

Effects of Alternative Assessment in EFL Classroom: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Alternative assessment has been the focus of many educational researches in EFL classroom. This study was carried out to highlight the definition, characteristics and effects of alternative assessment in EFL context by reviewing current research on assessment. The research consisted of a systematic review of the empirical studies on alternative assessment in EFL classroom. Focusing solely on online search, many studies were found but only (n=24) met the inclusion criteria involving a total of (n=1588) participants. Also, it aimed to scrutinize the methods, participants and findings of the selected studies as well as the locations where they were conducted. The findings indicated that most of the studies (18 out of 24) reported positive effects of employing alternative assessment on language learning skills in EFL classroom. The results also show that the dominant method employed in the articles was quantitative where students were the main focal point involved in the research as their participants. The study is further concluded with a discussion on definition, characteristics and effects of alternative assessment in EFL context.

Keywords: Alternative Assessment, Systematic Review, Language Skills, EFL Context.

1. Introduction

Recently, a reform took place in the field of evaluation in terms of a paradigm shift from traditional testing to assessment (Charvade, Jahandar & Khodabandehlou, 2012). In education field, innovations have been witnessed in procedures to assess students' performance where summative assessment is gradually changing to formative assessment (alternative assessment). According to Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2018), alternative assessment is a blanket term employed to cover a set of various alternatives to traditional or standardized form of assessment. Moreover, these alternatives emerged with regards to the perceived deficiencies of traditional assessment methods. To Worthen (1993), alternative assessment is a universal term used for several types of assessments such as authentic assessment, performance assessment and direct assessment. Alternative assessment employs various forms of assessment involving different tasks whereby learners are required to get use of high-level thinking skills in real life situations or the use of these skills in authentic context (Al Ruqeishi, 2015). In alternative assessment or criterion-referenced assessment, an individual's performance is measured against specific learning objectives or

performance standards, not against performance of other students on national or local level (Dung & Ha, 2019). While conducting classroom assessment, teachers are required to develop, analyse and administer the assessment (questions and techniques) themselves and then compare the results of assessment to their teaching (Jabbarifar, 2009). Therefore, alternative assessment provides teachers with feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and students with measurement of their progress.

According to Brown and Hudson (1998), alternative assessment has attained a larger degree of importance and acceptance in EFL/ESL field of instruction. It is due to the fact that the practices of language-testing connected with language learning are inevitably different from testing practices prevalent in other fields. In fact, both the process of English language learning and its assessment are very nature complex, and in order to deal with such complexities English language teachers and administrators have used various assessment techniques (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2018). A primary focus of evaluation in education is to examine whether objectives of the course of a study are attained by students or whether the scope and sequence of curriculum are achieved (Jabbarifar, 2009). In classroom, the purpose of assessment is to provide the learners with opportunities to exhibit what they have learned rather than catching them out to display what they have not learned.

A plethora of literature exists on alternative assessment, but there seems to be no consensus on the unified definition of alternative assessment among scholars. According to Gipps and Stobart (2003), it is an umbrella term covering any alternatives to standardized multiple-choice testing, Information Technology (IT) based testing, and an alternative approach making assessment an integral part of the learning and teaching process where the focus is more directly on the performance. As stated earlier, the main focus of alternative assessment is to assess performance where the emphasis is on the similarity between the performance observed and the performance expected or of interest (Gipps & Stobart, 2009). Other equivalent terms for alternative assessment found in current literature are authentic assessment, performance assessment and direct assessment. Brown and Hudson (1998) list some characteristics of alternative assessment based on the studies of (Aschbacher, 1991; Herman, Aschbacher and Winters, 1992; Huerta-Macías, 1995), and the summary of these characteristics include: requiring problem solving and higher level thinking, using authentic contexts and simulations, focusing both on process and product, using human judgement, requiring students to produce, performing or creating something, requiring teachers to perform new instructional and assessment roles, providing information both on students' strengths and weaknesses.

There are numerous forms of alternative assessments employed in EFL/ESL classrooms such as portfolios, teachers' and students' reflective journals, reading logs and diaries, writing folders, projects, teachers' observations and anecdotes, teacher-student-parent conferences, audio-visual recordings, checklists, peer-assessment, self-assessment, conferencing, demonstrations and self-assessments (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2018; Janisch, Liu & Akrofi, 2007; Yildirim & Orsdemir, 2015). All these forms of alternative assessment contribute to the development of four basic language skills namely reading, writing, listening and speaking. Numerous past studies conducted on the impact of alternative assessment on language skills revealed a positive correlation between alternative assessment and language abilities (Naeini, 2011). Besides, an increase is witnessed in learners' motivation, interest and confidence.

The purpose of current study is to present an overview of internationally published empirical studies on alternative assessment in EFL context. An international perspective is taken into consideration to observe the characteristics, impacts and techniques of assessment in various EFL settings. Also, empirical studies were chosen to examine its practicality and to know its real impact from both students' and teachers' experiences. A brief account of methodology including the criteria for inclusion and exclusion is provided.

1.1 Research Objectives

- To identify the characteristics/reasons of alternative assessment.
- To examine the effects of Alternative Assessment on basic language learning skills.

2. Research Method

In order to systematically analyze the topic (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006), different search strategies (e.g. similar terms) were tested in various search engines such as Google, Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, SAGE, ERIC online open access databases to name a few as to ensure reliability and to yield best results. The reviewers searched articles online published between 2008-2019. Searching in different search engines, specific keywords were used including alternative assessment, authentic assessment, direct and holistic assessment in EFL as well as effects of alternative assessment, alternative assessment vs traditional assessment in EFL.

Numerous (n=373) publications resulted from initial search and were screened by reviewing the titles, keywords and abstracts. However, most of the research studies did not meet the inclusion requirement. Based on the selection criteria, only the articles addressing the stated research objectives for current study were focused. In

addition, solely empirical studies that clearly indicated research design, participants and results were considered in the inclusion requirements. Other reasons that excluded many of the articles were inaccessibility, publications in languages other than English, concept papers, conference proceeding papers and working papers. Finally, a total of 24 journal articles were eligible for the systematic review and were included in the data-set for analysis. The background of this systemic review, however, was not limited to the empirical studies.

3. Results

3.1 Methods Used in the Reviewed Studies

From a systematic review of 373 articles published between 2008-2019, the researchers found only 24 empirical studies which met the inclusion criteria. Of these, four (n=4) were qualitative studies involving: (n=1) interviews, classroom observations and document analysis; (n=1) survey, teacher' journal, self-reflection format and interview; (n=1) in-depth semi structured interview and (n=1) a case study. Fourteen (n=14) of the studies used quantitative methods among which (n=4) employed experimental design, (n=1) a quasi-experimental design, (n=2) semi-experimental intact comparison group design, and (n=2) applied survey design. Five others (n=5) used mixed method where likert scale questionnaires and opinion questionnaires were used for quantitative, and an open-ended interview, a focus group interview, a semi-structured interview, ongoing document analysis, and participants' portfolios applied for qualitative method. See table 1.

Table 1. Methods used in the reviewed studies

Methods	Frequency	Percentage
Quantitative	15	62.5
Mixed	5	20.8
Qualitative	4	16.7
Total	24	100

3.2 Participants of the Reviewed Studies

As can be seen in table 2, nine (n=9) of the articles included EFL teachers as their participants among them (n=5) involved school teachers, (n=2) engaged university teachers and (n=2) included college teachers. There were (n=14) studies focused on students where (n=4) involved learners from institutes, (n=5) had responses from university students, (n=5) included school students and only (n=1) study focused on both students and teachers as its respondents.

Table 2. Participants involved in the reviewed studies

Participants	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher	9	37.50%
Student	14	58.35%
Teacher and Student	1	4.15%
Total	24	100%

3.3 Main Findings

Table 3 shows the findings of reviewed studies on alternative assessment in EFL classroom from 2008-2019. Based on the objectives of the current study, the selected research studies were analyzed where two broad themes were identified: (1) definition and rationales of employing alternative assessment and (2) methods of alternative assessment and their effects on language skills detailed in the following sections respectively.

Table 3. Findings of the Reviewed Studies

Author(s) and Date	Study	Method	Participant	Location	Findings
Wubshet & Menuata	Investigating the practice of alternative	Qualitative	Six (6) Grade 9 English	Hawasa Zuria,	Teachers did not have a clear understanding of alternative assessment. Hence, they were

(2015)	assessment in English classrooms: The case of selected grade nine English teachers assessment practices.		teachers	Ethiopia	using traditional assessment such as multiple choice, matching and true or false questions. They did not use process and product equally and did not use alternative assessment.
Aliasin & Amanlu (2017)	The effect of alternative assessment techniques on EFL learners' reading comprehension ability and self-efficacy in reading: The case of Iranian Junior High School students.	Quantitative	77 male intermediate junior high school students	Zanjan, Iran	Learners were aware of self-efficacy; alternative assessment had no significant effect on the self efficacy, but the use of alternative assessment techniques had significant effects on the participants' performance on the reading comprehension test.
Javaherbakhsh (2010)	The Impact of Self-Assessment on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Skill	Quantitative	73 EFL students selected based on means of TOEFL scores.	Zabansara and Marefat Institutions, Iran	The results of t-test show that students in experimental group improved their writing skills by employing several self-assessment techniques.
Safari & Koosha, (2016)	Instructional Efficacy of Portfolio for Assessing Iranian EFL Learners' Speaking Ability.	Quantitative	64 EFL students including male and female randomly selected from Kowsar Language Institute	Kowsar Language Institute, Esfahan, Iran	The results suggested that the e-portfolio group performed better regarding language quantity, use of various lexical items and vocabulary. Also, it revealed that the experimental group using video-portfolios performed better than the control group. Advantages of speaking portfolios such as self-assessment, peer-feedback, and improvement of speaking skill were highlighted.
Soodmand Afshar & Bastami, (2012)	The effect of portfolio assessment on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' autonomy.	Mixed	60 pre-intermediate female learners studying English in a private language institute.	Cambridge Open Centre, Iran	Both quantitative and qualitative data analyses revealed that portfolio assessment significantly enhanced learners' autonomy in the experimental group, and offered them an opportunity to reflect upon their learning process, growth, and progress overtime.
Baleghizadeh & Masoun	The effect of self-assessment on EFL learners' goal	Quantitative	57 University EFL	Iran	Students' learning goal orientation significantly increased as a result of inclusion

(2014)	orientation		students		of the self-assessment element in EFL classes. Also, the learners got more learning-oriented through applying self-assessment during the course.
Khonbi & Sadeghi (2012)	The effect of assessment type (self vs. peer vs. teacher) on Iranian university EFL students' course achievement	Quantitative	40 university students: 19 in self-assessment and 21 in peer-assessment group.	Iran	There was a significant difference in the course achievement of students in the self- and peer-assessment groups, with the latter outperforming the former. This over performance of students in the peer-assessment group on the post-test was contrary to what was expected from the analyses of the four series of assessments in all of which it was the self-assessment group that over performed the peer-assessment group.
Moradan & Hedayati (2012)	The impact of portfolios and conferencing on Iranian EFL learners' writing skill	Quantitative	92 male Iranian intermediate EFL students	Iran	The performance of two experimental groups was better than the control group though there was no significant difference in the two experimental groups. Also, no significant difference was found between the effectiveness of portfolio and conferencing methods. Teachers' feedback was considered helpful in removing the gaps between what has been learned.
Iraji, Enayat & Momeni (2016)	The effects of self- and peer-assessment on Iranian EFL learners' argumentative writing performance	Quantitative	36 intermediate EFL students	Iran	Self/peer-assessments were helpful and influential in improving learners' argumentative writing ability. By providing alternative assessment techniques, learners could write better compositions. Using self-assessment checklists also provide teachers with complete information about students' progress and failure in the process of learning.
Azarnoosh (2013)	Peer assessment in an EFL context: attitudes and friendship bias	Quantitative	26 participants: 24 females and 2 males tertiary level students.	Iran	The results of this study revealed no significant difference between learners' peer assessment and teachers' assessment. Moreover, no friendship bias was found in peer assessment. However, this practice led to the change of students' attitude to a positive perspective on peer assessment. While they expected the practice

					to be difficult, they found it not to be so; learners became assured that peer assessment was useful, motivating and interesting.
Abbas, Z. (2012)	Difficulties in using methods of alternative assessment in teaching from Iraqi instructors points of view.	Quantitative	30 EFL instructors	College of Education (AL-Assmaie) and the college of Basic Education at Diyla University, Iraq	The findings indicated that Iraqi instructors of English face difficulties in using methods of alternative assessment in teaching.
Yildirim & Orsdemir (2013)	Performance Tasks as Alternative Assessment for Young EFL Learners: Does Practice Match the Curriculum Proposal?.	Mixed	43 English teachers from 10 state primary schools.	Adana, Turkey	The results indicated that goals of alternative assessment were achieved moderately. The benefits of alternative assessment reported are vocabulary improvement, grammar reinforcement, increased motivation and improved confidence. However, cognitive and effective skills were not improved as much as Psycho-motor skills, and also the integration of four language skills is partially missed.
Ataç (2012)	Foreign Language Teachers' Attitude toward Authentic Assessment in Language	Quantitative	37 randomly-selected instructors.	Atilim University Preparatory School of English, Turkey	Participants hold positive attitudes and showed a strong sense of inclination toward goal setting in their classes with regards to authentic assessment.
Yurdabak an & Erdogan (2009)	The effects of portfolio assessment on reading, listening and writing skills of secondary school prep class students	Quantitative: experimental	44 participants: Treatment group (n=22) and control group (n=22)	English preparatory classes in secondary school, Turkey	The findings showed that portfolio assessment had significant influence on students' writing skills; however, same results were not found for the reading and listening skills. Also, it was found that portfolio assessment is a fair method compared to traditional applications of assessment. Also, it is a more down-to-earth approach that increases responsibility of students and motivates them.
Cuesta, Mayorga, Padilla and Mayorga	Alternative Assessment Tools for the Writing Skill Development of EFL Learners	Quantitative	23 First level English students	Private University, Ecuador	It was concluded that alternative assessment positively affects the development of writing skill of EFL learners. Thus, they have all enhanced their writing

(2019)					competence.
Al-Nouh, Taqi & Abdul-Kareem (2014)	EFL Primary School Teachers' Attitudes, Knowledge and Skills in Alternative Assessment.	Mixed	335 female EFL teachers	40 primary schools in six educational zones, Kuwait	The findings indicated that teachers were skillful and knowledgeable in alternative assessment; their attitude was at medium level.
Putri, Pratolo & Setiani (2019)	The Alternative Assessment of EFL Students' Oral Competence: Practices and Constraints.	Qualitative	Two EFL teachers with more than five years of experience.	Islamic Boarding School (IBS), Indonesia	Findings revealed that participants applied alternative assessment such as peer assessment and inside class observation, feedback on their assignment while teachers had difficulties in practicing the alternative assessment.
Ardianti & Mauludin (2017)	Students' responses on the application of Authentic Assessment in EFL reading class.	Qualitative	27 EFL reading students: 22 female and 5 male in university	East Java, Indonesia	Alternative assessment methods such as portfolios, self-assessment and performance assessment make the reading enjoyable that becomes as a routine activity. Also, it contributes in vocabulary building, reading comprehension and improving reading performance.
Phongsirikul (2018)	Traditional and Alternative Assessments in ELT: Students' and Teachers' Perceptions.	Mixed	103 first-year students majoring in English and five teachers in a university	Bangkok, Thailand.	Teachers and students hold positive attitudes toward alternative assessment in terms of its validity and reliability. Alternative assessment was valued as a catalyst in enhancing learners' motivation in English skills.
Kalra, Sundrarajun & Komintaracat, (2017)	Using Portfolio as an Alternative Assessment Tool to Enhance Thai EFL Students' Writing Skill.	Quantitative	56 senior undergraduate Thai students studying business English	Thailand	Portfolio-an alternative method had significant effects on the students' performance in writing skill.
Chan, (2008)	Elementary school EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of multiple assessments	Quantitative	520 EFL teachers Female: 503 Male: 17	Taiwan	The study found that the EFL teachers had strong beliefs of multiple assessments and a better understanding of the concepts of assessment and multiple assessments such as portfolio, classroom observation. Multiple assessments were considered more practical than traditional assessment and believed that EFL teachers can easily assess students' achievement in all language skills and can diagnose

					students' difficulties.
Ghaicha & Omarkaly (2018)	Assessment in the Moroccan EFL Classrooms Teachers' Conceptions and Practices.	Mixed	73 both male and female high school teachers	Inzegane-Aitmelloul and Agadir-Ida-outanane, in the south of Morocco.	The results revealed that the practice of alternative assessment is slowly evolving within the Moroccan EFL context in spite of the very positive attitudes expressed towards it; teachers' main concerns were time constraints, class size, and lack of training.
Rojas Serrano (2017)	Making Sense of Alternative Assessment in a Qualitative Evaluation System.	Qualitative	7 English students	Bogotá, Colombia	Students hold optimistic views toward alternative assessment in English classrooms in terms of encouraging awareness and reflection, students' centeredness, lowering students' anxiety, integrating different areas of learning and providing prompt and meaningful feedback.
Ali & Al Ajmi (2013)	Towards Quality Assessment in an EFL Programme.	Quantitative	37 EFL teachers from public College	Oman	Quality assessment can be developed through teachers' views and beliefs.

3.3.1 Definition and Rationales of Employing Alternative Assessment

The researchers found that the definitions used for alternative assessment are largely consistent in meaning but slightly differs in terms of labeling. Nine (n=9) articles employed the word alternative assessment in their titles and there were only three studies used other terminologies such as authentic assessment (n=2) and quality assessment (n=1). The remaining studies focus on either strategies, techniques or methods of alternative assessment (e.g. self-assessment (n=2); assessment type (n=1); portfolio and conferencing (n=1); multiple assessments–portfolio and classroom observation (n=1); self-and peer assessment (n=1); peer assessment (n=1); portfolio (n=4); performance tasks (n=1).

Though it is very difficult to have an inclusive definition of alternative assessment, it can be defined as a broad assessment approach in the field of education generally opposing traditional assessment. On the other hand, some of the articles reasoned for incorporating alternative assessment in EFL classroom (e.g. Abbas, 2012; Wubshet & Menuta, 2015; Aliasin & Amanlu, 2017; Afshar & Bastami, 2012). For instance, Afshar and Bastami (2012) stated that standardized tests do not consider individual differences among students which truly exist and need low level of cognitive ability–memorizing and recalling. This may cause students failing to actualize learning in real life situations. Alternative assessment engages learners in self-evaluation and peer evaluation of performance (Ali & Ajmi, 2013), encourage autonomous learning, emphasis on students' performance, consider language proficiency, learning styles, cultural and educational backgrounds and grade levels (Javaherbakhsh, 2010).

In addition, Wubshet and Menuta (2015) cited other rationales for employing the mentioned assessment: (1) to know the complex outcome–beyond the assessment of fact and knowledge, alternative assessment evaluates more complex goals where products and processes are equally valued and develops life-long skills: creative thinking, problem solving, summarizing, synthesizing and reflecting. (2) To address realistic tasks–utilizing authentic assessment, students are engaged in performances, tasks, demonstrations and interviews reflecting daily situations within meaningful contexts. (3) To include good instruction tools–instruction and assessment interact continuously where assessment can provide feedback for students' learning and cause changes in the instruction. Focusing on students' strengths, alternative assessment enables teachers to have a more accurate view of their achievements. (4) To communicate what we value–instruction and assessment have to be aligned. Valuing oral proficiency but assessing it only through written tests, students will infer that only written language matters. (5) To meet the students' different learning styles–alternative assessment offers a large amount of possibilities, for instance, some students exhibit understanding by writing about something while others may perform or display their actions. While screening the selected studies, majority of the articles indicated reasons behind using alternative assessment

in EFL classrooms though some articles did not mention obvious reasons for applying the alternative assessment. Studying the selected articles comparatively, the reviewers provided a compiled number of reasons offered by the cited researchers stated in table 4.

Table 4. Reasons of employing alternative assessment in EFL classroom

Alignment between instruction and assessment, real use of language, contextualization of learning, focusing on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTs), considering language proficiency, learning styles, cultural and educational backgrounds, students know criteria for evaluation, learners' autonomy (students take responsibility for own learning and evaluation while identifying their progress), motivation, developing creativity, focusing both on product and process, encouraging lifelong skills, leading to active performance involvement, promoting a wide range of assessment strategies and ensuring successes.

3.3.2 Methods of Alternative Assessment and their Effects on Language Skills

The concept of assessment in EFL is discussed extensively in international literature. However, methods of assessment in EFL field, especially of alternative assessment, is the major topic explored by researchers from Iran in current study (Baleghizadeh & Masoun, 2014; Khonbi & Sadeghi, 2012; Moradan & Hedayati, 2012; Iraj, Enayat & Momeni, 2016; Soodmand Afshar & Bastami, 2012; Safari & Koosha, 2016 and Azarnoosh, 2013). The methods of assessment found in these studies are: self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher assessment, portfolios, and conferencing. Also, Yildirim and Orsdemir, 2013; Ataç, 2012; Yurdabakan and Erdogan, 2009 notified favorable contributions of alternative assessment. For instance, Yildirim and Orsdemir found that the usage of the mentioned assessment resulted in vocabulary improvement, grammar reinforcement, increased motivation and improved confidence. However, cognitive and effective skills were not improved as much as Psycho-motor skills, and also the integration of four language skills is partially missed. Yurdabakan and Erdogan (2009) explain the effects of portfolio assessment on reading, listening and writing skills where the findings showed that portfolio assessment had significant influence on students' writing skills; however, same results were not found for the reading and listening skills. Also, it was found that portfolio assessment is a fair method; compared to traditional applications of assessment increasing responsibility of students and motivates them.

In addition, other studies in EFL context such as (Abbas, 2012 in Iraq; Putri, Pratolo and Setiani, 2019 and Ardianti and Mauludin, 2017 in Indonesia; Kalra, Sundrarajun and Komintaracat, 2017 in Thailand) also reported on the implementation of different alternative assessment methods in classroom. According to Jabbarifar (2009), alternative methods, in EFL, are the various tools available in classrooms for teachers to collect essential information of language learning process and the factors related to the students which impact the process of language learning and teaching. Furthermore, to Siedentop and Tannehill (2000), methods of alternative assessment are the tools different from traditionally used techniques, standardized tests, instead alternative methods are the learners' active involvement in solving realistic problems by implementing new knowledge, recalling prior knowledge and relevant skills.

The methods or tools of alternative assessment in language classroom are called alternatives in assessment by Brown and Hudson (1998). More specifically, personal-response assessment is used as a category term to include various methods used in alternative assessment. This type of assessment is an individualized assessment where learners are allowed to produce what they want in their own language that provide teachers with an on-going manner of assessing learners' performance throughout instruction (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

All methods mentioned in the reviewed studies were considered more beneficial in enhancing students' development in foreign language learning. The results of the studies indicated that all basic language learning skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) have been significantly developed by implementing alternative assessment methods. Moreover, there has been a positive effect on learners' autonomy and goal orientation. Writing skill was one of the most focused skills in the reviewed studies. A total of 7 studies (Yurdabakan and Erdogan, 2009; Kalra, Sundrarajun and Komintaracat, 2017; Cuesta, Mayorga, Padilla and Mayorga, 2019; Iraj, Enayat and Momeni, 2016; Moradan and Hedayati, 2012; Javaherbakhsh, 2010) reported the positive influence of alternative assessment strategies on students' writing skills ranging from simple writing to argumentative writing skill. Based on the findings of the reviewed studies, portfolio and self-assessment were found the most used strategies to enhance writing skill among other strategies such as peer-assessment, conferencing, etc. Moreover, the implementation of these strategies positively influence learners' writing competence and were considered more practical than traditional methods. Not only students were motivated by producing and assessing their own compositions but also their responsibility of learning was increased. Also, teachers found these methods very beneficial in assessing students' ability in writing and in diagnosing their difficulties.

Three studies (Aliasin and Amanlu, 2017; Ardianti and Mauludin, 2017; Yurdabakan and Erdogan, 2009) investigated the effects of alternative assessment on reading skill both at tertiary and secondary level. The results of the mentioned studies indicated a substantial improvement in students' reading comprehension skills. The results of students' performance revealed that implementing methods of alternative assessment such as portfolio, self-assessment and performance assessment prepared the students enough to get high scores on reading comprehension tests. Moreover, implementing alternative assessment methods in reading classes make the complicated readings enjoyable that becomes a routine activity contributing in vocabulary building and in improving reading comprehension and performance as well as a factor of motivating students.

Other studies (Putri, Pratolo and Setiani, 2019; Safari and Koosha, 2016) examined the practice of alternative assessment in EFL classrooms in regards to its impact on speaking skill and oral abilities of students. The students managed to increase the quantity of spoken language and to use various lexical items and vocabulary of foreign language by applying alternative assessment methods such as e-portfolio and video portfolio. Moreover, self-assessment and peer feedback were considered as catalyst factors in improving speaking and listening skills. However, Yurdabakan's and Erdogan's (2009) study show that implementing alternative assessment method such as portfolio doesn't have considerable results in improving listening skill as compared to speaking skill.

4. Conclusion

This study reports systematic literature review of empirical studies on assessing alternative assessment in EFL classroom published between 2008-2019. Based on the selected number of studies (n=24), majority of the articles (19 out of 24) reported positive attitudes and effects of utilizing the alternative assessment providing more opportunities for both teachers and students. There were very limited difficulties (n=2) indicated in the implementation, two others (n=2) argued no significant difference in the performance and only (n=1) reported no clear understanding from respondents employing alternative assessment.

In addition, the definitions used for alternative assessment are largely consistent in meaning though minor nuances in terms of labeling existed. While only focusing on the terms in the titles of the studies, most of them used alternative assessment as part of their titles. Moreover, all of the methods of alternative assessment reviewed in the selected studies were deemed helpful in enhancing students' development in foreign language learning. The reported findings indicated significant improvement in the basic language learning skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) of the students. Majority of the articles were focused on portfolio, self/peer assessment contributing much to learners' performance and achievements. In terms of methodology, the result of the systematic review showed that the dominant method employed in the articles was quantitative, and students were the main focal point involved in the research as their participants.

It should be acknowledged that several limitations might influence the results of this systematic review. Firstly, the study is not exhaustive, as relevant research may have been missed because of the limited choice of search terms and databases. Although a thorough search for covering Alternative Assessment in EFL contexts holistically would be quite difficult, the reviewers hope that the included articles will represent the current status of Alternative Assessment in EFL settings. Future reviewers with more resources can include several other databases and choice of research works to provide a more comprehensive picture of alternative assessment in the EFL context. It is hoped that the findings of this systematic review will provide useful guidance for educators, practitioners and researchers in the area of Education.

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