



Analysis of Teachers' Efficacy in Applying Diverse Assessment Methods Across English Language Skills in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ndhiwa Sub-County, Homa-Bay County, Kenya

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Abstract: This study examined teachers' efficacy in applying diverse assessment methods across English language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—in public junior secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-County, Kenya. Grounded in the Competency-Based Education (CBE) framework, the study sought to determine whether teachers possess the confidence and competence required to implement varied and holistic assessment approaches that promote communicative competence. A descriptive research design was adopted to investigate teachers' practices and perceptions in their natural settings. The study involved 432 respondents, comprising 13 English language teachers, 14 headteachers, one Sub-County Director of Education, and 404 Grade 8 learners. Respondents were selected through stratified, purposive, and census sampling techniques. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules and analyzed through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that teachers demonstrated high efficacy in applying diverse assessment methods, with an overall mean score of 3.53, indicating strong agreement on their competence. Teachers expressed confidence in designing and administering written, oral, formative, and summative assessments, adapting assessment approaches to diverse learner needs, and providing constructive feedback. Formative assessment practices, particularly feedback provision ($M = 3.79$), received the highest ratings, reflecting strong alignment with CBE principles. The study concludes that teachers possess strong assessment efficacy, although greater emphasis is needed on translating this competence into skill-specific and practice-oriented assessment. The study recommends continuous professional development, enhanced assessment literacy, and improved alignment between assessment practices and competency-based learning outcomes.

Keywords: Teacher efficacy, assessment methods, Competency-based education, Formative assessment, English language skills, Junior secondary schools, Kenya.

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1. Introduction

Assessment plays a central role in the teaching and learning of English language, particularly within contemporary

competency-based education systems that emphasize the development of practical skills alongside content knowledge (Bachman, 2022). In this context, teachers' efficacy in applying diverse assessment methods is critical, as it determines how effectively learners' competencies in

reading, writing, listening, and speaking are measured and developed. Education systems in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada have increasingly embraced varied assessment approaches, including formative, summative, and performance-based methods, to capture the multidimensional nature of language proficiency (Gottlieb, 2016). These approaches require teachers to possess strong assessment literacy and confidence in selecting, designing, and implementing appropriate tools that align with learning objectives and support meaningful feedback (DeLuca et al., 2021). Consequently, teachers' efficacy is not only central to assessment quality but also to learners' overall language development.

Despite the recognized importance of diverse assessment methods, challenges persist in their application across different educational contexts. In many systems, traditional assessment practices continue to dominate, often emphasizing written examinations at the expense of oral and listening skills. This imbalance limits the holistic development of learners' communicative competence, as effective language use requires mastery of all four skills (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Moreover, the successful implementation of diverse assessment methods depends heavily on teachers' confidence, training, and experience. Studies have shown that teachers with lower assessment efficacy tend to rely on conventional testing approaches, while those with higher efficacy are more likely to adopt innovative strategies such as peer assessment, project-based tasks, and oral presentations (Karim & Hamid, 2022). This suggests that teachers' beliefs in their capabilities significantly influence the range and effectiveness of assessment practices used in the classroom.

In African, countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania, the application of diverse assessment methods remains uneven due to systemic challenges such as large class sizes, limited instructional resources, and inadequate professional development opportunities for teachers. These constraints often hinder teachers' ability to effectively assess listening and speaking skills, which require more time, interaction, and specialized techniques (Ndou, 2021; Akande, 2023). As a result, many teachers tend to prioritize reading and writing assessments, which are easier to administer and align with national examination formats. This situation underscores the critical role of teacher efficacy, as even within constrained environments, teachers who are confident and well-trained are more likely to explore alternative assessment approaches that support comprehensive language development (Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020).

In Kenya, the introduction of the Competency-Based Education (CBE) framework has intensified the need for teachers to effectively apply diverse assessment methods in evaluating learners' competencies. The CBE approach emphasizes continuous assessment and the integration of formative strategies such as group work, oral presentations, and practical tasks to assess learners' proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Mokaya & Njoroge, 2022). While this reform represents a significant shift from traditional examination-oriented systems, its success largely depends on teachers' efficacy in implementing these varied assessment strategies. However, evidence suggests that many teachers face challenges related to insufficient training, limited resources, and unclear guidelines on assessment practices, which may affect their confidence and effectiveness in applying diverse methods (Versity, 2023).

Public junior secondary schools in Ndhwa Sub-County operate within the broader framework of CBE, requiring teachers to assess learners across multiple language skills using varied approaches. However, contextual factors such as resource limitations, teacher preparedness, and classroom dynamics may influence teachers' efficacy in applying these methods. Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence examining how teachers in Ndhwa Sub-County perceive their own efficacy in using diverse assessment strategies across reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This gap highlights the need for a systematic analysis of teachers' efficacy in applying diverse assessment methods, as such insights are essential for informing targeted interventions, enhancing assessment practices, and ultimately improving English language learning outcomes among junior secondary school learners.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing emphasis on competency-based education and the need for holistic assessment of English language skills, concerns persist regarding teachers' efficacy in applying diverse assessment methods across reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In many educational contexts, including Kenya, assessment practices remain largely skewed toward traditional written examinations, with limited integration of oral and listening-based assessments that are essential for developing communicative competence (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). This imbalance is often linked to gaps in teachers' assessment literacy, limited professional training, and contextual constraints such as large class sizes and inadequate resources, which collectively hinder the effective implementation of varied assessment approaches (DeLuca et al., 2021; Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020). Consequently, even within the Competency-Based

Education (CBE) framework that advocates for continuous and multidimensional assessment, teachers may lack the confidence and skills required to fully operationalize diverse assessment strategies in English language instruction.

In Kenya, while studies have explored curriculum reforms, teacher preparedness, and learners' performance in national examinations, there is limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on teachers' efficacy in applying diverse assessment methods across English language skills at the junior secondary school level (Mokaya & Njoroge, 2022; Wasanga, 2020). This gap is particularly evident in Ndhiwa Sub-County, where no documented study has systematically examined how teachers assess learners' competencies in reading, writing, listening, and speaking using varied approaches. As a result, it remains unclear whether teachers possess the requisite efficacy to implement assessment practices that align with the goals of CBE. This lack of context-specific evidence limits the ability of policymakers and educators to design targeted interventions aimed at strengthening assessment practices and improving learners' overall English language proficiency.

1.3 Objective of the Study

To examine teachers' efficacy in applying diverse assessment methods across different aspects of English language reading, writing, listening, and speaking in public junior secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-County.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teachers' Efficacy in Using Different Assessment Methods

Teachers' efficacy in using different assessment methods plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of student learning and the overall success of instructional goals. Efficacy refers to teachers' confidence in their ability to plan, implement, and evaluate various assessment strategies that cater for diverse learning needs (Brookhart, 2017). In the Competency-Based Education (CBE), where multiple forms of assessments such as formative, summative, and performance-based assessments are employed, teachers must possess both the knowledge and skills to utilize these methods effectively. The ability to choose the appropriate assessment technique based on the learning objectives, content area, and student needs is critical in promoting student engagement, motivation, and mastery of competencies (William & Thompson, 2019).

Formative assessment, for instance, requires teachers to continuously monitor student progress and provide timely feedback to support learning improvement. Teachers with

high efficacy in formative assessment understand how to adapt their teaching strategies based on the feedback they gather through quizzes, classroom discussions, or peer evaluations (Hattie & Clarke, 2019). Teachers who are confident in using formative assessments are more likely to provide continuous, constructive feedback that guides learners in identifying strengths and areas for improvement. This approach supports continuous learning by emphasizing progress and mastery rather than simply focusing on scores. Research highlights that high efficacy in formative assessment practices leads to a supportive, growth-focused learning environment Brookhart (2019). These teachers are able to create a supportive learning environment where assessment is used not just to measure student performance but to guide instruction and learning. Effective formative assessment practices enable teachers to identify gaps in learning and adjust their instructional methods to meet the diverse needs of their learners (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2019).

In summative assessments, teachers with high efficacy ensure that the assessments are aligned with learning outcomes and accurately measure learners' competencies at the end of a learning cycle. These teachers are adept at designing exams, projects, or standardized tests that not only assess knowledge but also evaluate critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills (Republic of Kenya, 2017). Teachers with strong efficacy in summative assessment also know how to analyze the results to inform future instructional planning and identify areas where learners may need further support. Their confidence in implementing summative assessments ensures that learners are accurately evaluated, contributing to their overall learning progress (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2019).

Performance-based assessments require a different set of skills, as teachers must design tasks that reflect real-world applications of the competencies being taught. Teachers with high efficacy in this area can create projects, presentations, or practical tasks that allow learners to demonstrate their understanding in meaningful contexts (Sung et al., 2020). These teachers are capable of assessing not only the final product but also the process learners go through, providing feedback that promotes deeper learning. Additionally, teachers confident in performance-based assessments can effectively scaffold tasks, ensuring that learners are supported in developing the necessary skills before being assessed (Brookhart, 2017).

The use of self-assessment and peer assessment also requires teachers to have confidence in facilitating these practices. Teachers with high efficacy are able to guide learners in reflecting on their own work and providing constructive feedback to their peers. This approach helps learners develop self-regulation, critical thinking, and collaborative learning skills (Hattie & Clarke, 2019). Teachers who are proficient in implementing self and peer

assessments can create an environment of trust and openness, where learners feel comfortable assessing their progress and learning from each other (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2019). Their ability to integrate these assessment methods effectively fosters a deeper understanding of content and promotes student ownership of the learning process.

Digital assessment tools are also integral in today's classrooms, offering interactive and data-driven insights into student progress. Teachers confident in using these tools such as online quizzes, digital portfolios, and learning management systems can monitor student growth more efficiently and provide targeted feedback Hillier (2020). However, digital assessment efficacy remains an area of challenge for many educators, often due to limited training or resources, indicating a need for further professional development in digital literacy.

Diagnostic assessments are another essential method for gauging learners' prior knowledge and identifying learning gaps early in the instructional process. Teachers who are effective in diagnostic assessments can better tailor instruction based on initial insights into learners' understanding Hattie & Clarke (2019). By proactively addressing areas where learners need support, teachers with high efficacy in diagnostic assessment create a foundation for targeted and effective teaching strategies. Portfolio assessments offer a valuable means of tracking learners' growth over time, encouraging them to showcase their achievements, creativity, and analytical skills. Teachers with strong efficacy in portfolio assessments are skilled at helping learners assemble work that reflects both progress and areas for improvement Panadero et al., (2022). Portfolios provide a nuanced, longitudinal view of student development, supporting teachers in making well-rounded assessments of competencies.

The efficacy of teachers in using various assessment methods is often shaped by external factors such as resource availability, institutional support, and access to professional development opportunities. Schools that invest in professional development and resources are more likely to have educators who feel empowered to employ a diverse range of assessments Desimone&Garet, (2015). Conversely, limited resources can weaken teacher confidence, restricting their ability to incorporate varied assessments effectively.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design to analyze teachers' efficacy in applying diverse assessment methods across English language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—in public junior secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-County, Kenya. The design was appropriate

as it enabled the researcher to describe teachers' competencies and practices as they naturally occur without manipulating any variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study was conducted in Ndhiwa Sub-County, which comprises 135 public junior secondary schools. A sample of 14 schools was selected using stratified sampling, where the sub-county was divided into seven educational zones (wards), and two schools were randomly selected from each stratum to ensure representativeness. Purposive sampling was used to select key respondents, including 1 Sub-County Director of Education, 14 headteachers, and 14 English language teachers due to their direct involvement in assessment and instructional processes. Additionally, 408 Grade 8 learners from the selected schools were included through a census approach to provide complementary perspectives, resulting in a total sample size of 437 respondents.

Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' efficacy in applying diverse assessment methods. Questionnaires were administered to the 14 English language teachers and 408 learners to gather data on the use of various assessment approaches across the four language skills, using a four-point Likert scale. Interview schedules were conducted with the 14 headteachers and the Sub-County Director of Education to obtain in-depth insights into teachers' assessment practices. Validity of the instruments was ensured through expert review and alignment with the study objectives, while reliability was confirmed through a pilot study conducted in Kisumu County, which yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.750, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, and standard deviations, to determine the levels of teachers' efficacy, while qualitative data from interviews and open-ended responses were analyzed thematically to complement and enrich the quantitative findings. Ethical considerations were strictly observed through informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and secure handling of data throughout the study.

4. Results and Discussion

Teachers' Efficacy in Using Different Assessment Methods in Various Aspects of English Language in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ndhiwa Sub-County

Interpretation Scale

The researcher adopted a four-point scale for interpreting the data as follows:

- 1.00-1.49 = Strongly disagree (Not effective at all)
- 1.50-2.49 = Disagree (Moderately effective)

2.50-3.49 = Agree (Effective)
 3.50-4.00 = Strongly agree (Very effective)

Teachers' Efficacy in Using Different Assessment Methods

Table 1: Teacher's Efficacy in Using Assessment methods

Descriptive Statistics			
Teacher's Efficacy in Using Assessment Methods	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel confident in designing and administering written exams.	14	3.50	.650
I am comfortable using oral assessments, such as presentations and debates, to evaluate student learning.	14	3.43	.646
I feel capable of creating effective listening comprehension tests for my learners	14	3.57	.646
I am confident in using formative assessments, like quizzes and homework, to monitor student progress.	14	3.50	.650
I feel prepared to conduct continuous assessments, such as group discussions and projects, to assess learners' skills.	14	3.64	.633
I am comfortable administering summative assessments to gauge learners' overall understanding.	14	3.43	.756
I am able to adapt assessment methods to meet the diverse needs of my learners	14	3.64	.633
I can effectively modify assessment tasks to accommodate learners with different learning styles	14	3.57	.646
I feel prepared to use a range of assessment methods to ensure fair evaluation for all learners	14	3.50	.519
I am skilled at giving constructive feedback on written exams.	14	3.57	.514
I feel competent in providing feedback to learners after oral assessments.	14	3.50	.650
I can provide clear and helpful feedback for formative assessments, such as quizzes and homework.	14	3.79	.426
I am able to give effective feedback on group discussions and projects	14	3.43	.514
Training has enhanced my ability to implement different assessment methods	14	3.29	.726
I feel that my professional development has improved my skills in assessment design and implementation.	14	3.57	.756
Ongoing training opportunities help me stay effective in assessing learners' progress.	14	3.57	.646
Average	14	3.531	0.626

As indicated in Table 1, respondents strongly agreed that they could provide clear and helpful feedback for formative assessments such as quizzes and homework ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.426$). They also reported high preparedness to conduct continuous assessments such as group discussions and projects ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.633$), adapt assessment methods to meet diverse learner needs ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.633$), create effective listening comprehension tests ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.646$), and modify assessment tasks to accommodate different learning styles ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.646$). Similarly, respondents expressed strong agreement that they were skilled in giving constructive feedback on written exams ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.514$), that professional development had improved their skills in assessment design and implementation ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.756$), and that ongoing training opportunities helped them remain effective in assessing learners' progress ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.646$). They further indicated confidence in designing and administering written examinations ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.650$), using formative assessments to monitor student progress ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.650$), employing a range of assessment methods to ensure fair evaluation ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.519$), and providing feedback after oral assessments ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.650$).

Respondents agreed that they were comfortable using oral assessments such as presentations and debates to evaluate student learning ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.646$), administering summative assessments to gauge overall understanding ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.756$), giving effective feedback on group discussions and projects ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.514$), and that training had enhanced their ability to implement different assessment methods ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.726$).

Overall, teachers' efficacy in using assessment methods yielded a mean score of 3.531 with a standard deviation of 0.626 ($M = 3.531$, $SD = 0.626$). The relatively low standard deviation indicates minimal variability in responses, suggesting a shared perception among teachers regarding their competence in assessment practices. Based on the mean scale interpretation, these findings imply strong agreement among respondents and indicate that teachers' use of assessment methods was highly effective. Consequently, assessment practices employed by teachers were perceived as very effective in supporting teaching and learning.

Moreover, these findings resonate with Heritage (2010), who emphasized the importance of teacher competence in designing responsive and formative assessments. Teachers' high confidence in providing feedback, modifying assessment tasks, and implementing continuous assessments aligns with key elements identified as essential for formative assessment success. The effective use of oral assessments and group-based evaluations

further supports Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, which underscores the value of interaction and collaboration in learning. Assessment approaches such as presentations, discussions, and peer evaluations foster engagement while enabling teachers to gauge learner progress through authentic and contextualized tasks.

Additionally, the findings affirm conclusions by the OECD (2013), which emphasize that well-trained and confident teachers are central to the successful implementation of competency-based education. Professional development and ongoing training, as reflected in this study, enhance assessment literacy, consistent with Stiggins' (2002) assertion that teacher training in assessment improves instructional decision-making and student achievement.

The findings suggest that teachers in Ndhwa Sub-county possess both familiarity with a wide range of assessment approaches—formative, summative, oral, peer, and portfolio—and the competence to apply them effectively to support student learning. This high level of proficiency may be attributed to sustained professional development, robust curriculum frameworks, and teachers' commitment to improving learner outcomes. The strategic use of diverse assessment methods supports differentiated instruction, timely feedback, and data-informed pedagogical decisions, all of which are vital to strengthening academic performance within the competency-based curriculum framework.

To sustain and enhance this effectiveness, continuous capacity building, collaborative professional networks, and strong instructional leadership are essential. Systematic monitoring and feedback mechanisms can further empower teachers to refine assessment strategies in response to diverse learner needs and evolving educational goals.

Furthermore, teachers noted that assessment methods assist in accurately measuring learners' understanding and skills. They particularly emphasized peer assessment as being more appropriate due to the comfort and openness it fosters among learners, enabling them to correct one another freely. While educators acknowledged the value of all assessment methods, peer assessment was especially valued for its social-emotional benefits, increased learner engagement, and formative impact. Consequently, peer assessment emerged as a preferred strategy for assessing both competencies and conceptual understanding.

The interview responses from both teachers of English and school administrators reinforce the quantitative findings regarding teachers' efficacy in using diverse assessment methods. Teachers noted that they can use various assessment strategies effectively, producing desired outcomes in learner engagement and performance. One teacher stated that "*teachers are able to produce the*

desired result," while another emphasized that "*the learner is given the opportunity to explore as the teacher facilitates,*" reflecting the learner-centered philosophy emphasized in competency-based curricula. The mention of flexibility and incorporation of learner feedback into assessments further demonstrates adaptive teaching practices. These statements imply the use of formative, interactive, and flexible assessment methods, including classroom observation, guided activities, oral questioning, peer review, group tasks, and iterative assignments that allow learners to receive feedback and improve over time. The mention of flexibility and incorporation of learner feedback into assessments further demonstrates adaptive teaching practices, showing that assessment is not limited to fixed tasks but tailored to support learning progress across reading, writing, listening, and speaking competencies.

Administrators echoed these views, with comments such as "*high efficacy,*" "*methods are effective,*" and "*they are working since the learners are able to express themselves.*" These observations suggest that assessment practices are not only being implemented consistently but are also leading to visible improvements in learner outcomes. The head teacher and sub-county director emphasized that these methods help teachers identify individual student abilities, affirming the role of assessment in differentiated instruction. These qualitative insights align with literature by Stiggins (2002) and Black & Wiliam (1998), who assert that effective assessment practices contribute significantly to both instructional quality and learner achievement. Moreover, they support Heritage's (2010) advocacy for teacher responsiveness in assessment as a key driver for personalized learning and academic success. Thus, the interview data enrich the overall findings, confirming that teachers exhibit high efficacy in using assessment methods aligned with competency-based education goals.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Teachers in Ndhiwa Sub-County demonstrate strong efficacy in using assessment methods, particularly in providing feedback and adapting tasks to learner needs. The conclusion is that teacher competence is high, but gaps remain in translating training into consistent, skill-targeted assessment practices. Professional development should continue to reinforce formative, learner-centered strategies and ensure alignment with CBE objectives.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Teacher training programs should emphasize designing skill-specific assessments linked to

measurable learning outcomes in listening, reading, writing and speaking.

2. Teachers should use assessment data to inform lesson planning and provide targeted feedback that directly addresses learners' weaknesses.
3. Continuous professional development should focus on aligning assessment practices with CBE goals to ensure efficacy translates into tangible student improvement.

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