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Artificial Intelligence and its Influence on Assessment Practices in English Language Education

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on assessment practices in English language education, employing a mixed-methods approach to evaluate its effectiveness and pedagogical implications. A total of 120 undergraduate students from the College of Business and Social Sciences, AdiKeih, Eritrea, were divided into experimental (AI-assisted assessment) and control (traditional assessment) groups. Quantitative data from pre- and post-tests revealed that students using AI tools such as Grammarly and ELSA Speak achieved significantly higher gain scores (M = 8.70) compared to the control group (M = 2.74), with the difference confirmed by t-test ($t = -5.86$, $p < 0.0001$), ANOVA ($F = 34.36$, $p < 0.000001$), and regression analysis ($\beta = 5.302$, $R^2 = 0.226$). Qualitative interviews with students and teachers highlighted increased learner autonomy, motivation, and feedback quality in AI-enhanced settings, though concerns were raised regarding over-reliance on automation and unequal access. The findings suggest that AI, when ethically and inclusively implemented, can effectively complement traditional assessment methods by offering scalable, personalized, and real-time feedback. The study concludes with recommendations for teacher training, ethical safeguards, and the adoption of hybrid assessment models that balance AI capabilities with human pedagogical expertise.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, English Language Education, Assessment, Feedback, Adaptive Testing.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized various sectors, including healthcare, finance, and education. Among these, the domain of English Language Education has experienced a significant transformation due to the integration of AI-driven technologies. Assessment practices, in particular, have been reshaped to provide more efficient, accurate, and personalized feedback to learners. Traditional methods of language assessment, often criticized for their subjectivity and time-consuming processes, are increasingly being augmented or replaced by intelligent systems capable of

evaluating linguistic competencies with remarkable precision **(Huang et al., 2023)**.

Artificial Intelligence in education (AIEd) refers to the use of machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), speech recognition, and intelligent tutoring systems (ITS) to enhance teaching, learning, and assessment. In the context of English language instruction, these tools are designed to assess multiple language skills—such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking—with greater consistency and adaptability **(Özdere, 2023)**. For instance, automated essay scoring systems can analyze writing samples for grammar, coherence, and vocabulary usage, while speech recognition tools can evaluate pronunciation and fluency in real time. These advancements mark a paradigm shift in how learners' performances are measured and interpreted.

The assessment process in language education traditionally relies on teacher judgment, rubrics, and standardized testing, which can be limited by human bias, time constraints, and a lack of immediate feedback. AI-powered tools mitigate these issues by offering scalable, real-time evaluation mechanisms that not only streamline the assessment process but also promote formative assessment strategies through continuous feedback **(Wei, 2023)**. For example, students using AI-based tools such as Write & Improve or ELSA Speak can receive instant feedback on their writing and speaking tasks, allowing them to reflect and improve iteratively. This capability aligns with the principles of self-regulated learning, which emphasize autonomy and active learner engagement in the learning process.

Moreover, the integration of AI in assessment has shown promising results in enhancing learners' performance and motivation. A study conducted by **Ling Wei (2023)** on 60 EFL learners revealed that those exposed to AI-mediated instruction scored significantly higher in grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills compared to their peers in traditional settings. The same study also reported higher levels of L2 motivation and use of self-regulated learning strategies among AI-assisted learners. These findings are echoed by **Kot and Nykyporets (2024)**, who emphasize that AI-driven adaptive learning systems can customize instruction based on a learner's individual pace, proficiency, and style, leading to more targeted and effective assessment outcomes.

Despite the growing adoption of AI in language assessment, challenges remain. Ethical concerns related to data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the digital divide are critical issues that must be addressed. AI algorithms often rely on large datasets, which may not always be representative of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, thereby introducing potential biases in assessment outcomes **(Macias Loor et al., 2024)**. In addition, unequal access to digital infrastructure and limited teacher training in AI integration pose significant barriers, especially in under-resourced educational contexts such as Eritrea. It is essential to consider these factors to ensure that AI-driven assessment systems are fair, inclusive, and pedagogically aligned.

At the College of Business and Social Sciences in AdiKeih, Eritrea, the integration of AI tools in English language education is still in its nascent stage. However, the potential for improvement in assessment practices is immense. Preliminary classroom-level observations indicate that AI tools like Grammarly and Google's speech-to-text have been informally adopted by some instructors and learners to enhance writing and speaking evaluations. These tools offer an opportunity to supplement traditional teacher-led assessments with real-time, personalized feedback that aligns with 21st-century educational demands.

Furthermore, AI contributes to the scalability of language education in contexts where teacher-to-student ratios are high, and individual feedback is difficult to maintain. With AI-supported formative assessment tools, instructors can monitor students' progress continuously and adjust instruction accordingly. This data-driven approach to assessment empowers educators with insights into learner performance and learning gaps, thus enabling evidence-based pedagogical decisions **(Huang et al., 2023)**.

The pedagogical implications of AI in assessment are also worth noting. Rather than replacing the teacher, AI serves as a supportive tool that enhances instructional efficacy. Teachers can use AI-generated insights to tailor instruction, design interventions, and scaffold learning more effectively. Additionally, AI can support inclusive education by offering tools that cater to learners with diverse needs, such as speech-to-text for

students with writing difficulties or visual feedback for auditory learners (Özdere, 2023).

Despite its advantages, the implementation of AI in assessment must be guided by robust policies, ethical standards, and teacher readiness programs. Without these safeguards, there is a risk of misuse or over-reliance on technology, which could undermine the pedagogical objectives of language education. As such, institutions must invest in capacity-building initiatives and infrastructure development to harness the full potential of AI in educational assessment.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine the effectiveness of AI tools in assessing English language skills such as writing, speaking, and grammar.
- To analyze the impact of AI-assisted assessment on learner performance, motivation, and feedback quality.
- To evaluate teachers' and students' perceptions of AI-based assessment practices in English language education.
- To identify the ethical, technical, and accessibility challenges associated with implementing AI in language assessments.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Assessment is a critical component of English language education, serving as a tool to measure learners' proficiency, guide instruction, and provide feedback. However, traditional assessment methods often suffer from subjectivity, time constraints, and inconsistent feedback, especially in large classroom settings (Huang et al., 2023). In response, Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies such as automated essay scoring, speech recognition, and intelligent tutoring systems have emerged as innovative solutions that offer real-time, data-driven assessments. These tools can enhance the accuracy, speed, and personalization of evaluations, thereby transforming assessment practices in English language learning (Özdere, 2023).

Despite their growing use, the integration of AI in educational assessments raises several concerns. Questions about the reliability of AI-generated feedback, ethical issues such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the digital divide remain underexplored, particularly in under-resourced contexts like Eritrea (Kot&Nykyporets, 2024). Moreover, many educators lack the training and infrastructure necessary to effectively implement AI tools in their assessment practices. Therefore, there is a pressing need to investigate how AI influences English language assessment in higher education settings, with an emphasis on its effectiveness, user perception, and implementation challenges. This study seeks to address this gap and provide empirical evidence for sustainable AI integration.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into English language education has reshaped traditional assessment practices, enabling a shift toward more dynamic, personalized, and data-driven evaluation methods. Researchers have increasingly highlighted the potential of AI in automating and enhancing various assessment tasks, including grammar correction, pronunciation feedback, essay scoring, and performance tracking (Özdere, 2023; Huang et al., 2023).

One of the most significant applications of AI in assessment is automated writing evaluation (AWE). Tools such as Grammarly, Write & Improve, and other AI-based platforms offer instant, formative feedback on structure, coherence, and language use, allowing learners to self-regulate and refine their work (Wei, 2023; Alghasab, 2025). These tools not only support learner autonomy but also reduce teacher workload and improve feedback consistency. Similarly, AI-powered speech recognition tools aid in assessing speaking proficiency by analyzing fluency, intonation, and pronunciation, offering immediate diagnostic responses (Rodrigues, 2024; Zhai&Wibowo, 2023).

Adaptive testing systems have also emerged, providing customized assessments based on learners' real-time performance and proficiency levels. Kot and Nykyporets (2024) emphasized that AI-driven adaptive platforms significantly improve accuracy and learner engagement in higher education contexts. Macias Loor et al. (2024) further added that AI fosters inclusivity by enabling individualized pacing and content delivery.

Despite these advancements, scholars have raised concerns about the ethical implications of AI-based assessments. Issues such as algorithmic bias, lack of transparency, and data privacy pose challenges to equitable assessment practices

(Zhang, 2024; Almossa&Alzahrani, 2022). Moreover, disparities in digital access and teacher preparedness affect the successful implementation of AI tools, especially in under-resourced contexts (Tafazoli, 2024).

Student perceptions of AI in assessment also vary. While some embrace the instant feedback and personalized support, others question the accuracy and pedagogical value of machine-generated evaluations (Pasenta&Chakim, 2024). This highlights the importance of integrating AI tools in alignment with human instruction, rather than replacing it entirely.

In the literature reveals a growing consensus on AI's transformative role in English language assessment. While AI offers numerous benefits in terms of efficiency, personalization, and objectivity, its effectiveness is contingent upon ethical deployment, infrastructural readiness, and human-AI collaboration (Huang et al., 2023; Tafazoli, 2024). Further empirical research is essential to explore sustainable practices for AI-enhanced assessment in diverse educational contexts.

5. RESEARCHMETHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to investigate the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on assessment practices in English language education. The quantitative component involved an experimental approach comparing two groups of undergraduate students enrolled in English language courses at the College of Business and Social Sciences, AdiKeih, Eritrea. A total of 120 participants were selected using stratified random sampling and divided equally into a control group (traditional assessment) and an experimental group (AI-assisted assessment using tools like Grammarly, ELSA Speak, and Write & Improve). Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to both groups to measure improvements in writing, grammar, and speaking proficiency over an eight-week intervention period. The collected test scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests to determine significant differences in performance outcomes. The qualitative component included semi-structured interviews with 10 English language instructors and 15 randomly selected students from both groups to gain insights into their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward AI-driven assessments. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring patterns and themes related to feedback quality, learner engagement, and perceived fairness of AI-based tools. Validity was ensured through triangulation of data sources, and ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed. The mixed-methods approach provided a comprehensive understanding of both the effectiveness and the pedagogical implications of integrating AI in assessment practices, particularly in the context of resource-limited higher education institutions. By combining empirical data and experiential insights, the study aimed to offer practical recommendations for enhancing assessment strategies through responsible and pedagogically sound use of AI technologies.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

6.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

To assess the effectiveness of AI-assisted assessment practices in English language education, both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted. The study involved 120 undergraduate students divided equally into a control group (traditional assessment) and an experimental group (AI-assisted assessment). Pre-test and post-test scores were collected, and gain scores (PostTest − PreTest) were computed to evaluate the improvement in performance.

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

The table below presents the group-wise mean scores for Pre-Test, Post-Test, and Gain:

Group	PreTest	PostTest	Gain
Control	54.38	57.12	2.74
Experimental	55.02	63.72	8.70

The experimental group, which received AI-based assessment support, showed a significantly higher mean gain (8.70) compared to the control group (2.74), suggesting that AI tools positively influenced student performance.

6.3 Inferential Statistics

Independent Samples t-test

To determine if the difference in gain scores between the control and experimental

groups was statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was conducted.

- T-test Statistic = -5.86
- p-value = 0.0000

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the result is statistically significant. This indicates that the gain in scores of the experimental group is significantly higher than that of the control group.

6.4 ANOVA (F-test)

A one-way ANOVA was performed to validate the group differences.

Group Comparison Summary

Source	Sum of Squares	df	F	p-value
Group	843.49	1	34.36	4.25e-08
Error	2896.87	118		

The F-value of 34.36 and $p < 0.000001$ further confirm that there is a statistically significant difference in gain scores between the control and experimental groups.

6.5 Linear Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	2.982	0.64	4.661	0
Group (Experimental=1)	5.302	0.905	5.862	0

To explore the predictive power of group membership (coded as 0 = Control, 1 = Experimental) on gain scores, a simple linear regression was performed.

- R-squared = 0.226
- F-statistic = 34.36
- p-value = 4.25e-08

The regression analysis showed that group membership significantly predicted gain scores, explaining approximately 22.6% of the variance. The regression coefficient for the experimental group was positive, indicating that being in the AI-assisted group increased expected gain scores.

6.6 Qualitative Data Analysis

To complement the quantitative findings, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 students and 10 English language instructors involved in both the experimental (AI-assisted assessment) and control (traditional assessment) groups. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and perspectives regarding the integration of AI in assessment practices. Data were transcribed, coded, and categorized into key themes using **Braun and Clarke's (2006)** six-step framework for thematic analysis. Three major themes emerged: (1) Enhanced Feedback and Autonomy, (2) Motivation and Engagement, and (3) Concerns about Fairness and Technology Reliance.

❖ **Enhanced Feedback and Autonomy**

Students in the experimental group consistently expressed appreciation for the immediacy and specificity of AI-generated feedback. Tools like Grammarly and ELSA Speak allowed them to correct errors in real time, receive explanations, and practice autonomously.

"*I used to wait for my teacher's feedback, but now I can get suggestions immediately. It helps me revise faster and learn on my own*." — Student Participant 3

Teachers also reported that AI tools reduced their correction workload while providing more consistent evaluations across assignments. They valued the ability to track students' improvement over time.

"*The AI tools provided a clear picture of how students progressed. It supported my own evaluation and saved time*." — Instructor Participant 6

❖ **Motivation and Engagement**

Another recurring theme was increased student motivation. Learners felt more confident due to instant feedback and interactive practice, especially in speaking tasks using speech recognition.

"*The app told me when my pronunciation was wrong, and I kept practicing until I got it right. That made me want to speak more*." — Student Participant 11

Instructors observed greater participation and willingness among students to complete writing and speaking tasks outside the classroom.

"*Even the shy students started submitting voice recordings regularly. The AI made them feel safe to try*." — Instructor Participant 2

❖ **Concerns about Fairness and Technology Reliance**

Despite these advantages, both students and teachers expressed concerns about over-reliance on AI and the potential for technical errors.

"*Sometimes Grammarly marked my sentence wrong when it was actually fine. I got confused.*" — Student Participant 6

Teachers worried about students becoming dependent on AI suggestions without internalizing the grammar rules or vocabulary usage.

"*The risk is that students blindly accept AI corrections without understanding why*." — Instructor Participant 9

Moreover, some instructors raised concerns about access equity, noting that students with limited digital literacy or poor internet access were at a disadvantage.

7. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on assessment practices in English language education using a mixed-methods approach. The findings from both quantitative data (test scores and statistical analysis) and qualitative data (interviews with students and instructors) provide compelling evidence that AI-assisted assessment tools significantly enhance student learning outcomes, increase engagement, and streamline the evaluation process.

7.1 Quantitative Results

Descriptive statistics showed that students in the experimental group (who used AI tools like Grammarly and ELSA Speak) had a mean gain score of 8.70, compared to 2.74 in the control group using traditional assessments. An independent samples t-test confirmed that this difference was statistically significant ($t = -5.86$, $p < 0.0001$), indicating that AI-based assessments substantially improved learner performance.

The ANOVA (F-test) further validated this outcome with an F-value of 34.36 ($p < 0.000001$), demonstrating a significant difference between group means. Additionally, linear regression analysis revealed that group type (Control = 0, Experimental = 1) was a strong predictor of performance gain ($\beta = 5.302$, $R^2 = 0.226$, $F = 34.36$, $p < 0.000001$). The regression model indicated that students in the AI-assisted group gained approximately 5.3 points morethan those in the control group.

These results strongly suggest that AI integration into assessment significantly enhances the precision and effectiveness of language evaluation and provides personalized feedback that boosts learner performance.

7.2 Qualitative Results

The thematic analysis of interviews revealed three key themes:

- **Enhanced Feedback and Autonomy**: Students appreciated real-time, personalized feedback, which enabled independent learning. Instructors also noted that AI tools supplemented their assessments and allowed more time for instruction.
- **Motivation and Engagement**: AI-driven platforms encouraged students to engage more actively with their learning, particularly in writing and speaking tasks. Tools that corrected pronunciation and grammar in real-time increased learner confidence and participation.
- **Concerns about Fairness and Technology Dependence**: Both students and teachers raised valid concerns about algorithmic errors, over-reliance on AI, and unequal access to digital tools, particularly in low-resource settings.

7.3 Integrated Discussion

The quantitative and qualitative findings are mutually reinforcing. The statistical evidence indicates that AI significantly improves assessment outcomes, while the interview data provide deeper insights into how and why this impact occurs. AI tools empower learners by delivering immediate, individualized feedback, aligning well with formative assessment principles and fostering self-regulated learning **(Wei, 2023)**. Students not only learned more effectively but also more confidently.

These results are consistent with earlier research by **Kot and Nykyporets (2024)**, who observed that AI-enhanced platforms improve learning outcomes by adapting to individual learner needs. Similarly, **Huang et al. (2023)** emphasize that AI systems help reduce teacher workload while maintaining accuracy and consistency in evaluation.

However, the concerns voiced in interviews cannot be overlooked. **Zhang (2024) and Tafazoli (2024)** caution against ethical and accessibility issues related to AI integration, particularly when students accept AI corrections

without understanding the reasoning. Teachers must remain central to the assessment process, using AI tools as supplements rather than substitutes.

8. RECOMMENDATIONSOF THE STUDY

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that Artificial Intelligence (AI) be integrated into English language assessment as a complementary tool rather than a replacement for teacher-led evaluation. Educational institutions should prioritize teacher training to ensure effective use of AI platforms and promote ethical implementation that safeguards data privacy and ensures equitable access for all learners, especially in resource-limited settings. A blended assessment model that combines AI-driven formative feedback with human-evaluated summative assessments is advised to balance automation with pedagogical judgment. Regular monitoring of AI tools and the inclusion of student and teacher feedback can help refine their application and ensure alignment with learning objectives. Furthermore, AI tools should be carefully selected and customized based on specific language skills such as writing, pronunciation, or grammar, ensuring that their use supports learner autonomy, motivation, and long-term proficiency development.

9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study, while providing valuable insights into the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on assessment practices in English language education, is subject to several limitations. Firstly, the sample size was limited to 120 students from a single institution in Eritrea, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader or more diverse educational settings. Secondly, the intervention period was relatively short (eight weeks), which may not fully capture the long-term effects of AI-assisted assessment on language proficiency. Thirdly, while the study employed a mixed-methods approach, the qualitative component was based on a small number of interviews, potentially limiting the depth and diversity of perspectives. In addition, the AI tools used in the study (e.g., Grammarly, ELSA Speak) may have limitations in evaluating complex language constructs such as creativity, tone, or cultural appropriateness, which human teachers can better assess. Finally, the study did not fully explore the impact of digital literacy, internet accessibility, or socio-economic background on learners' ability to use AI tools effectively. These limitations highlight the need for further longitudinal and large-scale studies across multiple educational contexts to better understand the long-term impact, ethical implications, and best practices for integrating AI in language assessment.

10. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on assessment practices in English language education through a mixed-methods approach involving both statistical analysis and qualitative inquiry. The results clearly demonstrate that AI-assisted assessment tools significantly enhance student performance, provide real-time personalized feedback, and foster learner autonomy. Quantitative findings showed a statistically significant improvement in gain scores among students using AI tools compared to those assessed through traditional methods.

Regression and ANOVA analyses further confirmed that AI integration is a strong predictor of improved learning outcomes. Qualitative insights supported these findings by revealing that students were more engaged and motivated when they received immediate, individualized feedback from AI tools. Teachers also acknowledged the efficiency and support provided by such tools in managing assessment workloads and tracking student progress. However, the study also highlighted challenges related to digital inequality, algorithmic reliability, and the potential over-reliance on automated feedback without human interpretation.

AI cannot replace the pedagogical role of educators, it can serve as a powerful complement to human-led assessment when applied thoughtfully and ethically. Successful implementation depends on infrastructure readiness, teacher training, and equitable access to technology. Future research should explore long-term impacts of AI integration, particularly in diverse educational settings, and develop frameworks that blend AI assessment with pedagogical best practices to ensure inclusive, accurate, and effective English language education.

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