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Adapting Assessment for Diverse ELT Learners

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Abstract

This article comprehensively addresses the significance and complexities of adapting assessment for diverse ELT learners. The research design employs a literature review approach, systematically analyzing academic articles, reports, and case studies.The study identifies key concepts and patterns related to adapting assessment for diverse ELT learners. Diverse learners in ELT encompass individuals with varying identities, motivations, and language proficiency levels. Strategies to adapt assessment include incorporating culturally diverse materials, providing multiple assessment formats, considering individual language proficiency levels, and accommodating learners with disabilities. Clear assessment instructions and rubrics are also crucial for effective evaluation. Implementing adapted assessment faces challenges such as diverse academic abilities, linguistic backgrounds, and the need for collaboration with families and communities. Strategies to overcome these challenges include building trust, employing communication strategies, integrating digital storytelling, adapting assessments to online environments, and framing language learning as critical engagement. recognizing and accommodating diverse learners in ELT assessment is vital for creating equitable and inclusive educational experiences. This article provides educators with valuable insights and strategies to meet the diverse needs of their students.

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INTRODUCTION

The significance of diverse learners in English Language Teaching (ELT) is a topic that has been explored in various studies. Researchers have emphasized the importance of incorporating cultural diversity in ELT materials to equip learners with the ability to navigate different contexts (Ariawan et al., 2022). Additionally, the need for investigating diversity in ELT studies has been highlighted, indicating the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse needs of learners (Cesur, 2022). The concept of identity and its relationship to language learning and social change has also been discussed, particularly in the context of diasporic communities and their diverse needs and desires

for learning (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Furthermore, the inclusion of various accents and World Englishes in ELT has been recognized as beneficial for learners, exposing them to the diversity of English and enhancing their perspectives (Irgin, 2020; Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019). Recognizing and embracing the diversity of learners in ELT is crucial for creating inclusive and effective language learning environments.

Adapting assessment for diverse English Language Teaching (ELT) learners is of utmost importance to ensure equitable and inclusive education. Incorporating cultural representations from source, target, and international cultures in ELT materials is crucial for equipping learners with cultural diversity in different contexts (Ariawan et al., 2022). Integrating different varieties of English in ELT not only enhances learners' awareness of sociolinguistic realities but also fosters the development of metacultural competence, enabling effective intercultural communication (Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019). Additionally, understanding the narratives and experiences of bilingual parents can contribute to the development of the ELT curriculum, taking into account the real-life use of the English language (Chavez, 2022). Implementing differentiated instruction that considers diverse learning differences, socio-cultural backgrounds, and language skills is vital in supporting English language learners (Ndu et al., 2022). Furthermore, recognizing the identities and investments of language learners and teachers can lead to innovative research and promote social change in language learning (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

The purpose of this article is to comprehensively address the significance and complexities of adapting assessment for diverse English Language Teaching (ELT) learners. By offering educators practical guidance and evidence-based strategies, we aim to empower them to tailor assessment practices to the unique linguistic backgrounds, cultural contexts, learning styles, and life experiences of their students.

METHOD

The research design for this study primarily employs a literature review approach. This approach involves systematically searching, selecting, and analyzing relevant academic articles, reports, and case studies to build a comprehensive understanding of the topic. To gather data for the literature review, a thorough search of academic databases such as ERIC, JSTOR, PubMed, and other relevant databases will be conducted. These databases contain a wealth of scholarly articles, reports, and case studies related to assessment in English Language Teaching (ELT). The selected literature will be subjected to content analysis to identify key concepts, themes, and patterns related to adapting assessment for diverse ELT learners. This analysis involves systematically categorizing and coding information from the literature to derive meaningful insights.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Overview Diverse Learner

Diverse learners refer to students who come from various backgrounds, including different ethnicities, linguistic abilities, and learning needs (Mosito et al., 2020). These learners may have different levels of fluency in a second language (Saito et al., 2018) and may require tailored teaching strategies and approaches (Mtshali & Mashiya, 2022). These learners may experience a range of emotions, both positive and negative, when engaging in diverse learning facilitated by various technologies (Chen et al., 2021). Learner autonomy, which can be defined from different perspectives, is also a concept relevant to diverse learners (Hoa et al., 2019).

The diverse learner population in English Language Teaching (ELT) encompasses individuals with varying identities, motivations, and language proficiency levels. Norton & Toohey (2011) highlight the importance of considering learners' identities and the potential impact of labeling them as "poor" or unmotivated language learners. Vogt & Tsagari (2014) emphasize the need for assessment literacy among teachers to effectively evaluate the

language proficiency of diverse learners. Hu (2005) examines ELT in Chinese secondary schools, emphasizing the role of this sector in raising the national level of English proficiency. Sadeghpour and Sharifian Sadeghpour & Sharifian (2019) discuss the integration of different varieties of English in ELT, which enhances learners' awareness of sociolinguistic realities and promotes metacultural competence. Borg & Edmett (2019) focus on the development of a self-assessment tool for English language teachers, highlighting the importance of supporting teachers in catering to the diverse needs of learners.

Strategies to Adapt Assessment

To adapt assessment for diverse English Language Teaching (ELT) learners, several strategies can be employed. Firstly, incorporating culturally diverse materials and topics in assessments can provide a more inclusive and relevant assessment experience (Rouf, 2022). This can involve developing, adopting, and adapting ELT materials to reflect the local cultures and needs of the learners (Rouf, 2022). Additionally, considering the use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and World Englishes (WEs) perspectives in assessment can help accommodate the linguistic diversity of learners (Lopriore & Tsantila, 2022).

Secondly, providing multiple assessment formats and options can cater to different learning styles and preferences (Meihami & Razmjoo, 2016). This can include incorporating self-assessment and peer-assessment opportunities, allowing learners to reflect on their own progress and provide feedback to their peers (Meihami & Razmjoo, 2016).

Thirdly, considering the individual language proficiency levels of learners and tailoring assessments accordingly is crucial (Lopriore & Tsantila, 2022). This can involve providing differentiated assessment tasks that align with learners' language abilities and providing appropriate support and accommodations for learners with disabilities (Tarrayo et al., 2021).

Forthly, accommodating learners with disabilities is a crucial aspect of creating an inclusive educational environment. It requires proactive efforts from educational programs to recruit, accommodate, and retain students, residents, and faculty with disabilities (Poffenberger et al., 2022). However, there is a lack of data on the prevalence of disability among psychologists and graduate students in psychology, highlighting the need for more research in this area. Additionally, it is important to recognize that some gifted and talented students may also have disabilities, known as twice-exceptional, and their unique needs should be addressed (Park et al., 2018). Disability is considered a central aspect of diversity, and supervisors play a vital role in creating a socially just and disability-affirmative training environment (Wilbur et al., 2019). By understanding the barriers faced by trainees with disabilities and establishing appropriate accommodations, supervisors can support their professional development (Lund et al., 2020).

The last, the use of clear assessment instructions and rubrics is essential for effective evaluation. Dawson, (2017) emphasizes the need for clearer rubric design to ensure replicability and understanding among researchers and practitioners. Brookhart & Chen (2015) highlight the importance of quality in descriptive rubrics, emphasizing the need for clear and focused criteria. Schunn et al. (2016) investigate the accuracy of peer review in assessing writing using a clear rubric, demonstrating the potential for students to accurately evaluate their peers' work. (Oh et al., 2018) discuss the significance of clear descriptions in an instructional rubric for faculty calibration and students' self-assessments. Finally, (Brookhart, 2018) suggests that rubrics improve student learning by increasing transparency, reducing anxiety, aiding feedback, and supporting self-regulation. Overall, these references emphasize the importance of clear assessment instructions and rubrics in promoting effective evaluation and enhancing student learning outcomes.

Challenges and limitations in implementing adapted assessment

Assessing English language learners from diverse backgrounds presents several challenges. Firstly, these learners exhibit a wide range of academic abilities, English language proficiency levels, and academic backgrounds (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012). This diversity requires teachers to employ assessment strategies that are sensitive to individual learner needs and provide appropriate support. Secondly, the linguistic backgrounds of English language learners can influence their comprehension and interpretation of English texts, leading to challenges in tasks such as reading comprehension and sentence resolution (Yang & Shih, 2013). Teachers need to be aware of these challenges and design assessments that consider the linguistic backgrounds of the learners. Thirdly, the involvement of families and communities in supporting English language learners is crucial. However, establishing effective communication and collaboration between teachers, families, and communities can be challenging, especially when there are language and cultural barriers (Hardin et al., 2010). Lastly, the development of second-language literacy skills is closely linked to the academic success of English language learners (Kim, 2011). Therefore, assessments should not only focus on language proficiency but also on the development of literacy skills in the second language. Overall, assessing English language learners from diverse backgrounds requires teachers to be sensitive to individual learner needs, consider linguistic backgrounds, foster collaboration with families and communities, and address the development of second-language literacy skills.

Key demographic variables in English Language Teaching (ELT) include age, gender, language background, learning styles, and cultural identity. Tarrayo & Anudin (2021) discuss the importance of incorporating gender-fair language and gender-equality values in ELT practices. Norton & Toohey (2011) explore how identity categories such as race, gender, and sexuality intersect with language learning. Lee, (2015) examines the perspectives of EFL learners on ELT materials evaluation relative to learning styles. Gilmore (2007) emphasizes the use of authentic materials in foreign language learning to enhance the curriculum. Haque and Hossain Haque & Hossain (2022) focus on virtual assessment in ELT during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the challenges and considerations in the context of Bangladesh.

Strategies to overcome the challenges

Strategies to overcome the challenges in implementing adapted assessment for diverse learners in ELT can include:

1. Facilitating a connection between learners and building trust, making help-seeking a norm (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2022).
2. Employing communication strategies, such as memory, cognitive, and social strategies, to improve academic listening comprehension skills (Halali et al., 2022).
3. Integrating digital storytelling into language classrooms to improve student motivation (Adara et al., 2022).
4. Adapting assessment methods and platforms to online environments, considering the shift to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Ali & Dmour, 2021).
5. Framing language learning and critical engagement as mutually reinforcing endeavors toward critical praxis for multilingual learners (Bacon, 2017).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the significance of recognizing and accommodating diverse learners in English Language Teaching (ELT) cannot be overstated. This article has explored the multifaceted nature of diversity within ELT, encompassing cultural, linguistic, identity, and socioeconomic dimensions. Researchers have underlined the importance of embracing this diversity, emphasizing its role in equipping learners with the skills needed to thrive in a globalized world.

Adapting assessment practices for diverse ELT learners has emerged as a paramount concern. By incorporating cultural diversity, recognizing linguistic varieties, and considering

individual language proficiency levels, educators can create assessments that are more equitable and inclusive. Additionally, accommodating learners with disabilities and providing clear assessment instructions and rubrics are essential steps in ensuring effective evaluation and supporting student learning.

Challenges and limitations in implementing adapted assessment have been acknowledged, particularly the diverse academic abilities and linguistic backgrounds of English language learners. Nonetheless, strategies have been discussed to overcome these challenges, ranging from building trust and employing communication strategies to integrating digital storytelling and adapting assessments for online environments.

Overall, this article's purpose has been to empower educators with practical guidance and evidence-based strategies for adapting assessments to the unique needs and backgrounds of diverse ELT learners. By recognizing and embracing this diversity, we can foster inclusive and effective language learning environments that enable all students to succeed. In doing so, we contribute not only to their language proficiency but also to their development as informed, culturally aware, and globally competent individuals.

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