LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN ENGLISH FOR OCCUPATIONAL PURPOSES COURSES: INSIGHTS FROM STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

THỰC TIỄN ĐÁNH GIÁ NGÔN NGỮ TRONG CÁC KHÓA HỌC TIẾNG ANH ĐỊNH HƯỚNG NGHỀ NGHIỆP: GÓC NHÌN TỪ NHẬN THỨC CỦA SINH VIÊN

Nguyen Thi Diep[1,*], Tran Thi Thu Nga[2]

ABSTRACT

This article adopted the theoretical framework about principles of language assessment by Brown (2010) to investigate students' perceptions about assessment practices employed in English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) courses. A quantitative approach has been adopted to attain the aims of the research. Data were collected through survey questionnaires delivered to 158 non-majored English students in a technical public university in Hanoi, Vietnam. Findings indicate that most students are satisfied with the assessment methods used in EOP courses in terms of validity, practicality, reliability, authenticity and washback. This study provides a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the current assessment practices in EOP courses, while also highlighting the challenges that need to be addressed. Based on these findings, the study also discusses several implications for future research and provides some recommendations to enhance the quality of the assessment activities in EOP courses in university setting.

Keywords: Practicality, validity, reliability, authenticity, washback, assessment principles.

TÓM TẮT

Bài báo áp dụng khung lý thuyết về các nguyên tắc đánh giá ngôn ngữ của Brown để điều tra nhận thức của sinh viên về thực tiễn đánh giá ngôn ngữ đang được áp dụng trong các khóa học tiếng Anh định hướng nghề nghiệp. Bài báo sử dụng phương pháp định lượng. Dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua bảng câu hỏi khảo sát 158 sinh viên không chuyên Tiếng Anh ở một trường đại học kỹ thuật công lập ở Hà Nội, Việt Nam. Các phát hiện chỉ ra rằng phần lớn sinh viên rất hài lòng với đánh giá ngôn ngữ hiện tại được áp dụng trong các khóa học tiếng Anh định hướng nghề nghiệp về tính giá trị, tính thực tiễn, độ tin cậy, tính xác thực và tác động ngược. Nghiên cứu này cung cấp hiểu biết sâu sắc hơn về hiệu quả của các hoạt động đánh giá hiện tại trong các khóa học tiếng Anh định hướng nghề nghiệp, đồng thời nêu bật những thách thức cần được giải quyết. Dựa trên những phát hiện này, bài báo cũng thảo luận một số vấn đề về hoạt động đánh giá cho các nghiên cứu sau và đưa ra một số đề xuất để nâng cao chất lượng các hoạt động đánh giá trong các khóa học tiếng Anh định hướng nghề nghiệp tại các trường đại học.

Từ khóa: Tính thực tiễn, tính giá trị, độ tin cậy, tính xác thực, tác động ngược, nguyên tắc đánh giá.

[1]School of Languages and Tourism, Hanoi University of Industry, Vietnam

[2]Faculty of Foreign Languages, Academy of Finance, Vietnam

*Email: diepnt@haui.edu.vn

1. INTRODUCTION

With an increasing demand for developing students' English proficiency, higher education institutions have made considerable efforts to enhance language assessment practices. One significant change is the shift in assessment methods in language courses. Assessment

plays a significant factor in the success of learning and teaching process and is considered as a means to measure learners' achievement [1]. Teachers and students influence the teaching process through assessment [2]. More specifically, assessment provides information about student achievement, which teachers use to improve their instructional practices. Assessment can inform students about their learning progress [3] and improve teaching quality [4, 5]. The assessment is used to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, monitor progress, assign grades, determine instructional effectiveness, provide students feedback, prepare students for high-stakes tests and motivate them [6]. Effective assessments should ensure reliability and validity while aligning with curriculum objectives and learning goals [7]. Additionally, students' perceptions are crucial, as a positive relationship exists between motivation and assessment practices [8]. Students have roles in striving to understand what success looks like and to apply each assessment to try to understand how to do better the next time [9]. Numerous empirical studies have examined how students and teachers perceive assessment practices; however, research into students' perceptions of language assessment within the context of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) remains limited. To address this gap, the present study investigates students' perceptions of current assessment practices in EOP courses with respect to five key criteria: practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback. Understanding how students perceive these criteria of assessments is essential to ensuring the efficiency of the current assessment practices, as well as the quality of overall EOP courses. To address these objectives, the current paper focuses on addressing two research questions:

1. How do students perceive current assessment practices in EOP courses?

2. What difficulties do students have with the current assessment practices in EOP courses?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of Assessment

Assessment was defined as "the process of collecting information that is used to make decisions" [10]. Similarly, assessment was described as the process of collecting data to gain a deeper understanding of students' learning strengths and weaknesses [11]. In short, both definitions view assessment as an ongoing process that helps teachers make informed decisions to support student learning.

2.2. Forms of assessment

Assessment can be categorized into two types: formative and summative, based on its specific purposes. Formative assessment supports learning by providing ongoing feedback [12], while summative assessment evaluates student performance at the end of a learning period [13]. Formative assessment (FA) instructs teachers decision making about future instruction and provides feedback to students so they can improve performance [14]. Summative assessment (SA) is stated as the assessment of learning and considered an assessment method used for the purpose of certifying learning, submitting reports to the students and their families about the development of the students, and giving signs to the students about their own positions comparing themselves with other students [13]. In practice, there are many opposite opinions about FA and SA. SA's result oriented education system only focuses on the students to get higher exam results and instructors may face a process of education for exams with this perspective, limiting the usage percentage of feedback and it causes lack of learning cycle in the self-assessment point of the student [15]. Therefore, formative assessments are preferred, it supports teachers and students to identify areas that require further work in order to improve instruction and student performance.

2.3. Principles of assessment

The principles include practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback [2] in designing language assessment tasks that test designers and teachers need to consider guaranteeing the intended goals of the assessments.

Validity

It focuses on ensuring that assessments fairly and accurately measure the relevant content of the course and are designed and administered clearly. It also considers how results are used and the consequences for students [2].

Reliability

It refers to consistency, stability, dependability, and accuracy of assessment results [2]. It is closely tied to the process of scoring and grading of students' performance. If scores and grades do not reflect accurately what the student actually did or would not be rewarded by another

marker, then the scores lack reliability, thereby weakening the validity of the claims made.

Practicality

This principle ensures that the test is feasible, efficient, and user-friendly. It focuses on whether the test can realistically be created, given, and scored within the available time, budget, resources, and staff capacity.

Authenticity

An assessment is considered authentic when the language used is natural and the tasks closely mirror situations that learners are likely to encounter outside the classroom.

Washback

It is about how assessment drives classroom practices and learners' outcomes, ideally in a positive and supportive direction. A test can generate meaningful washback if it positively affects students and teachers about how well they do their jobs, determines what and how teachers teach and students learn, allows sufficient preparation time, offers constructive feedback that boosts language development, is more formative than summative oriented, equips opportunities for learners to achieve peak performance [2].

This research investigates students' perceptions of current assessment practices based on the framework which outlines five key elements of effective assessment proposed by [2]. These elements serve as the foundation for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of assessment practices in English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) courses.

2.4. Previous studies about Assessment Practices

Numerous previous research done about the assessment practices to students' learning. Students had a positive view about the assessment tasks in terms of validity, reliability, authenticity, washback, and practicality and the findings showed no difference between students' perceptions and learning outcomes [18]. The results of the study about washback effects on the contextual factors affecting washback of a learning-oriented English assessment in Malaysia pointed that the reform of assessment created opportunities and challenges, enhancing communicative teaching, integrating higher-order thinking skills, formative assessment [19]. An exploration about the essential factors of effective language skills assessment highlighted the importance of the integration of knowledge, skills and principles in assessment practices

[20]. Students perceived that language assessments were practical and valid, but the assessments need to be more authentic [21]. Empirical evidence from the study revealed that students perceived the principles of practicality, validity, reliability, authenticity, and washback of online assessment in English as Foreign Language education were in moderation rate [22]. The research emphasized the need for the enhancement of practicality, validity, reliability, authenticity, and washback in speaking English skills assessment [23]. The research explored teachers' perceptions of assessment tasks about validity, reliability, authenticity, practicality, and washback across three Moroccan Faculties of Arts and Humanities. The results stated that teachers perceived high validity, reliability, authenticity, practicality level [24]. In Vietnamese context, the research investigated the validity and washback of self-assessment (SA) with 54 translating-majored students. The findings revealed that students' SA had a close relationship with teachers' assessment. SA had a positive validity and washback related to learners and their learning [25]. The study investigated 103 learners' and 20 teachers' perceptions about English Tests at their institutions comparing the Common European Frame of Reference (EEFRA) administered in Vietnamese public university. The findings indicated that teachers and students perceived that tests of the institution with high satisfaction of validity level [26]. In addition, a study examined basic theories and empirical research about the validity of language tests revealed that the validity of language tests referred to the quality of language assessment [27]. Previous research investigated students and teachers' views about principles of language assessment in different contexts; however, there have been limited studies in the English for Occupational Purposes context. To address this gap, the present study aims to examine how students perceive current language assessment practices in terms of validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity and washback.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research context

The study investigated students' perceptions of the current assessment practices employed in EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) courses at a technical university, HaUI (Hanoi University of Industry) in Vietnam. The university offers EOP courses through a blended mode combining face-to-face instruction with online learning activities. Students study 60% online and 40%

offline of the course. In each semester, students have continuous assessments to evaluate students' learning. For the online part, students have to complete online unit tests after finishing one online unit. Plus, they have to write an email, or a paragraph and a video of topic talk, then uploaded online and teachers mark them. Marks from unit tests, writing and speaking are used to evaluate conditions for taking the final exam of the course, and speaking marks are used to count with the progress test 2. For the offline part, the assessments include progress test 1 (this test is 30 minutes, testing technical vocabulary & grammar structures), progress test 2 (this is a speaking test including 2 parts: one answering some questions about background information from teachers, then they will choose cards randomly to make a conversation basing on a given situation with their partner), mid-term test (this tests students' listening, reading & writing skills). It lasts 35 minutes, with 10 listening comprehension tests and 10 reading comprehension tests, 10 multiple choice sentence buildings). The progress tests in offline class represent 40% of the final results. Final assessments account for 60% of the final results. Different forms of assessments are used in the EOP courses such as online unit test, online speaking and writing assignments, oral tests, written tests.

3.2. Participants

The population of the study was 158 students who majored in Electrical and Electronics Engineering. They have already taken part in several EOP courses. The reasons for choosing the participants are because they have real experience in assessment practices, so their answers would be more practical. Details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of participants (n =158)

Variables	Division	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	108	68.35
	Female	48	30.38
	Others	2	1.27
Age	18-19	68	43.04
	20-21	58	36.71
	22-23	32	20.25
Numbers of EOP courses studying at university	>= 1	80	50.63
	>= 3	58	36.71
	>= 6	20	12.66

Year in university	First year	80	50.63
	Second year	58	36.71
	Third year	11	6.96
	Fourth year	9	5.70
Major	Electrical engineering	57	36.08
	Electronics engineering	73	46.20
	Automation	28	17.72

The study was conducted at the end of the first semester of 2024-2025 academic year. The data were collected after the students finished the course.

3.3. Data collection method

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire including 27 statements each rated on a 5-point scale in terms of their agreement (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to evaluate students' perceptions about assessments in EOP courses. To reduce the potential issues related to ambiguity or misinterpretation, the questionnaires were written in Vietnamese language.

A pilot data was conducted online through Google Forms with 30 participants (equivalent to one class size) in week 8 of the first semester of the 2024-2025 academic school year. The pilot aimed to refine item wording and ensure comprehensibility. Then, changes and necessary modifications were added. Data from the pilot study were excluded from the analysis to answer the main research questions. The official data were carried out online through Google Forms with 158 participants in week 12, after students had completed 100% of assessments in the courses.

Cronbach's alpha was employed to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient exceeded 0.8, indicating a high level of internal consistency across the items. Therefore, the scale was dependable, and the perceptions were well explained by the observed variables. Details can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Construct reliability of the two latent constructs

Latent constructs (n = 158)	Cronbach's Alpha	Indicators	Acceptability
Students' perceptions of the validity in current assessment practices	0.945	4	High
Students' perceptions of the practicality in current assessment practices	0.974	4	High

Students' perceptions of the washback in current assessment practices	0.987	4	High
Students' perceptions of the reliability in current assessments practices	0.985	4	High
Students' perceptions of the authenticity in current assessments practices	0.989	4	High
Students' perceptions of challenges in current assessment practices	0.819	5	High

Most constructs have high Cronbach's Alpha values (above 0.8), suggesting high reliability.

3.4. Data Analysis

The study adopted the statistical software tool, SPSS, for the analysis of the data from the survey questionnaires. All the responses were coded numerical and subjected to descriptive statistical analysis including reliability testing, frequency distribution, mean scores, and standard deviations. The results then were presented in the tables to facilitate interpretation and comparison across variables.

4. FINDINGS

Tables 3 ÷ 7 present the percentage of agreement with the statements to investigate students' perceptions about current assessment practices in terms of validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity and washback in EOP courses. Respondents indicated their opinions using a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 being "totally agree", and 1 being "totally disagree". The analysis followed the classification of means proposed by [28]: 1.00 - 1.50 = very low; 1.451 - 2.50 = Low; 2.51 - 3.50 = Moderate; 3.51 - 4.50 = High; and 4.51 - 5.00 = Very high.

4.1. Students' perceptions of the validity in current assessment practices

As shown in Table 3, the majority of participants stated positive perceptions of the validity of current assessment practices. The mean scores for all statements ranged from 4.17 to 4.37. Specifically, the highest mean score (4.37, SD = 0.877) for the assessments evaluating both grammar and communication skills, highlighting that students recognized a balanced assessment approach that included both linguistic accuracy and communicative competence. The high mean score of 4.36 (SD = 0.861) showed that the questions and tasks in the assessments reflect the skills the students were

expected to learn in the course. It demonstrated a strong alignment between course objectives and assessment content. The mean score of 4.34 with a standard deviation of 0.894 for the assessments accurately tested my ability to use English in workplace situations suggested that assessments are perceived as relevant to real-world applications. The slightly lower mean score of 4.17 (SD = 1.091), for the assessment content was free from irrelevant or confusing information, which means participants have a high agreement about clarity in assessment content. Details are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' perceptions of the validity in current assessment practices

Statements (n = 158)	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	Mean	SD
The assessments accurately test my ability to use English in workplace situations.	52.5	36.1	7.6	0.6	3.2	4.34	0.894
The questions and tasks in the assessments reflect the skills I am expected to learn in the course.	51.3	40.5	4.4	0.6	3.2	4.36	0.861
The assessment content is free from irrelevant or confusing information.	48.7	35.4	6.3	3.8	5.7	4.17	1.091
The assessments evaluate both grammar and communication skills.	53.2	38.6	3.8	1.3	3.2	4.37	0.877

Note: 5 = totally agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = totally disagree, SD = Standard Deviation

As can be seen in Table 3, high percentage of students generally perceived the assessments as valid for their learning; however, 7.6% of students partly agreed, indicating some concerns about the full applicability of assessments to workplace scenarios. A small percentage of students (3.8%) felt that assessments did not effectively test workplace English, suggesting a need for further alignment with professional communication skills. A small minority (3.8%) of participants stated that assessments did not match what they learn, indicating that misalignment was not a widespread issue. 9.5% of students indicated that some assessment tasks contained irrelevant or confusing elements. This suggests that some questions might not be well-structured or clearly worded, potentially leading to misunderstanding or misinterpretation. 3.9% of students only partly agreed, and 4.5% disagreed, suggesting that some students felt

that assessments still focused too much on grammar and vocabulary rather than practical communication.

4.2. Students' perceptions of reliability in current assessment practices

Table 4 shows that the mean scores for all statements ranging from 4.28 to 4.30 for reliability, higher than 4.1 which means that the respondents had positive perceptions of reliability in current assessment practices. Among the four criteria of assessing reliability of assessments, students perceived the highest mean score for the grading criteria as 4.297. The lightly higher mean score for the assessments allowed me to demonstrate my English ability in multiple ways is 4.284, and the same mean scores for "the different teachers would give me the same score if they assessed my work" and "the assessment scores fairly reflect my English abilities" are 4.278. Moreover, the standard deviations of the items varied from 0.892 to 0.896, which showed that participants had slight differences in their perceptions towards the reliability of the current assessment practices in EOP courses.

Table 4. Students' perceptions of reliability in current assessment practices

Statements (n = 158)	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	Mean	SD
The assessment scores fairly reflect my English abilities.	47.5	39.9	8.9	0.6	3.2	4.278	0.894
The grading criteria are clear and consistently applied.	47.5	43.0	4.44	1.9	3.2	4.297	0.892
Different teachers would give me the same score if they assessed my work.	48.1	38.6	9.5	0.6	3.2	4.278	0.902
The assessments allow me to demonstrate my English ability in multiple ways (e.g., writing, speaking, problem-solving).	47.5	41.1	7.0	1.3	3.2	4.284	0.896

Note: 5 = totally agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = totally disagree, SD = Standard Deviation

In terms of percentage, 90.5% of students felt grading criteria were clear and consistent, 87.4% of students believed that their assessment scores accurately reflected their English abilities, 88.6% of students agreed or totally agreed the assessments allow me to demonstrate my

English ability in multiple ways, the same percentage for The assessment scores fairly reflect my English abilities; Different teachers would give me the same score if they assessed my work is 87.4% of students' agreement . It indicated that the majority of students had positive perceptions of reliability in current assessment practices. However, a small portion remained skeptical. For example, 8.9% of students were uncertain, and 3.8% of students stated that their performance was not fully captured by the current assessments. 9.5% of students were uncertain, and 3.8% of students disagreed about grading subjectivity or inconsistency among teachers. 4.5% of students disagreed about test formats (e.g., written exams over oral communication).

4.3. Students' perceptions of the practicality in current assessment practices

The data from Table 5 reveals generally positive perceptions of the practicality of current assessment practices among students. The mean scores for all statements ranged from 4.31 to 4.36, indicating a high level of agreement with the statements regarding assessment quality.

Table 5. Students' perceptions of practicality in current assessment practices

Statements (n = 158)	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	Mean	SD
The assessment methods in my EOP course are easy to understand and complete.	51.3	38.0	7.0	1.9	1.9	4.34	0.844
The time given for assessments is appropriate for the tasks required.	50	38	6.3	2.5	3.1	4.31	0.897
The assessments are conducted in a way that fits well within the course schedule.	53.2	36.1	6.3	1.3	3.1	4.36	0.864
The assessment format (e.g., written tests, presentations, projects) is accessible to all students.	50.6	38.6	5.7	1.3	3.2	4.33	0.894

Note: 5 = totally agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = totally disagree, SD = Standard Deviation

The mean score of 4.34 with a standard deviation of 0.844 shows students found the assessment methods clear and manageable. It can be referred to that the assessment design was effective and well-structured.

Only a very small percentage of respondents (3.8%) struggled with understanding or completing assessments, which may be due to individual learning differences rather than a widespread issue. The time given for assessments was appropriate for the tasks required and also has a high mean score of 4.31 (SD = 0.897). However, a small percentage (5.6%) of participants expressed concerns, suggesting potential adjustments in timing.

Particularly, the assessments were conducted in a way that fitted well within the course schedule has the highest mean score of 4.36 (SD = 0.864). It indicates that assessment timing did not disrupt learning and that students had adequate time to prepare. Only 4.4% found scheduling problematic, which may be due to individual workload concerns rather than a structural issue.

The assessment format (e.g., written tests, presentations, projects) was accessible to all students and had a mean score of 4.33 (SD = 0.894), which meant students found the assessment formats accessible. Moreover, the combination of written tests, presentations, and projects effectively accommodated different learning styles. However, 4.5% of students struggled with accessibility, which may indicate difficulties with certain assessment types (e.g., oral presentations or practical projects).

4.4. Students' perceptions of authenticity in current assessment practices

Regarding the authenticity of assessment, the mean scores for all statements ranged from 4.29 to 4.31 (Table 6). It also revealed a high level of agreement with the statements of authenticity in the assessment. For example, the listening and reading materials come from real workplace sources received the highest mean score in this category (4.31, SD = 0.874), with 91.1% agreement, showing strong alignment between assessment materials and real-world contexts. It shows that students perceived that current assessments were relevant, job oriented. Moreover, the standard deviations varied from 0.877 to 0.892 showed slight differences in their perceptions toward authenticity in current assessment practices.

The small percent of students showed their disagreement with the authenticity of the current assessments for example, 4.6% disagreement suggests that the current design was effective, 4.5% express partial agreement, suggesting a need for more varied or updated materials or, 4.5% of students disagreed with the

practical value of their assessments. This indicates that even the high percentage of students admitted that current assessment was directly applicable to workplace communication scenarios, some adjustments should be noticed.

Table 6. Students' perceptions of authenticity in current assessment practices

Statements (N = 158)	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	Mean	SD
The tasks in the assessments reflect real-life situations in my future job.	48.1	41.1	6.3	1.3	3.3	4.29	0.892
The speaking and writing tasks are similar to what I would do in a professional setting.	47.5	41.8	7.0	0.6	3.2	4.29	0.877
The listening and reading materials come from real workplace sources (e.g., emails, manuals, reports).	48.1	43.0	4.4	1.3	3.2	4.31	0.874
The assessment tasks require me to apply English in practical, job-related contexts.	48.1	41.1	6.3	1.3	3.2	4.29	0.885

Note: 5 = totally agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = totally disagree, SD = Standard Deviation

4.5. Students' perceptions of washback in current assessment practices

The data from Table 7 reveal generally positive perceptions of washback in current assessment practices among students. The mean scores for all statements ranged from 4.31 to 4.34. It showed a high level of agreement with the statements of washback regarding assessment quality. The assessment tasks encourage students to practice English beyond the classroom receive the highest mean score of 4.34, SD = 0.901, whereas "the feedback I receive from assessments helps me improve my English skills" and "knowing how I will be assessed motivates me to study English more effectively" got the same score of 4.32 with SD = 0.883 and SD = 0.906 respectively. The assessments helped students identify their strengths and weaknesses in English got the lowest mean scores of 4.31(SD = 0.880).

Table 7. Students' perceptions about washback in current assessment practices

Statements (n = 158)	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	Mean	SD
The assessments help me identify my strengths and weaknesses in English.	48.1	42.4	5.1	1.3	3.2	4.31	0.880
The feedback I receive from assessments helps me improve my English skills.	49.4	41.1	5.1	1.3	3.2	4.32	0.883
Knowing how I will be assessed motivates me to study English more effectively.	51.3	38.6	5.1	1.9	3.2	4.32	0.906
The assessment tasks encourage me to practice English beyond the classroom.	51.9	38.6	4.4	1.9	3.2	4.34	0.901

Note: 5 = totally agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = totally disagree, SD = Standard Deviation

5. DISCUSSION

The paper investigated students' perceptions toward current assessment practices in terms of validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity and washback in EOP courses grounded the theoretical framework about the principles of language assessment [2]. Specifically, students perceived that the validity of the current assessment was high. It means that the current assessment reflected the language needs for the future workplace, as well as the effective evaluation of communication skills. The results are aligned with the findings reported on [16] and [19]. Students pointed out that the assessment measures their intended skills effectively. Nevertheless, certain areas still require improvements to achieve closer alignment with real-world applications as a small percentage of students showing disagreement with the current assessment. With respect to reliability, even though the rate for these criteria was fair and consistent, the main concern remains the different instructors. Some students complained about grading among different teachers. This highlights

the need for more standardized marking practices. This result is quite similar to the findings from the study that emphasized the importance of teacher training for standardized assessment and concerned the subjectivity among assessors [22]. In terms of the practicality, the majority of students indicated that the assessment methods were easy to understand, appropriately timed, and well-structured and manageable within the learning context. This finding supports with the results of studies that assessment formats are generally accessible [18, 20]. That showed students largely agreed that assessment tasks were manageable, time-efficient, and well-scheduled. In reference to the authenticity, the assessment design effectively prepared students for workplace communication with large quantities of learners reported that the task assessments were relevant to the real-life work situations. These researchers emphasized the necessity of the task design and contents needed to be aligned with job-specific language use. In relation to the washback, the high proportion of students stated that the current assessments had positive effects on their motivation and engagement with English learning, which is consistent with the findings of the study that self-assessment had strong washback effects to learners' learning behavior [17, 23].

Overall, this study confirms the findings of the previous studies and contributes unique insights into the EOP context in Vietnam. Furthermore, the findings from the current study proved that current assessment practices in EOP courses were effective in terms of validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity and washback.

6. CONCLUSION

This article explored students' perceptions of assessment practices in English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) courses at a Vietnamese technical university regarding validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity and washback. The findings indicated that students generally perceived these assessments as valid, practical, reliable, and authentic. The results suggested that while assessment activities effectively measured students' English proficiency, improvements needed to ensure that assessment tasks fully reflect real-world professional demands.

Based on these findings, there are several implications for assessment activities in EOP courses more efficiently. First, assessment designers should ensure that test tasks closely simulate workplace scenarios, such as technical

report writing, professional email communication, and industry-specific discussions. Another point is that clear and detailed assessment guidelines should be provided to minimize student confusion. Third, adequate preparation opportunities should be integrated into the course structure to help students develop the necessary skills before high-stakes assessments. As a final point, feedback mechanisms should be improved to provide students with constructive insights into their performance and areas for development.

Despite offering valuable insights, this study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted at a single technical university with students majoring in engineering. As a result, the findings may not be representative of students from other disciplines or institutions in Vietnam. Additionally, the study employed solely quantitative data, it may lack the depth of students' personal experiences and opinions that the qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could reveal. A final consideration is that the data of the study focused on students' points of view, not teachers about current assessment practices. The necessity arises to be made about a comparison between students' and teachers' perspectives. This could provide a more comprehensive understanding of current assessment practices in EOP courses. For these reasons, future research should address these gaps to gain deeper and more comprehensive insights into assessment practices in EOP courses.

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THÔNG TIN TÁC GIẢ

Nguyễn Thị Điệp[1], Trần Thị Thu Nga[2]

[1]Trường Ngoại ngữ - Du lịch, Trường Đại học Công nghiệp Hà Nội

[2]Khoa Ngoại ngữ, Học viện Tài chính