order to study how teachers' attitudes towards online assessments evolved over time, identifying key factors influencing their perceptions and acceptance.

The data was collected from Iraqi EFL teachers chosen randomly from different universities. The data are analyzed by using descriptive statistics of SPSS 26 software program. According to the results, the researchers present some recommendations.

Key Words: Attitudes, EFL University Teachers, Online Assessment, COVID -19 Pandemic

اتجاهات مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعات العراقية نحو
التقييم الالكتروني قبل وأثناء وبعد جائحة كوفيد – 19
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تاريخ استلام البحث : 2025/1/17 - تاريخ قبول النشر : 2025/2/27

تاريخ النشر : 2025/9/28

FA/202509/29E/22/666



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الملخص

كان لانتشار فيروس كورونا 2019 (COVID-19) تأثير كبير على مجالات الحياة كافة مما ادى الى توقفها على جميع الاصعدة ومن بينها الصناعة والتجارة

والتعليم وغيرها، ولا يزال النظام التعليمي يعاني من العواقب الوخيمة لهذا التوقف والإغلاق، حيث تسبب الحجر الصحي في إغلاق الكليات والجامعات لفترة طويلة من الزمن؛ ونتيجة لذلك، سرعان ما أفسح التعليم التقليدي المجال للتعليم عبر الإنترنت.

وعلى الرغم من التحول السريع إلى التعلم والتقييم عبر الإنترنت بسبب جائحة كوفيد-19، إلا أن هناك فهمًا محدودًا لكيفية إدراك معلمي جامعات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية) في العراق للامتحانات الالكترونية في مراحل مختلفة من الوباء.

لذلك، تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف مواقف معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق تجاه استخدام التقييم عبر الإنترنت في مرحلة ما قبل وأثناء وبعد الوباء، وتبنى الباحثون استبانة مقسمة إلى ثلاثة أجزاء، يحتوي كل جزء على (10) فقرات، ومن أجل تعزيز الدراسة، استخدم الباحثون المقابلات شبه المنظمة ذات الأسئلة المفتوحة التي تحتوي على (5) فقرات. وقد تم تصميم عناصر الاستبيان والمقابلة خصيصًا لدراسة كيفية تطور مواقف المعلمين تجاه التقييمات عبر الإنترنت مع مرور الوقت، وتحديد العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر على تصوراتهم وقبولهم. تم جمع البيانات من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حيث تم اختيارهم عشوائيًا من جامعات مختلفة، وتم تحليل البيانات باستخدام الإحصاء الوصفي لبرنامج SPSS 26، وفي ضوء النتائج قدم الباحثون بعض التوصيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاتجاهات، معلمي اللغة الانكليزية اللغة، الامتحانات الالكترونية، جائحة كورونا

1. Introduction

1.1 General Background

During the lockdown and the spread of corona virus (COVID-19) many educational institutions around the world were struggling to find an alternative solution in order to not to lose the whole ongoing semester. As a result online learning becomes the only solution for this challenge. Therefore, many educational institutions turn to online courses instead of face to face courses thus assessment during emergent situations should be also online form.

Online – learning can be seen as a tool which can facilitate learning –teaching process and make learning environment more students –centered and more flexible as well as it can help the students to depend on themselves since they can choose the time, place, and also enhance the interaction between the students. (Arinal Rahman, 2022:16)

1.2 Problem of the study

The rapid shift to online assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted teaching and learning practices in higher education worldwide, including Iraq. While online assessment provided a necessary solution during the crisis, its effectiveness, acceptance, and long-term sustainability among EFL university instructors remain uncertain. Prior to the pandemic, many instructors relied on traditional assessment methods, often lacking exposure to digital tools. The sudden transition forced them to adapt to unfamiliar technologies, raising concerns about their attitudes, perceived challenges, and the effectiveness of online assessments.

However, as universities gradually return to in-person or hybrid learning, it remains unclear whether instructors view online assessment as a valuable long-term strategy or merely a temporary necessity. Understanding their attitudes before, during, and after the pandemic is crucial for informing future assessment policies and digital integration in Iraq's EFL classrooms. This study seeks to explore these attitudes, identify key challenges and benefits, and determine whether online assessment will continue to play a role in post-pandemic education.

1.3 Aim

The present study aims at assessing and comparing the attitudes of EFL Iraqi University teachers toward the use of online assessment before, during, and after COVID -19

1.4 The Limits of the Study

The study is limited to the Iraqi EFL teachers at the universities in Baghdad

1.5 Research Tools

The present study adopted Mixed-methods approach, data was collected by using questionnaire and semi –structure interviews with open ending questions. The questionnaire contains 30 items; divided into three parts:

1. Part One: contains (10 items) asked about teachers' attitudes toward online assessment before Covid -19
2. Part Two: contains (10 items) asked about teachers' attitudes toward online assessment during Covid -19
3. Part Three: contains (10 items) asked about teachers' attitudes toward online assessment after Covid -19

The subjects are required to choose only one option from a variety of three options. The statistical analysis of the data was calculated by using SPSS 26 software program

The researchers adopted semi –structure interviews with open ending questions which contains (5 items). The Interviews with educators provide qualitative insights into their pedagogical approaches, challenges faced, and perceptions of the impact of AI on critical thinking in literature education. The test was carried out on 10/6/2024.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Online Assessment

Assessment is like the heart of teaching, teaching without assessment cannot be successes since teaching become online, and assessment should be also shifted into online assessment. Therefore, assessment whether it was online or offline, it should be related to course objectives and it must be designed specifically in order to measure students' achievement correctly and enhanced learning processes.

Diarsini et al (2022: 82) mention that in online assessment, the teacher can evaluate students' knowledge through distance examination practices or remote assessment tools. Diarsini et al (ibid) add that the application of online assessment courses can be difficult for some teachers; while some teachers found that using online forms whether it was used for teaching or assessing, was easy.

Al Maqbali et al (2022: 73) state that online assessment is used to measure students' performance by using internet –based instruments. Thus, online assessment can be used in two forms: synchronous online assessment could be auto scoring feedback quizzes or presentation. While asynchronous online assessment

may took the shape of assignments, projects, and e –portfolios. So, online assessment aims to evaluate students by using information technology or any web –based measurement instruments.

According to Doğan et al (2020:3), online assessment contains four categories:

A. The teacher evaluates students’ product such as writing an essay, research reports, presentation, and records audio or visual.

B. Score students’ product automatically such as short answers, matching, gap filling, true false, and MCQ.

C. Online –discussions activities such as discussion group, case study, and role play.

D. Web –publishing, like sharing web –pages, sharing documents, and wikis.

2.2 Teachers’ Attitudes toward Online Assessment Before COVID-19

Online assessments were starting to be used more frequently before the COVID-19, but they weren't yet accepted as standard procedure in every educational institution. They provided important benefits in terms of adaptability, effectiveness, and immediate response. But obstacles including academic honesty, technical difficulties, and the need for improved support and training for educators and learners prevented them from being widely adopted.

According to Banani, & Abdul-Kareem, (2022: 5518), before the academic year 2019–2020, Iraqi universities had never used online learning as an alternative learning method. As a forced substitute, Iraqi educational institutions introduced online assessment and online learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a results, both of Iraqi teachers and Iraqi students have faced many difficulties with online learning such as internet access, as well as the majority of them lack sufficient computer competence.

Many educational institutions around the world used an integrated or mixed mode by combing technology with

classroom instructions before the spread of COVID -19. In this case the use of technology with teaching was used as a supplement not as a replacement of the teaching courses. (Momeni, 2022: 5). For example, at Aston University which is one of the top universities in Birmingham, United Kingdom, Some aspects of blended learning were introduced before the pandemic occurred. For instance, students utilized Blackboard, attend *Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)*, to access course materials, finish online tests, and turn in homework. Practice multiple-choice questions were distributed to students during exam revision sessions, and they responded to the questions using polling software (Bashir, et al, 2021:2)

2.3 Teachers' Attitudes toward Online Assessment During COVID-19

The pandemic has presented serious difficulties for educators in their daily work. Lockdowns during COVID -19 and the forced closure of schools, colleges, and universities have been the direct effects. Emergency Remote Education (ERE) is the term for educational institutions' emergency response during pandemics to replace a present teaching and assessment into online teaching and online assessment. Therefore, there is a need to modify material that has been taught in present classes into either blended learning or completely remote learning. (Bashir, et al, 2021:2)

The following points summarize the main challenges that most of teachers faced it with online assessments:

1. Handrayani, (2022:11-12) states that teachers' challenges with online assessment can be categorized into students' background, teachers' low skill in technology, and school policy. Teachers' challenges that related to students' background included: internet disconnection, dishonestly, lack of motivation, as well as, most of teachers faced difficulties in electing relevant learning resources for online assessments. Furthermore, teachers were not allowed to use any other assessment options according to school regulation. In the meantime, when teachers administer online tests, they face two

difficulties. They had to first solve the problems that students were having, like academic dishonesty, a bad internet connection, and a lack of motivation. In order to develop more strategies for online assessment, educators also needed to improve their abilities.

2. Less –motivated and discourage students may become the biggest challenges for the teacher during online assessment. Many students are disengaged with online classes since they were dissatisfied with online contents; they used to participate with their teacher and their colleagues. As a result, these less motivated students were frequently late in sending their assignments until the date had passed. (Diarsini, et al, 2022: 84). Additionally, due to the lack of teachers' direct control, many students can cheat by submitting assignment which made by others or they can download it from internet; since online – learning allow the students to access many websites during online –classes and online assessment. Therefore, it will be very difficult for the teacher to determine the original work for each student (ibid: 84). In order to avoid the above problem, Kurniati, et al (2023: 2067) suggest a solution in which the teacher can change a type of question from objective into more subjective question for example; using writing an essay instead of MCQ questions. Besides, teacher can use test timer or limit the time that the students have to finish their exam, in this case only the student who is familiar with the content of the exam can answer the question. Therefore, the teacher can prevent the students from being dishonest or cheating on the exam.

3. Most of teachers faced difficulties with technology and they are unfamiliar with online teaching and online assessment. Thus, before online course is started, teachers require a training course in order to be familiar with online courses (Alruwais, 2018:36).

4. Designing a test items is not an easy procedures especially during pandemic since all testing processes should be done electronically by using online assessment. Meiantoni, et al (2021:34) mention that many teachers faced difficulties on preparing online –test items. They believed that online assessment items require more time to prepare than a presence

examinations. Additionally, teacher need more time in order to be familiar with the online assessment platform that is applied in English classes.

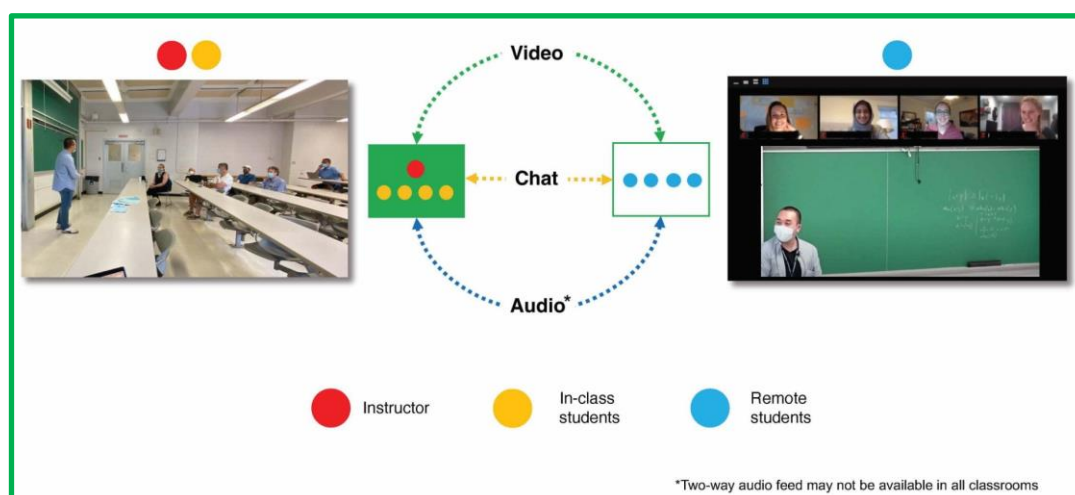
5. The teaching workload is more than just the numbers of hours the teacher spend in the teaching processes every lesson. Teachers'' efforts are increased as a result of development of online –lessons, designing a test items, helping students during online –courses. Therefore, overloading academic staff with instructional hours can effect on teaching process Al-Maqbali, & Raja, 2022:76).

2.4 Teachers' Attitudes toward Online Assessment After COVID-19

Olasina (2023:4) mentions that after COVID-19, there has been an extensive debate about whether to go back to traditional assessment methods or to supplement them with online methods. Some have even called for the use of only online tools and procedures for assessment.

Several universities around the world were already using strategies in order to make educational systems more flexible and meet their students' needs While part of the instructional process for blended learning is done online, there are alternative methods such as the *hybrid model*, which combines online and in-person instruction (Bashir, et al ,2021:2). Additionally, the *Hyflex* model of teaching also has been used which combines online and face to face learning. According to *Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning* (2020) *HyFlex* is a term that combines "*hybrid.*" with "*flexible.*". In order to achieve desired learning objectives, hybrid learning combines face to face learning and online learning in which all students are supposed to complete the same mix of online and in-person assignments. While the "*flexible.*" component of *HyFlex*, on the other hand, consists of giving students the freedom to choose how they interact with the course material and how they participate in it, both throughout the course and from session to session. See *figure (1)*

Fig. 1: HyFlex class: Instructor, face-to-face students, and remote students linked by video, audio, and chat technologies.



2.5 Previous Studies

2.5.1 Gupta et al (2023)

The study investigates using different techniques used in assessing students' performance during pandemic. The results show that university teachers used a variety of online assessment techniques during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these techniques were common, while others were quite unique, such as blogs and peer tutorial videos. The study highlighted the diverse approaches and varying levels of readiness among teachers, as well as the multifaceted challenges they faced in the online assessment landscape.

2.5.2 Banani & Abdul-Kareem (2022)

The study explores the attitudes of EFL Iraqi teachers in Iraqi universities toward online learning and online assessment. The results show that most of teachers believe that online teaching cannot be fully replaced with traditional face-to-face classroom interactions. As well as, Teachers generally prefer paper-based examinations over e-examinations. They find paper-based exams more reliable and a better measure of students' progress in learning English.

2.5.3 Zead Khalif & Alhamdwee (2022)

The study examines how online teaching was conducted in Iraqi universities during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The

results reveal that teachers require additional training in online teaching methods, highlighting the evolving nature of education. The need for high-quality teaching and effective evaluation has become more pressing, especially during the pandemic. Higher education institutions must demonstrate faculty readiness and professionalism, with online teaching being a critical component.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Questions

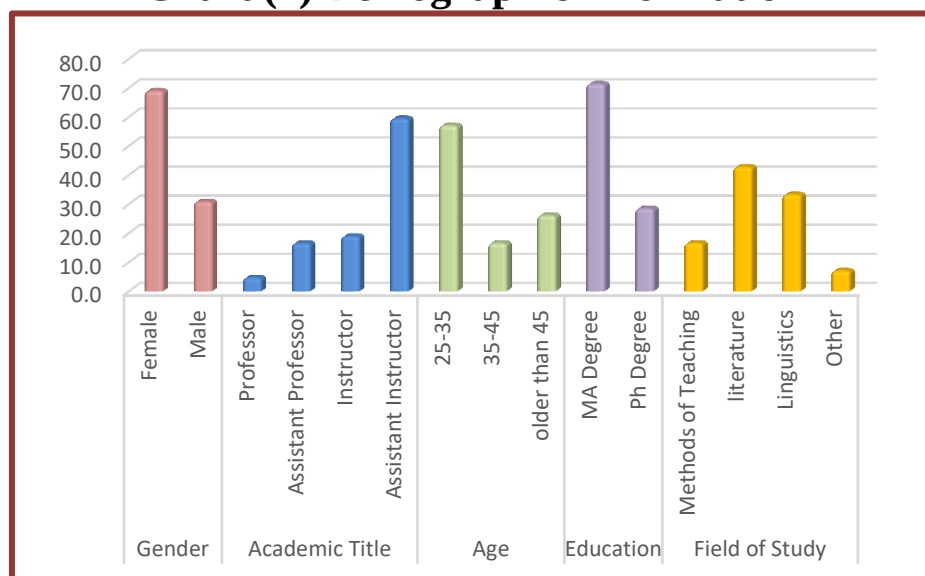
The present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What were the initial attitudes of EFL Iraqi university teachers toward online assessment prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. How did the attitudes of EFL Iraqi university teachers toward online assessment change during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. What are the current attitudes of EFL Iraqi university teachers toward online assessment in the post-pandemic period?

3.2 Subjects

The participants of the current study were 42 Iraqi EFL university teachers, chosen randomly from different Iraqi universities around Baghdad city; the following chart (1) shows more details about the participants:

Chart (1) Demographic Information



3.3 The Test

3.3.1 Test Validity and Reliability

In the current study, the questionnaire was selected for this type of research. The first version of the questionnaire comprised 28 items. Its face validity was established by presenting it to a group of experts in English language teaching, and linguistics who verified the accuracy of the wording and the clarity of the items. Their opinions and notes were considered carefully, leading to the addition of some items and the modification of others. As a result, the final version of the questionnaire consisted of 30 items.

In order to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, Alpha Cronbach was calculated to test the reliability of the questionnaire items; %80 is enough to admit the questionnaire for the students.

3.3.2 Pilot Study

The goal of conducting the pilot study is to assess the time needed to complete the questionnaire and to identify any hidden issues with specific items that may not be obvious during the initial design. Therefore, the pilot study was conducted with 10 teachers randomly selected from the sample on Sunday, 1/6/2024.

3.3.3 Administration of the Test

The questionnaire and the interview were applied on Wednesday 10/6/2024. The questionnaire sends electronically to the participants through their official e-mails. To save time and effort, the researchers used Google Form in order to write the items of the questionnaire and to collect their responses.

4 Data Analysis

4.1 Analysis of the Questionnaire

4.1.1 Analysis of Part One: Before Covid-19

The statistical analysis of part one of the questionnaire showed that the highest average goes to the last item (*Before the COVID-19 pandemic, plagiarism was a significant issue in my*

classes.) with mean 3.357 and Std. Deviation 1.143. Following by the second item (*I faced some technical difficulties in online assessment*) with mean 3.333 and Std. Deviation 0.928. These results reveal that plagiarism and technical difficulties were significant concerns for educators who use online forms before the COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas the lowest average was given to the first item (*I used online forms to examine my students before covid-19*) with mean 2.071 and Std. Deviation 1.021. Followed by fourth item (*I am not familiar with various online assessment tools and platforms*) with mean 2.714 and Std. Deviation 1.153. The first and fourth items with the lowest average scores reveal a limited pre-pandemic engagement with online examination forms and a general unfamiliarity with online assessment tools among educators.

According to table (1) the weighted average of the first part of the questionnaire (**Before Covid-19**) is 2.952, therefore, the general tendency for the first part is (*Neutral*), as a general tend according to 5-points Liker's scale since 2.952 lies on interval [2.60 – 3.39]. A neutral tendency toward online assessment before Covid-19 reveals variability in responses, in which some educators might have been comfortable and familiar with online assessment tools, others were not, leading to an overall balanced perspective.

Table (1) Analysis of Part One: Before Covid-19

Items	Questions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rink
1	I used online forms to examine my students before covid-19.	N	14	16	8	3	1	2.071	1.021	2
		%	33.3	38.1	19.0	7.1	2.4			
2	I faced some technical difficulties in online assessment	N	2	6	11	22	1	3.333	0.928	3
		%	4.8	14.3	26.2	52.4	2.4			
3	I used online assessment as supplementary tool rather than a fundamental component in my class.	N	6	8	8	17	3	3.071	1.217	3
		%	14.3	19.0	19.0	40.5	7.1			

4	I am not familiar with various online assessment tools and platforms	N	7	12	11	10	2	2.714	1.153	3
		%	16.7	28.6	26.2	23.8	4.8			
5	My workload increased significantly due to online assessments before the pandemic	N	4	11	15	11	1	2.857	1.001	3
		%	9.5	26.2	35.7	26.2	2.4			
6	My institution provides adequate support for online assessments	N	8	11	13	9	1	2.619	1.103	3
		%	19.0	26.2	31.0	21.4	2.4			
7	I found the process of scoring tests manageable and not overly time-consuming before the pandemic.	N	4	12	7	16	3	3.047	1.167	3
		%	9.5	28.6	16.7	38.1	7.1			
8	I found it difficult to design effective online assessments to measure some learning outcomes before the pandemic.	N	5	10	8	13	6	3.119	1.272	3
		%	11.9	23.8	19.0	31.0	14.3			
9	Sometimes I used online platforms to ask my students to submit their assignments electronically	N	5	6	6	20	5	3.333	1.223	3
		%	11.9	14.3	14.3	47.6	11.9			
10	Before the COVID-19 pandemic, plagiarism was a significant issue in my classes.	N	3	7	10	16	6	3.357	1.143	3
		%	7.1	16.7	23.8	38.1	14.3			
Mean				2.952						3
Std. Deviation				0.448						

4.1.2 Analysis of Part Two: During Covid-19

Table (2) for the second part of the questionnaire shows that the highest average go to the third item (*during the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of online assessments became obligatory for many educational institutions due to the lockdown*) with mean 4.523 and Std. Deviation 0.551. Followed by last item (*I found many students of my class submit assignments that include a high proportion of plagiarism and are directly copied from*

websites) with mean 4.285 and Std. Deviation 0.891. The highest average of third and last items indicate that during the lockdown led to the obligatory use of online assessments and a significant increase in plagiarism among students. In other hand, the lowest average goes to the eighth item (*I found it difficult to design effective online assessments during the pandemic*) with mean 3.238 and Std. Deviation 1.225. Followed by the seventh item (*I found that the transition to fully online assessments made scoring tests more challenging during the pandemic*) with mean 3.238 and Std. Deviation 1.225. The lowest average for the seventh and eighth items show a neutral tendency toward designing and scoring online assessment during the pandemic in which some teacher found these aspects manageable and others faced difficulties.

According to table (2) the weighted average of the second part of the questionnaire (***During Covid-19***) 3.776, therefore, the general tendency for the first part is (*Agree*), as a general tend according to 5-points Liker's scale since 3.776 lies on interval [3.40 – 4.19]. The overall agreement tendency indicated that most of teachers show agreement toward the items of the second part regarding their experiences with online assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table (2) Analysis of Part Two: During Covid-19

Items	Questions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rink
1	I used online forms to examine my students only during covid-19.	N	3	2	2	20	15	4.000	1.126	4
		%	7.1	4.8	4.8	47.6	35.7			
2	I faced many challenges when it comes to evaluate my students electronically such as overloaded platforms are one of the primary challenges I faced during online exams	N	2	6	8	23	3	3.452	0.992	4
		%	4.8	14.3	19.0	54.8	7.1			
3	during the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of online assessments became obligatory for many educational institutions due to the lockdown	N	0	0	1	18	23	4.523	0.551	5
		%	0	0	2.4	42.9	54.8			

4	I start to use various online assessment tools and platforms	N	0	3	2	28	9	4.023	0.748	4
		%	0	7.1	4.8	66.7	21.4			
5	I was overloaded with teaching hours during online teaching	N	0	3	12	22	5	3.690	0.780	4
		%	0	7.1	28.6	52.4	11.9			
6	I had access to sufficient technical support for online assessments during the pandemic.	N	0	6	12	21	3	3.500	0.833	4
		%	0	14.3	28.6	50.0	7.1			
7	I found that the transition to fully online assessments made scoring tests more challenging during the pandemic	N	2	10	10	14	6	3.285	1.132	3
		%	4.8	23.8	23.8	33.3	14.3			
8	I found it difficult to design effective online assessments during the pandemic.	N	3	11	8	13	7	3.238	1.225	3
		%	7.1	26.2	19.0	31.0	16.7			
9	Since testing becomes fully online during the pandemic, many students of my class fail to submit their assignments on time due to their poor technical capabilities	N	1	3	11	17	10	3.761	0.983	4
		%	2.4	7.1	26.2	40.5	23.8			
10	I found many students of my class submit assignments that include a high proportion of plagiarism and are directly copied from websites	N	1	1	3	17	20	4.285	0.891	5
		%	2.4	2.4	7.1	40.5	47.6			
Mean				3.776						4
Std. Deviation				0.401						

4.1.2 Analysis of Part Three: After Covid-19

The results of the Third part of the questionnaire shows that the highest average go to the fourth item (*I am familiar with various online assessment tools and platforms*) with mean 3.857 and Std. Deviation 0.813. Followed by the eighth item (*I think we can start to redesign assessments to fit the online format, ensuring they were still aligned with learning objectives*) with mean 3.738 and Std. Deviation 0.798. The high average for the fourth and eighth items show teachers' positive attitudes toward the familiarity of using different online assessment tools and their desire to redesign assessments for online formats. While, the lowest average goes to the first item (*I am still using online forms to examine my students after covid-19*) with mean 2.761 and Std. Deviation 1.205. Followed by fifth item (*My workload has remained high due to online assessments post-pandemic*)

with mean 3.142 and Std. Deviation 0.925. The lowest average of first and fifth items show disagreement among teachers for using online assessment after Covid-19, and neutral tendency on whether the workload has remained high due to online assessments post-pandemic

According to table (3) the weighted average of the third part of the questionnaire (**After Covid-19**) 3.352, therefore, the general tendency for the first part is (Neutral), as a general tend according to 5-points Liker's scale since 3.352 lies on interval [2.60 – 3.39]. The overall neutral tendency suggests that respondents had mixed feelings about their experiences with online assessments post-pandemic. This neutrality reflects a balance between continued use and adaptation to new or traditional assessment methods.

Table (3) Analysis of Part Three: After Covid-19

Items	Questions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rink
1	I am still using online forms to examine my students after covid-19.	N	7	13	7	13	2	2.761	1.205	3
		%	16.7	31.0	16.7	31.0	4.8			
2	Online assessment after the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present several challenges	N	2	7	10	20	3	3.357	1.007	3
		%	4.8	16.7	23.8	47.6	7.1			
3	I return to blending teaching with more emphasize on online platforms	N	3	6	14	18	1	3.190	0.968	3
		%	7.1	14.3	33.3	42.9	2.4			
4	I am familiar with various online assessment tools and platforms	N	1	1	8	25	7	3.857	0.813	4
		%	2.4	2.4	19.0	59.5	16.7			
5	My workload has remained high due to online assessments post-pandemic.	N	1	10	15	14	2	3.142	0.925	3
		%	2.4	23.8	35.7	33.3	4.8			
6	My institution encourages me to improve my lessons by using online assessments tools	N	2	9	11	19	1	3.190	0.968	3
		%	4.8	21.4	26.2	45.2	2.4			
7	I have integrated new technologies or methods for scoring tests after the pandemic.	N	2	7	13	19	1	3.238	0.932	3
		%	4.8	16.7	31.0	45.2	2.4			
8	I think we can start to redesign assessments to fit the online format, ensuring	N	0	3	11	22	6	3.738	0.798	4
		%	0	7.1	26.2	52.4	14.3			

	they were still aligned with learning objectives									
9	After Covid -19 The experiences during the pandemic have improved students' ability to submit assignments on time. Overall, my difficulties with assignment submissions have decreased from during COVID-19 to after the pandemic.	N	1	2	14	20	5	3.619	0.854	4
		%	2.4	4.8	33.3	47.6	11.9			
10	I have integrated new technologies or methods for detecting plagiarism after the pandemic in online assessment	N	3	2	13	22	2	3.428	0.940	4
		%	7.1	4.8	31.0	52.4	4.8			
Mean				3.352						3
Std. Deviation				0.521						

4.2 Analysis of the Interview

The present study adopts semi-structured interviews with the participants. Forty two teachers were interviewed for their experiences with online assessment through pre pandemic, during pandemic, and post pandemic. By collecting data directly from teachers, the study captures a comprehensive picture of how online assessments have evolved across different stages of the pandemic.

4.2.1 Technology Access and Usage

The results of the first question of the interview (***Do you have access to reliable internet at home***) indicated that the majority of the participant (37 teachers) mentioned that they had a access to reliable internet at home, this likely facilitates smooth engagement in online teaching, planning, and assessments, contributing to a more effective remote learning environment. These teachers may face fewer technical difficulties, enabling them to focus more on content delivery and student interaction. While only (5 teachers out of 42) mention that they didn't have access to reliable internet at home, this will express that those teachers who lack reliable internet at home may face more challenges such as disconnection in conducting online classes,

uploading materials, and limited ability to communicate effectively with students during online class.

The contrast between these two groups highlights the need to provide educational institutional with suitable solutions, especially in an increasingly digital educational environment, ensuring that all teachers have a reliable internet in order to enhance teaching processes.

4.2.2 Professional Development

The results of the second question of the interview (***Have you received any training on online assessment techniques? If yes, please specify***) indicated that the majority of the participant (29 teachers) mentioned that they haven't received any training in online assessment techniques. Some teachers said that they depend on themselves in order to know how to use online forms: *"In fact no But I have improved my electronic skills through useful websites"* (Participant 35)

As a results, the lack of training on how to deal with different online assessment forms suggest that many teachers may be unprepared to assess their students electronically.

While (13 teachers) mention that they have received training on online assessment, their responses indicate a variety of training experiences and sources, as some of the teachers mentioned:

"Yes. The training was by Ministry of higher education" (Participant 3)

"Yes through workshops" (Participant 6)

"Yes, I have enrolled in multiple training courses on online assessment techniques, including those offered by American English for Educators" (Participant 19)

"Yes, I have received training in online assistance techniques, including communication skills, problem-solving, and providing technical support" (Participant 35)

4.2.3 Feedback and Improvement

The results of the third question of the interview (***How do you provide feedback to students in an online assessment environment***) show a variety of responses such as:

“By asking them on platform, and discussing together their answers” (Participant 2)

“By providing them with written feedback and real-time feedback” (Participant 10)

“I write them a feedback in the comment section appreciating their efforts” (Participant 18)

“By both collecting their mistakes and publishing them as points in one post related to feedback, or by replying individually to each student” (Participant 19)

“I usually write my feedback using Google Forms. Each student can receive his or her own personalized feedback” (Participant 20)

“I provide feedback to students in an online assessment environment by offering clear, timely, and personalized comments, highlighting strengths, and using interactive tools like annotations and audio or video feedback” (Participant 35)

The above responses indicated that the majority of teachers used different techniques to provide their student with feedback in online assessment. This variety reflects the adaptability and creativity of teachers in addressing the unique challenges of online assessment.

4.2.4 Digital Tools

The responses to the fourth interview question (***Which of the following digital tools you were used during online assessment? Zoom app, Google Meet, WhatsApp group, YouTube, Google Forms? And Why***) indicate that the majority of teachers show a clear preference for certain digital tools during online assessments, such as Google Meet and Google Forms which seen as the most commonly used among teachers due to their availability, and their capacity to accommodate a large number of students, as noted by Participant 18.

One of the teachers said *“I used Google Meeet, Zoom app, and Google Forms because they have the advantage of being able to receive a great number of students to attend lectures and be examined under the same conditions”* (Participant 18).

On other hand, one of the teachers said that he used all digital tools *“during online assessment I used Zoom app, Google Meet, WhatsApp group, YouTube, Google Forms, Google class and Telegram in order to increase the ability of my students to various kinds of E-learning + each app has its own benefits, such as the quick access for WhatsApp for example”* (Participant 29)

(Participant 16) agree with (Participant 29) in using all of the available tools *“All of them, according to what i needed to provide during the lecture and how they could submit their work”*

These responses indicate that teachers were very careful in selecting which digital tools should be used during online assessment; therefore, there selection is done according to availability, functionality, and the specific needs of their students.

The last question in the interview (***What challenges have you faced with online assessments that were not covered in the questionnaire***) which specifically designed in order to make sure if there was any issues that were not covered by the questionnaire, the majority of Participants mention that the questionnaire covered all issues related to online assessment, except the following comment by some teachers:

“Lack of knowledge, power shortage, students were careless” (Participant 5)

“Technical challenges related to sound system and Internet connection” (Participant 18)

“Email overload and distraction at home” (Participant 25)

5. Discussion of the Results

The results show a clear progression in familiarity and adaptation to online assessment. While initial challenges were appeared before the pandemic, forced adoption during COVID-

19 led to a general agreement on the necessity of online assessment. However, post-pandemic attitudes remain mixed, with some educators continuing to use online assessment methods while others revert to traditional approaches. These results suggest that further training and institutional support could help bridge the gap, ensuring that online assessment becomes a more sustainable and effective practice in the long run.

6. Conclusions

The following conclusions obtained from current study are:

1. Regarding the first question of the present study (***What were the initial attitudes of EFL Iraqi university teachers toward online assessment prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?***) Iraqi EFL teachers show neutral tendency toward online assessment which means that some teachers were familiar and used online assessment before covid, these teachers might have been comfortable with technology, already using digital tools in their teaching and assessment practices. On the other hand, there were some teachers might have been less familiar with online assessments, due to a lack of exposure, training, or confidence in the technology.

2. Regarding the second question of the current study (***How did the attitudes of EFL Iraqi university teachers toward online assessment change during the COVID-19 pandemic?***) Iraqi EFL teachers show agreement tendency toward the items in the second part (during covid), highlighting both the challenges and the necessities of this sudden shift to digital education which become obligatory for all the educational institutions during the pandemic. Therefore, the obligatory apply of online assessment produced a number of challenges particularly in increasing plagiarism issues, and the initial difficulties in adapting to new assessment methods.

3. Concerning the last question of the present study (***What are the current attitudes of EFL Iraqi university teachers toward online assessment in the post-pandemic period?***) Iraqi EFL teacher show neutral tendency toward using online assessment

after the pandemic. This neutrality suggests that teachers have mixed feelings about online assessments post-pandemic; which mean that while teachers have gained familiarity and see potential in redesigning online assessments, there is no strong consensus on whether to continue using these methods post-pandemic.

4. The majority of teaches have access to reliable internet at home; which is the most important key to have an effective online assessment.

5. Lacks of training for some teachers becomes the biggest challenges for them, thus there is a need for educational institutions to provide all teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct effective and consistent online assessments.

6. Iraqi EFL teachers express familiarity and comfort with specific platforms such as Google meet and Google forms.

7. Recommendations

Based on the current study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Provide ongoing technical support and resources to help teachers adapt to online assessment platforms.
2. Provide the teachers with enough opportunities to attend training courses for online assessment.
3. Adopting strategies for preventing plagiarism in online assessments.
4. Explore a hybrid approach that combines online and traditional assessment methods based on the context and needs of the course.
5. Continuously evaluate and refine the digital tools and platforms used for online assessments to ensure they are effective and user-friendly.

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Appendix: The Questionnaire

Dear Teachers

As a part of our research at Mustansiriyah University - College of Arts, we have conducted a study to check “Attitudes of EFL Iraqi University Instructors toward Online Assessment before, during, and after COVID -19 Pandemic” we appreciate your response to the following questionnaire.

Note: your response will be held in strictest confidence and will remain anonymous.

Demographic Information:

- Gender:
- Age:
- Academic Title:
- Education
- Field of Study

Part One: Before Covid-19						
N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I used online forms to examine my students before covid-19.					
2.	I faced some technical difficulties in online assessment					
3.	I used online assessment as supplementary tool rather than a fundamental component in my class.					
4.	I am not familiar with various online assessment tools and platforms					
5.	My workload increased significantly due to online assessments before the pandemic					
6.	My institution provides adequate support for online assessments					
7.	I found the process of scoring tests manageable and not overly time-consuming before the pandemic.					
8.	I found it difficult to design effective online assessments to measure some learning outcomes before the pandemic.					
9.	Sometimes I used online platforms to ask my students to submit their assignments electronically					
10.	Before the COVID-19 pandemic, plagiarism was a significant issue in my classes.					

Part Two: During Covid-19						
N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I used online forms to examine my students only during covid-19.					
2.	I faced many challenges when it comes to evaluate my students electronically such as overloaded platforms are one of the primary challenges I faced during online exams					
3.	during the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of online assessments became obligatory for many educational institutions due to the lockdown					

4.	I start to use various online assessment tools and platforms					
5.	I was overloaded with teaching hours during online teaching					
6.	I had access to sufficient technical support for online assessments during the pandemic.					
7.	I found that the transition to fully online assessments made scoring tests more challenging during the pandemic					
8.	I found it difficult to design effective online assessments during the pandemic.					
9.	Since testing becomes fully online during the pandemic, many students of my class fail to submit their assignments on time due to their poor technical capabilities					
10.	I found many students of my class submit assignments that include a high proportion of plagiarism and are directly copied from websites without modification or Paraphrasing					

<i>Part Three: After Covid-19</i>						
11. N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12.	I am still using online forms to examine my students after covid-19.					
13.	Online assessment after the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present several challenges					
14.	I return to blending teaching with more emphasize on online platforms					
15.	I am familiar with various online assessment tools and platforms					
16.	My workload has remained high due to online assessments post-pandemic.					
17.	My institution encourages me to improve my lessons by using online assessments tools					
18.	I have integrated new technologies or methods for scoring tests after the pandemic.					
19.	I think we can start to redesign assessments to fit the online format, ensuring they were still aligned with learning objectives					
20.	After Covid -19 The experiences during the pandemic have improved students' ability to submit assignments on time. Overall, my difficulties with assignment submissions have					

	decreased from during COVID-19 to after the pandemic.					
21.	I have integrated new technologies or methods for detecting plagiarism after the pandemic in online assessment					

Interview

1. **Technology Access and Usage** / Do you have access to reliable internet at home?
2. **Professional Development** / Have you received any training on online assessment techniques? If yes, please specify?
3. **Feedback and Improvement** / How do you provide feedback to students in an online assessment environment?
4. **Digital Tools** / Which of the following digital tools you were used during online assessment? Zoom app, Google Meet, WhatsApp group, YouTube, Google Forms? and Why?
5. What challenges have you faced with online assessments that were not covered in the questionnaire?