The Level of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies among English Language Teachers in the Preparatory Stage in Governmenl Schools in Gaza ∗

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أن تقوم وزارة التربية والتعليم بعقد دورات لمدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية من أجل تدريبهم على استخدام استراتيجيات التقويم البديل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الانجليزية، المدارس الحكومية، المرحلة التحضيرية، استراتيجيات بديلة للتقييم.

Abstract

This study aims at investigating the level of using alternative assessment strategies among English language teachers in the preparatory stage in governmenl schools in Gaza. The study used the descriptive analytical approach, through designing a questionnaire that consisted of (6) domains and (30) items. The questionnaire was distributed to (90) English teacherseof preparatory stage. The study also used semi-structured interviews, which werehconducted with (25) English teachers of the same stage. The study revealed that the use of alternative assessment strategies among the teachers was moderate; it with a (54.24%). The study found that there were no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the level of using alternative assessment strategies among English language teachers due to their gender and experience. The study recommends that the Ministry of education should conduct workshops to train ELTs to use alternative assessment strategies.

Keywords: Alternative assessment strategies, preparatory stage, governmenl schools, English Language

درجة استخدام معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لاستراتيجيات التقويم البديل في المرحلة الإعدادية في المدارس الحكومية في غزة

ملخص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى استقصاء درجة استخدام معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لاستراتيجيات التقويم البديل في المرحلة الإعدادية في المدارس الحكومية في غزة. واستخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي من خلال استخدام استبانة مكونة من (6) مجالات موزعة على (30) فقرة، حيث تم توزيعها على (90) معلما ومعلمة ممن يُدرسون اللغة الانجليزية للمرحلة الاعدادية. وتم إجراء مقابلات شخصية مع (25) معلما ومعلمة للغة الإنجليزية لنفس المرحلة. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن درجة استخدام المعلمين والمعلمات لاستراتيجيات التقويم البديل كان متوسطاً بنسبة (54.24 %). وأظهرت الدراسة عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في درجة استخدام معلمي اللغة الانجليزية تبعاً لمتغير الجنس أو الخبرة. وأوصت الدراسة

Introduction

For the students to be prepared for performing different roles in the future, this requires better understanding of the nature of learning/teaching process, and facing new expectations, which the philosophy of education must seek to accomplish. The purpose of learning is not only providing students with information but also empowering them to produce knowledge, applying and practicing it in new life situations. In another context, learning should be reflected in real life situations.

Quite recently, the Ministry of Education in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has made some developments to the teachers' practices in the area of assessment throughout obligating the teachers who work in governmental and private schools to apply alternative assessment, or what assessment and evaluation experts have agreed to call: recent assessment strategies. In addition,the use of alternative assessment strategies (AAS) will help students to achieve self-independence, improve self-performance and provide immediate feedback. (Abu Zina, 2003). Mental operations, skills of discovery and looking for accurate information are aims to be provided for all students. Moreover, by the use of AAS, teachers can confirm that students' achievements are due to the use of authentic assessment, not mere memorizing information and retrieving it. Besides, AAS focus on the students' individual differences: their abilities and learning styles (Ministry of Education, 2004).

According to Sada & Ibrahim (2004) that use of recent assessment strategies helps teachers determine the current situation to their students, reformulate the special educational outputs, and obtain the exact information related to what results the students have achieved. It also helps teachers choose the most effective and appropriate

methods which will result in the improvements in the education field. In addition, teachers can compare students' results in their schools with other students' in other areas in the country they live in.

Today assessment, with its new concept, has exceeded the traditional understanding of assessing students' learning, which is built upon students' demonstration of what individual differences they have. Traditional assessment strategies do not measure what students really have concerning the abilities associated with high levels of thinking: creative and critical thinking, and the ability to crystalize judgments, make decisions, and solve problems, as well to be ready to deal with future changes (Brookshire et al. 2006). According to (Hallomet al. 2006) alternative assessment strategies are very useful to determine the achievement /performance to be assessed, because they (AAS) are an effective indicator to the learner. The activities and tasks may vary from classroom questions, discussions, debates, school projects, portfolios, presentations, and anecdotal record.

Richard & Renanday (2002, p.330) maintained that alternative assessment strategies came as a replacement for traditional assessment strategies in the field of education, since the second one did not give true evaluation of the students. They argued that teachers sought to use alternative assessment strategies since the traditional strategies of assessment failed to provide teachers with real data about their students. They added that modern assessment strategies concentrate on giving real evaluation of the learner's abilities to use language in real life situations.

Some educationalists went further to categorize AAS into many types. On this basis, Al Harbi (2016, p. 31) maintained that there are three kinds of alternative assessment: First, authentic assessment which makes students involve in conducting expressive tasks by using higher order thinking skills. Second, performance-based assessment that requires students to use their knowledge and skills in new situations. Third, constructivist assessment strategies, which make them participate in the assessment process.

In order for any procedure to apply to AAS, it must match with some of the features. In this vein, *Brown and Hudson (1998, p. 653) revealed that the characteristics of alternative assessment to language teaching are*:

1. Making students do and create something;

2. Using real situations;

3. Allowing students to be assessed based on their activities in classes;

4. Focusing on procedures as well as outputs;

5. Addressing teachers to implement modern instructional and assessment roles.

Scholars and educationalists have many discussions to give an exact name for alternative assessment. Thus, there are many terms to describe alternative assessment. Throughout literature review, the researchers found many terms regarding alternative assessment. According to Hamayan, (1995, p. 213) these are: ‹alternative assessment,› ‹informal assessment,› ‹authentic assessment,› ‹performance assessment,› ‹descriptive assessment,› and direct assessment.›

After reviewing the related literature, the researchers used the term "Alternative Assessment» as it was found in most of the studies reviewed.

The researchers have reviewed the relevant and modern studies in the field on alternative assessment. The studies are listed from modern to older ones.

Mustafa (2016) conducted a study which intended to identify the status of using Alternative Assessment by the Islamic education teachers of the elementary stage in Gaza. The study adopted the descriptive analytical approach by using a questionnaire and a focal group to collect the necessary data on a sample consisted of (115) teachers. The study found that the practice of alternative assessment strategies among Islamic Education teachers was high with a percentage of (74.79%). The paper-and-pencil strategy was the first domain used with a percentage of (83.58) while the last domain was mapping strategy with a percentage of (68.18%).

The Degree of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies among English Language
Teachers in the Preparatory Stage in Governmental Schools in Gaza

Mr. Khalil Abdullah Khalil Abu Rezeq
Mr. Mustafa Ahmad Shaker Abu Taha

Lope (2015) conducted a study which aimed to synthesize and review the literature of alternative assessment tools in order to evaluate the EFL students› writing in ‹Cape Verde Secondary Schools›. The study also aimed to make Cape Verdean EFL teachers aware of the various kinds of alternative assessment. The study focused on analytical and self-assessment tool, as a significant way of attaining an active picture of students› academic and linguistic progress. The study revealed that the majority of Cape Verdean teachers use traditional techniques of assessment. The research concluded that each different alternative assessment tool could be used by any EFL Cape Verdean teacher in the classroom.

Abbas (2012) did another significant study with the aim of exploring difficulties in using methods of alternative assessment in teaching English as a foreign language from Iraqi instructors› points of view. The study sample was the instructors of the English Department in college of Education (AL-Assmai) and the college of Basic Education at Diyla University in the academic year 20102011-.The study used a questionnaire consisted of (15) items, distributed to (30) EFL instructors. The study revealed that there were difficulties facing English teachers in using alternative assessment strategies in teaching.

Tawalba, et al. (2012) carried out a study, which aimed at identifying the degree of using alternative assessment strategies by social sciences and mathematics teachers in Jordan. For the purpose of the study, the researchers designed a questionnaire consisting of (35) items, distributed into six dimensions. The sample of the study comprised (1944) teachers. The study revealed that the most used strategy was observation, followed by paper and pencil strategy, then performance, self-appraisal and the last used one was communication strategy. The study also revealed that the teachers, with experience of more than (10) years, were classified as the teachers who rarely use alternative assessment strategies.

Al-Basheer & Barham (2012) carried out a study in which they tried to investigate the degree of using alternative assessment strategies among Mathematics and Arabic language teachers in Jordan. A questionnaire distributed to (86) teachers

and semi- structured interviews with (20) teachers were used to achieve the objectives of the study. The study showed that ‹pencil and paper strategy› was the first used strategy in the alternative assessment while performance-based strategy and observation strategy, were moderately used. The last strategy used by teachers was communication strategy. The study also revealed that there were no statistically significant differences attributed to teachers' specialization in using the strategies of alternative assessment.

Afana (2011) attempted in her study to explore the modern trends in assessment and the current status of Arabic Language teacher's practice of alternative assessment techniques in the preparatory stage in the UNRWA schools in Gaza. The study adopted the descriptive approach by observing (60) teachers and using a questionnaire distributed to (24) school principals and Arabic language supervisors. The study revealed that paper and pencil strategy was the first used strategy, while performance based assessment strategy and portfolio strategy were the last ones. The study showed that female teachers used more alternative assessment strategies than male teachers did.

El-Haj (2010) conducted a study aimed at identifying the extent of knowledge and use of the alternative assessment strategies among the upper basic grades English Language teachers in Amman, Jordan. The population of the study compromised all English teachers of the upper basic grades, grade 8, 9 and 10 during the scholastic year 20082009/ in the Governmental, UNRWA and private schools. The sample consisted of (150) teachers. The study used two tools to achieve the purpose of the study: a test to examine the teachers' knowledge of the alternative assessment strategies and a questionnaire to measure the use of each strategy. The study findings revealed that teachers› knowledge of alternative assessment was moderate and their practice of assessment strategies was high.

After reviewing the previous studies regarding the strategies of alternative assessment, the researchers reached the following comments:

1. Most of the studies agreed that the paper-and-pencil strategy was the first used strategy

in assessment, while performance and self-reflection assessment strategies were the least used strategies in assessment.

2. Most of the studies used a questionnaire to find out the extent of using the alternative assessment among teachers.

3. Generally, the domains of alternative assessment are the same as the study used.

4. All studies used the descriptive approach in order to find the degree of using alternative assessment.

Statement of Problem

There has been an increasing interest in alternative assessment recently in Palestine. A good example of this is the inclusion of new assessment strategies in the 11th and 12th levels. Abu Zina (2003) clarified that recent assessment strategies require teachers to adapt their assessment in order to be appropriate with the ongoing development of the thorough concept of assessing and evaluating students' learning. Therefore, teachers have to use/apply recent strategies other than the traditional ones, mainly paper tests, which are used to assess students' learning achievement. This means that paper tests should not be given all weight. Teachers need to consider distributing at least 20% of the total marks to classroom oral participation.

It is unfortunate that most teachers follow paper test strategy in assessing students' skills in English language. Oral skills may be always neglected due to some factors. Whatever the reason is, there is a necessity to use authentic assessment strategies that can measure what should be measured. Most of the written exams depend on pure memorization and such exams may not show the creativity and originality of the students.

After examining many studies in this field, the researchers found that there has not been any study in English language showing whether alternative assessment strategies are applied in English language classes in schools in the Gaza Strip. The study aimed to find whether alternative assessment strategies are applied in English language classes in governmental schools in Gaza.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to determine the degree of using alternative assessment among English language teachers in the preparatory stage in the governmental schools in Gaza and to investigate any possible differences between English language teachers due to gender and experience in using the strategies of alternative assessment.

Questions of the Study

The study attempts to answer these questions:

1. What is the degree of using alternative assessment among English language teachers in the preparatory stage in governmental schools in Gaza?

2. Are there any statistically significant differences at (a ≤ 0.05) in the degree of using alternative assessment among English Language teachers in the preparatory stage in the governmental schools in Gaza attributed to teacher's gender?

3. Are there any statistically significant differences at (a ≤ 0.05) in the degree of using alternative assessment among English Language teachers in the preparatory stage in the governmental schools in Gaza attributed to teacher's years of experience?

Significance of the Study:

The significance of study lies in its attempt (a) to come with outcomes useful for English language teachers to know their level and degree of using alternative assessment tools and (b) give a significant source of information for the Ministry of Education and English language supervisors in order to get an authentic and obvious image of the uses of alternative assessments among English Language teachers.

Limitations of the Study:

The study was conducted in the frame of the following limitations:

1. The study population is the English language teachers whose number is (130) (male

The Degree of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies among English Language
Teachers in the Preparatory Stage in Governmental Schools in Gaza

Mr. Khalil Abdullah Khalil Abu Rezeq
Mr. Mustafa Ahmad Shaker Abu Taha

and female) in the preparatory stage in governmental schools in Gaza – KhanYounis West Directorate.

2. The sample of the study consisted of (90) teachers whom the researchers distributed the questionnaires to.

3. The study was conducted during the first semester in the scholastic year 2016/2017.

Definitions of Key Terms:

The Alternative Assessment strategies: These are the set of modern strategies used in assessment such as performance based assessment, communication assessment, observation assessment, self-reflection assessment and record strategies.

English language teacher: He/she is the teacher who teaches English as foreign language for students at governmental schools in the Gaza Strip in Palestine. In this study, they are English language teachers in Preparatory stage.

Preparatory Stage: The reparatory stage is the three years that follow the elementary stage. It includes grades 7, 8 and 9.

Methodology of the study

The study adopted the analytical descriptive approach to achieve the study objectives. The study followed the mixed–mode approach; the qualitative approach by interviewing (25) English language teachers and the quantitative approach by using the questionnaire that was distributed to (90) teachers.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of (130) English language teachers in the preparatory stage in KhanYounis Governorate, south of the Gaza Strip, during the first semester of the scholastic year (2016 – 2017).

The sample of the study:

In order to achieve the objective of the study, the researchers distributed the questionnaire to (90) teachers, (75) teachers responded to the questionnaire, representing (83.33%) of

the sample. Among them, (25) teachers were interviewed by the two researchers.

Table (1)

the Description of the Sample According to Gender

Gender	No.	%
Male	40	53.30
Female	35	46.70
Total	**75**	**100.0**

Table (2)

The Description of the Study Sample According to Experience

Experience	No	%
5 years and less	13	17.30
6 – 10 years	20	26.70
11 – 15 years	12	16.00
More than 15 years	30	40.00
Total	**75**	**100.0**

Table (2) showed that the study sample varies in terms of years of experience. However, most of them are more than a 15-year experience, with weight of (40%).

Instrumentation:

Questionnaire:

The questionnaire consisted of (30) items, distributed into (6) domains using Likert Five-scale. The responses of the teachers were; (1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = moderate, 4 = high and 5 = very high). The least possible degree of using the alternative assessment strategies was "very low" while the most possible degree was (very high).

The Steps of Making the Questionnaire:

1. Reviewing literature regarding alternative assessment.

2. After building the preliminary questionnaire, it was distributed to a panel of referees who are specialized in English language teaching, methodology, education, and assessment and evaluation to check its validity.

3. Checking the reliability of the questionnaire by distributing it to (20) teachers who were out of the study sample.

Validity of the questionnaire:

To validate the questionnaire, the researchers used two types of validity: the referee validity and the internal consistency validity.

The referee validity:

The preliminary questionnaire was distributed to a panel of referees (8) who are specialized in English language teaching, methodology, education, and assessment and evaluation. Confusing items were adapted and explained according to their suggestions. The researchers kept the items which were agreed on with a percentage of (90%). In this regard, Droza (1997) mentioned that if the total degree among referees exceeded (75%), it will be acceptable.

Internal Consistency Validity:

Al Agha (1996, p.121) declares that "The internal consistency validity shows the correlation of the score of each item with the total average of the test. It also indicates the correlation of the average of each domain with the total average". This validity was calculated by using (Pearson Formula).

Table (3)

Correlation Coefficient for Each Item

No.	Performance Based Assessment	Correlation	Sig. Value
1	The performance	**0.733	0.000
2	The presentation	**0.587	0.000
3	The demonstration	**0.535	0.000
4	Optimal Dialogues	**0.513	0.001
5	Role-playing	**0.659	0.000
6	Exhibition	**0.710	0.000
#	Paper-and-pencil Strategy	Correlation	Sig. Value
7	Communication	**0.746	0.000
8	Worksheets	**0.477	0.002
9	Quizzes	**0.590	0.000
10	Summative tests	**0.699	0.000

No.	Performance Based Assessment	Correlation	Sig. Value
11	Formative tests	**0.620	0.000
#	Observation Strategy	Correlation	Sig. Value
12	Spontaneous observation	**0.587	0.000
13	Systematic observation	**0.789	0.000
#	Communication Strategy	Correlation	Sig. Value
14	Debate	**0.575	0.000
15	Conferences	*0.385	0.016
16	Interviews	**0.502	0.001
17	Group work	**0.648	0.000
18	Questions and answers	**0.630	0.000
#	Self-Assessment Reflection	Correlation	Sig. Value
19	Self- Reflection	**0.519	0.001
20	Self- Assessment	**0.475	0.002
21	Peer Reviewing	**0.452	0.003
22	Diaries	**0.495	0.001
23	Portfolio	*0.393	0.013
24	Free tasks	**0.683	0.000
25	Projects	**0.507	0.001
#	Record Strategies	Correlation	Sig. Value
26	Checklist	**0.744	0.000
27	Rating Scale	**0.628	0.000
28	Rubric	*0.397	0.012
29	Learning Log	*0.389	0.013
30	Anecdotal Record	**0.593	0.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The results of table (3) showed that the value of these items were suitable, consistent and valid for conducting this study. All of them were sig. at (0.05 and 0.01).

Structure validity:

The researchers calculated correlation coefficients between domains and all degree. Table (4) shows the external validity for questionnaire domains.

The Degree of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies among English Language
Teachers in the Preparatory Stage in Governmental Schools in Gaza

Mr. Khalil Abdullah Khalil Abu Rezeq
Mr. Mustafa Ahmad Shaker Abu Taha

Table (4)

External Validity for the domains of the questionnaire

No	Domains	Correlation	Sig. Value
1	Performance Based Assessment	**0.913	0.000
2	Paper-and-pencil Strategy	**0.936	0.000
3	Observation Strategy	**0.845	0.000
4	Communication Strategy	**0.830	0.000
5	Self-Assessment Reflection	**0.854	0.000
6	Record Strategies	**0.813	0.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The results of table (4) showed that Sig value is less than (0.05), so correlation coefficient is significant.

Reliability of the questionnaire

In order for the study to be reliable, the researchers conducted a pilot study to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire which measured by Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha Method:

The researchers calculated the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for domains and all degree. Table (6) shows the results:

Table (5)

Reliability of the Domains by Cronbach's Alpha Method

Model	Items	Cronbach›s Alpha Coefficient
Performance Based Assessment	6	0.844
Paper-and-pencil Strategy	5	0.609
Observation Strategy	2	0.808
Communication Strategy	5	0.901
Self-Assessment Reflection	7	0.878
Record Strategies	5	0.724
All degree	30	0.901

Table (5) showed that Cronbach›s Alpha

coefficient for all degree equals (0.901) and that result is more than (0.6). This result indicates that the questionnaire is suitable for conducting the study.

Statistical techniques:

The researchers used a number of statistical techniques which fit the nature of the study; the data were collected and computed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS IBM 22.0 version) as follows:

1. Frequencies and Percentage.

2. Correlation coefficient.

3. Alpha Cronbach Coefficient.

4. Independent samples T- test

5. One –Way Anova.

A. Interviews:

The researchers interviewed (25) male and female teachers. The teachers were randomly selected and interviewed face to face by the researchers. After taking their notes, the researchers analyzed the teachers' answers and reached the conclusion discussed in the results.

Findings and Data Analysis:

First:

The results and discussions of the quantitative data. (The questionnaire)

The result of the first question:

» What is the degree of using alternative assessment strategies among English language teachers in the preparatory stage in governmental schools in Gaza?

In order to answer the first question, the mean, std., rank and percentage calculated the teachers' responses to the items and domains of the questionnaire.

In order to decide the overall degree of using alternative assessment strategies, the following scale was used:

Table (6)

The Scale of Overall Degree of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies

Range of means	Degree
1_1.80	Very low (V. L)
1.81_2.60	Low (L)
2.61_3.40	Moderate (M)
3.41_4.20	High (H)
4.21_5	Very High (V. H)

Table (7)

Mean, std., percentage and rank for teachers' responses to the questionnaire's items

No.	Strategy	Items	Mean	Std.	Percentage	Rank	Degree of Using
1		The performance	2.787	1.234	55.74	3	M
2		The presentation	3.04	1.31	60.8	1	M
3	Performance Based Assessment Strategies	The demonstration	2.92	1.228	58.4	2	M
4		Optimal Dialogues	2.64	1.049	52.8	4	M
5		Role-playing	2.64	1.135	52.8	5	M
6		Exhibition	2.52	1.299	50.4	6	L
7		Communication	3.387	1.251	67.74	5	M
8	Paper-and-Pencil Strategies	Worksheets	3.694	1.053	73.88	4	H
9		Quizzes	3.934	1.167	78.68	3	H
10		Summative tests	4.08	1.037	81.6	1	H
11		Formative tests	4.014	1.214	80.28	2	H
12	Observation Strategies	Spontaneous observation	3.214	1.223	64.28	2	M
13		Systematic observation	3.294	1.125	65.88	1	M
14		Debate	2.254	1.152	45.08	3	L
15		Conferences	1.974	1.091	39.48	5	L
16	Communication Strategies	Interviews	2.227	1.134	44.54	4	L
17		Group work	3.027	1.395	60.54	2	M
18		Questions and answers	3.12	1.452	62.4	1	M
19		Self- Reflection	2.68	1.317	53.6	1	M
20		Self- Assessment	2.6	1.284	52	2	L
21		Peer Reviewing	2.454	1.277	49.08	3	L
22		Diaries	2.174	1.19	43.48	4	L
23	Self-Assessment Reflection Strategies	Portfolio	2.174	1.179	43.48	5	L
24		Free tasks	2.174	1.132	43.48	6	L
25		Projects	1.974	1.04	39.48	7	L
26		Checklist	2.334	1.245	46.68	1	M

The Degree of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies among English Language
Teachers in the Preparatory Stage in Governmental Schools in Gaza

Mr. Khalil Abdullah Khalil Abu Rezeq
Mr. Mustafa Ahmad Shaker Abu Taha

No.	Strategy	Items	Mean	Std.	Percentage	Rank	Degree of Using
27		Rating Scale	2.267	1.212	45.34	2	M
28	Record Strategies	Rubric	1.96	1.145	39.2	3	L
29		Learning Log	1.88	1.078	37.6	5	L
30		Anecdotal Record	1.947	1.126	38.94	4	L

Table (7) illustrated that the degrees of using the alternative assessment strategies are mainly classified under three categories: High (H), Moderate (M) and Low (L).

● **High (H) degree of using alternative assessment strategies:**

The strategies that were highly used by the teachers were all of paper and pencil strategies. Summative and formative tests were the most used strategies for assessment among the teachers.

● **Moderate (M) degree of using alternative assessment strategies:**

All of the observation strategies (spontaneous and systematic), group work, questions and answers, checklist and rating scales strategy were moderately used by the teachers.

● **Low (L) degree of using alternative assessment strategies:**

Exhibition, debate, conferences, interviews, self-assessment, peer reviewing, diaries, portfolios, free tasks, projects, rubric, learning log, anecdotal record strategy were used in low degree among the teachers. This may be interpreted that the level of students in Palestine in English language is weak. In addition to that, the previous mentioned strategies are too difficult to students to perform in the preparatory stage. Conducting such these strategies in English classes will be not worthy enough because they do not conform to student's level.

In the following table, the researchers will explain the overall rank and the degree of using alternative assessment strategies by teachers.

Table (8)

Mean, std., percentage and rank for teachers' responses to the questionnaire's domains

Domains	Mean	Std.	Percentage	Rank	Degree of Using
Performance Based Assessment	2.7578	0.977	55.156	3	moderate
Paper-and-pencil Strategy	3.8213	0.740	76.426	1	High
Observation Strategy	3.2533	1.094	65.066	2	Moderate
Communication Strategy	2.5200	0.954	50.40	4	Low
Self-Assessment Reflection	2.3181	0.924	46.362	5	Low
Record Strategies	2.0773	0.915	41.546	6	Low
Overall Degree	2.7124	0.617	54.248		moderate

Table (8) showed that the degree of using alternative assessment strategies among English language teachers in the preparatory stage in governmental schools in Gaza is moderate with a percentage weight of (54.248%). The first domain is paper and-pencil strategy with a percentage of (76.426%), while the last domain is record strategy with a percentage of (41.546%).

To sum up the answer of the first question, the degree of using alternative assessment among English language teachers in the preparatory stage in governmental schools in Gaza is moderate.

The study is consistent with the following studies: Mustafa (2016) study, Lope (2015) study, Abbas (2012) study, Barham (2012) study that showed paper and pencil, and Afana (2011)

study. In addition, the study goes in line with El Haj (2010) study which revealed that the use of alternative assessment strategies was moderate. However, not all the studies go along with the results of this research, Tawalba, et al. (2012) study was not in conformity to the results of this study.

The researchers attribute the reason why most of English language teachers in the Preparatory stage governmental stage in Gaza use paper and pencil strategy is that the system of assessment and evaluation of students depends mainly on the written tests. Teachers usually lack resources of alternative assessment strategies because of the lack of modern educational aids that help to use the alternative assessment. There are other reasons conform to the views of teachers will be discussed in the interviews discussion.

The Result of the Second Question:

Are there any statistically significant differences at (a ≤ 0.05) in the degree of using alternative assessment among English teachers in the preparatory stage in the governmental schools attributed to teacher's gender?

In order to find the differences between male and female English teachers in the preparatory schools in Gaza, the researchers used Independent samples T- test. Table (10) shows the results:

Table (9)

Mean, Standard Deviation, T Value, Significance Value, and Significance Level of Differences Between Males and Females

Domains	Gender	No.	Mean	Std.	T	Sig.
Performance Based Assessment	Male	40	2.53	0.947	2.223	0.029
	Female	35	3.019	0.959		
Paper-and-pencil Strategy	Male	40	3.745	0.794	0.954	0.343
	Female	35	3.909	0.675		
Observation Strategy	Male	40	3.15	0.872	0.872	0.386
	Female	35	3.372	1.309		
Communication Strategy	Male	40	2.53	0.931	0.096	0.923
	Female	35	2.509	0.993		
Self-Assessment Reflection	Male	40	2.39	0.878	0.711	0.479
	Female	35	2.237	0.982		
Record Strategies	Male	40	2.3	0.906	2.320	0.023
	Female	35	1.823	0.869		
overall degree	Male	40	2.703	0.609	0.149	0.882
	Female	35	2.724	0.633		

"t" value at (183) d f. at (0.05) sig. level 1.96
"t" value at (183) d f. at (0.01) sig. level 2.58

According to table (9), there are differences among English language teachers in using performance-based assessment strategies in favor of female teachers while in record strategies, the table showed that the differences in using alternative assessment are in favor of male teachers. The other domains were not significant. Overall degrees indicate that computed T value is less than the critical (a ≤0.05) and that proves that there are no statistically significant differences at (a≤ 0.05) among male and female teachers in using the alternative assessment strategies.

This can be justified due to the fact that male and female teachers are working in the same area, condition and educational system; as well as, to their students' level. The teachers whom we interviewed stated that all of the male and female students nearly have the same conditions and have general weakness in English language. That leads teachers to use the traditional assessment strategies (paper and pencil assessment) that are not complicated and conforming to the students' level.

The Degree of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies among English Language
Teachers in the Preparatory Stage in Governmental Schools in Gaza

Mr. Khalil Abdullah Khalil Abu Rezeq
Mr. Mustafa Ahmad Shaker Abu Taha

The Result of the Third Question:

Are there any statistically significant differences at (a ≤ 0.05) in the degree of using alternative assessment among English language teachers in the preparatory stage in governmental schools in Gaza attributed to teacher's years of experience?

In order to find differences between teachers according to their experience, the researchers used One -Way Anova.

Table (10)

Analysis of Variance for Alternative Assessment Domains Due to the Teachers' Experience

Domains	Model	Sum of squares	Df.	Mean square	F	Sig.
Performance Based Assessment	Between groups	0.699	3	0.233	0.236	0.871
	Within groups	69.984	71	0.986		
	Total	70.683	74			
Paper-and-Pencil Strategy	Between groups	0.304	3	0.101	0.179	0.910
	Within groups	40.222	71	0.567		
	Total	40.526	74			
Observation Strategy	Between groups	1.289	3	0.430	0.349	0.790
	Within groups	87.397	71	1.231		
	Total	88.687	74			
Communication Strategy	Between groups	0.194	3	0.065	0.068	0.977
	Within groups	67.086	71	0.945		
	Total	67.280	74			
Self-Assessment Reflection	Between groups	3.174	3	1.058	1.252	0.297
	Within groups	59.992	71	0.845		
	Total	63.166	74			
Record Strategies	Between groups	2.129	3	0.710	0.843	0.475
	Within groups	59.782	71	0.842		
	Total	61.911	74			
All degree	Between groups	0.553	3	0.184	0.476	0.700
	Within groups	27.493	71	0.387		
	Total	28.046	74			

Table (10) showed that sig. value at all domains and all degrees were more than (0.05). Therefore, there are no differences at (a ≤ 0.05) in the degree of using alternative assessment among English language teachers in the preparatory stage in the governmental schools in Gaza attributed to teacher's years of experience. This result could be perceived that the assessment system applicable at the governmental schools in Gaza is the same. Experienced teachers and novice ones have to use mainly one type of assessment. This is in line with the answer of the second question that there are no differences attributed to gender in using the alternative assessment strategies because of the same conditions, system and sources.

Second:

Results Relating to Qualitative Analysis of the Questions of the Study. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with (25) teachers to take their opinions

about their practices of alternative assessment strategies in their classes.

The results of the first question: Is it important to use alternative assessment strategies in the class to evaluate your students? Twenty teachers said that it is very important that they should use alternative assessment strategies in English language classes so that they can give authentic evaluation of their students' achievement. The (20) teachers declared that each skill and activity requires specific technique of assessment. They added that traditional assessment methods do not, in fact, reflect the real abilities of their students. They explained that the main criteria followed in their schools, in order to assess the student, were mid-term exams and final exams. The least marks out of (100) are given for student because of their creative works, debates, demonstration, peer reviewing, self-assessment and other alternative assessment strategies. They unanimously agreed that alternative assessment strategies make student study harder for better exhibition of their talents and skills.

Some (7) teachers out of the (20) revealed that it is hard for them to evaluate listening and speaking skills by paper-and-pencil strategy, which is being used frequently to evaluate students in English language classes. They claimed that they are eager to use presentation; role-playing, optimal dialogues and debate techniques to assess their students properly. They commented that there are other skills and sub skills that cannot be assessed without alternative assessment strategies.

However, (5) teachers, when asked if they think alternatives assessment is important, revealed that it is not. They claimed that the nature of the Palestinian students in Gaza hinders applying modern alternative assessments, and confirmed that this problem is due to psychological factors. They stated that the paper-and-pencil strategy: (worksheets, quizzes, summative and formative tests) is sufficient to determine students' progress. They commented that most of teachers in the Palestinian schools use that strategy in assessment. According to them, it is valid, reliable, used and approved by the Ministry of Education. The five

teachers explained that current conditions in their classrooms do not allow them to use alternative assessment strategies in classes with (40-45) students. Two interviewees revealed that they have workload exceeding (25) classes a week, which prevents them from applying alternative assessment strategies.

» ***Here are some responses of the ELTs to this question: Do you think it is important to use AASs in English classes?***

A female teacher, when asked the question above, explained that AASs are very important. She added that assessment and evaluation become true only when more than one assessment strategies are applied when assessing students' achievement. The teacher reveals that some classroom activities require different assessment tools.

A second female teacher, in reply to the same question, briefed that she wishes to apply alternative assessment strategies in the class, but this, she comments, is not easy because the classrooms are crowded.

The third teacher revealed that there is no need to use many of alternative assessment strategy in the class because students' answers in formative and summative exams and in the notebook are good enough to reflect students' understanding.

The result of the second question

» ***What are the alternative assessment strategies do you use in your English classes to assess your students? And why?***

As for this question, the twenty five teachers responded that they rarely use alternative assessment strategies. They consider them very important, but the conditions and current situation prevent them from doing so. The researchers think this is right since most classes are crowded (40-45) students, which makes it difficult, i.e. to conduct group work discussion or doing presentation. In addition, some teachers just focus on teaching grammar; they do not focus on improving students' performance. The problem

The Degree of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies among English Language
Teachers in the Preparatory Stage in Governmental Schools in Gaza

Mr. Khalil Abdullah Khalil Abu Rezeq
Mr. Mustafa Ahmad Shaker Abu Taha

also lies in the current assessment system which does not give much weight for such modern assessment tools. In another context, unless there is a paradigm shift in this system, such modern assessment cannot be applied.

The majority of responses indicated that teachers generally use worksheets, quizzes, summative and formative tests and spontaneous observation so as to assess their students. They revealed that the nature of English language curriculum forces English teachers to use those techniques. Mid-term and final exams are commonly used. They barely use performance-based strategy, communication strategy, or self-assessment strategies, which made teachers and students concentrate on memorizing strategy and studying for exams only.

A great number of teachers stated that the nature of English language, which is difficult for student, makes them unable to use performance based strategy, communication strategy or self-assessment strategies. Those strategies need a good command of English skills which are lost in (95%) of students, according to English teacher's statement.

Five female teachers stated that they use alternative assessment strategies and techniques. They told that they try hard to use these strategies because they are against the general procedures followed in all English classes pertaining to evaluation. They totally depend on excellent female students to conduct the techniques of alternative assessment. They thought that English language can be learned by communication by providing different life situations, mock interviews and role playing. Those female teachers stated that they sometimes use modern strategies of alternative assessment, but away from the official procedures of assessment in governmental schools.

The Following are a Summary of the ELT's Responses:

When asked what alternative assessment strategies they use in their English classes to assess their students and why, the teachers gave different responses. Here some of them:

The first one said that he generally uses summative tests, formative tests and worksheets to assess students. The teacher revealed that he rarely uses other techniques and alternative assessment strategies.

The second teacher explained that English is a language and languages are learnt by communication; therefore, he uses group work, role playing, communication, portfolio, questions and answers strategies in the class. He added that he has to use written exams in order to assess students since they are formal procedures implemented by the Ministry of Education.

A third teacher reveals that she cannot use most of the alternative assessment strategies since the students in the preparatory stage are not qualified enough to give them the following strategies: record strategies, self-assessment reflection and performance strategy.

Summary of the interviews:

As mentioned above, the majority of English language teachers (male and female) rarely use alternative assessment strategies. According to their statements, ***the following are the major obstacles that prevent them from implementing alternative assessment strategies:***

1. There is a great number of students in each class, which may mount from (40 to 47).

2. The formal assessment followed by the ministry of education requires written tests, (formative and summative tests.) Students are given (70%) marks out of (100%) marks to written tests. That made teachers focus on paper-and-pencil strategy in order that students pass exams easily.

3. Student in the preparatory stage are not good enough in English to demonstrate their ability of using English language to be assessed by teachers through AASs.

After analyzing the quantitative and the qualitative data, the researchers reached nearly the

same conclusion: English language teachers in the preparatory stage in governmental schools firstly use paper-and-pencil strategy. The study does not find many contradictions between the quantitative and the qualitative data collected. This flourishes the study procedures and findings, and makes it valid and sincere.

The study conclusions:

1. The study revealed that the degree of using alternative assessment strategies among English language teachers in preparatory stage in governmental schools in Gaza was moderate with weight of (54.248%).

2. The study showed the use of alternative assessment was varied in English classes. The first strategy was paper-and-pencil strategy with a percentage weight of (76.426%). The second strategy was observation strategy with a percentage weight of (65.066%). The third strategy was performance based assessment with a percentage weight of (55.156%). The fourth strategy was communication strategy with a percentage weight of (50.40%). The fifth strategy was self-assessment reflection strategy with a percentage weight of (46.362%). The sixth strategy was record strategies with a percentage weight of (41.546%).

3. There were no statistical significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the degree of using alternative assessment among English language teachers in the preparatory stage in governmental schools in Gaza due to gender variable.

4. There were no statistical significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the degree of using alternative assessment among English language teachers in preparatory stage in governmental schools in Gaza due to teachers' experience variable.

5. Most of the teachers interviewed stressed the importance of alternative assessment strategies. They wish they could use them because they would ease the process of

learning. However, the current conditions in Gaza delay their use of alternative assessment strategies.

Recommendations:

In the light of the findings reached, the researchers offer the following recommendations:

1. The Ministry of Education supervisors ought to conduct meetings with English language teachers in order to discuss the problems that hinder them from using the alternative assessment strategies.

2. Training teachers to use alternative assessment strategies throughout conducting workshops by the Ministry of Education.

3. Calling for changing the current system of assessment adopted by the Ministry of education, since it does not allow English language teachers to vary in using the alternative assessment strategies.

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The Degree of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies among English Language
Teachers in the Preparatory Stage in Governmental Schools in Gaza

Mr. Khalil Abdullah Khalil Abu Rezeq
Mr. Mustafa Ahmad Shaker Abu Taha

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Appendices

Appendix (1) The Questionnaire

Dear colleagues,

The researchers are carrying out a research entitled:

(The Degree of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies among English Language Teachers in the Preparatory Stage in Governmental Schools in Gaza)

You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire, which is the tool that will be used to achieve the outcome of the prospective research. It is only for research purposes and has nothing to do with the evaluation of the courses or the teacher. Please, do not write your name, the name of your school, or any ID specifications.

Your participation will be highly appreciated.

Personal information:

Teacher's Gender: ( ) Male   ( ) Female

Years of experience: ( ) less than 5   ( ) 5- 10   ( ) 11- 15   ( ) more than 15

The following items clarify your degree of using alternative assessment strategies. Answer the questionnaire with sincerity and objectivity, please.

Item N.	The Strategies of the Alternative Assessment	Forms of the strategy	Response				
			Very Low	Low	moderate	high	Very high
1.	Performance Based Assessment	The performance					
2.		The presentation					
3.		The demonstration					
4.		Optimal Dialogues					
5.		Role-playing					
6.		Exhibition					
7.	Paper-and-pencil Strategy	Communication					
8.		Worksheets					
9.		Quizzes					
10.		Summative tests					
11.		Formative tests					

The Degree of Using Alternative Assessment Strategies among English Language
Teachers in the Preparatory Stage in Governmental Schools in Gaza

Mr. Khalil Abdullah Khalil Abu Rezeq
Mr. Mustafa Ahmad Shaker Abu Taha

Item N.	The Strategies of the Alternative Assessment	Forms of the strategy	Response				
			Very Low	Low	moderate	high	Very high
12.	Observation Strategy	Spontaneous observation					
13.		Systematic observation					
14.	Communication Strategy	Debate					
15.		Conferences					
16.		Interviews					
17.		Group work					
18.		Questions and answers					
19.	Self-Assessment Refection	Self- Reflection					
20.		Self- Assessment					
21.		Peer Reviewing					
22.		Diaries					
23.		Portfolio					
24.		Free tasks					
25.		Projects					
26.	Record Strategies	Checklist					
27.		Rating Scale					
28.		Rubric					
29.		Learning Log					
30.		Anecdotal Record					