



The Use Of Modern Educational Assessment Methods By Arabic Language Teachers At Middle Education Stage A Field Study On Middle School Teachers In Ain Defla State (Algeria)

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to identify the use of Modern Educational Assessment Methods by Arabic Language Teachers at the Middle Education Stage.

To achieve these goals, the researchers followed the descriptive approach, using a questionnaire prepared by Mohamed Afana (2011). The study included 50 teachers from Ain Defla.

We found the following results: Arabic language teachers primarily used performance evaluation tests written, in addition to some modern methods such as evaluation of performance by interview, evaluation of performance based on observation, and self-evaluation, which were used to a large degree. Peer evaluation and evaluation based on performance were used to a medium degree, which is a positive indicator of the extent of knowledge some teachers have of modern evaluation methods and their desire to apply them in line with the new curricula and modern teaching strategies. However, evaluation with work portfolios and concept maps ranked last with very little use.

Keywords: educational evaluation, recent trends, alternative evaluation

Introduction:

Algeria is one of the countries that have witnessed extensive reforms in its educational system at all levels of education. Since educational reform must revolve around three fundamental issues: What should students learn? How do they learn it? And how is the progress they make measured? It can be said that unless the development extends to assessment, merely changing the curriculum content and teaching methods becomes futile without a broad vision for assessment.

The evaluation of students' learning is one of the most important stages of the educational process and is most closely related to the educational development that many educational systems seek with their different philosophies.

Despite recognizing the importance and role of evaluation in the educational process, the methods of evaluation used in our schools stand as a stumbling block in front of all reform attempts and waste any effort for development, as evaluation is limited to conducting exams that measure achievement. The exam is the only means to judge the students' level, and all learning outcomes are limited to only one aspect, which is acquiring the prescribed information in the textbooks, making the exam a goal in itself.

Achievement tests neglect the role of the student, giving them only one chance to succeed, focusing on memorizing information and neglecting meaningful learning and its applications. They often lack objective standards in judging the student's performance, do not reflect the desired higher levels of educational performance, and do not measure the different aspects of the learning process, leading to the need to adopt alternative and direct evaluations to address these criticisms, being more capable of providing an authentic picture of the student's performance and their real abilities in applying what they know and what they can do.

According to Al-Muntashri (2023), assessment will be an alternative when it is based on the type of tasks the student performs instead of eliciting specific answers. The authentic or alternative assessment is the actual assessment of performance, as this way we know whether the student is able to apply what he has learned in real-life situations, and whether he is capable of renewal and innovation in new situations.

This ultimately led to the emergence of alternative methods, which were given various names such as: true assessment, performance assessment, alternative assessment, and others... It seeks to provide a comprehensive image of the learner in all aspects of the educational process. And because it is assumed that any reform or development in the educational curricula, which is constantly known by the Algerian educational system, must be followed by reforms and developments in the assessment process, which in turn necessitates that assessment methods align with modern trends.

Therefore, we chose to focus in our study on the reality of using modern assessment methods by teachers in the middle school stage (Arabic language teachers as a model), and whether they have been taken into consideration within the framework of implementing second-generation pedagogy? Hence, the following question was raised:

- What are the most commonly used assessment methods by Arabic language teachers in the middle school stage?

1. The Importance of the Study:

The importance of the study is manifested in the fact that the concept of educational evaluation in our schools has become synonymous with the concept of exams (achievement tests), with its primary goal being to measure the cognitive aspect without caring about the other aspects of the learner's growth.

Exams have become the ultimate goal sought by the teacher and the learner, without consideration for higher mental levels. This prompted the researcher to assess the extent of teachers' knowledge and familiarity with modern evaluation methods, and the extent of their use in line with the educational reforms that have been introduced in the transition from the first generation approach to the second generation, embodying the competency-based approach to achieve quality in the educational learning process, in application of the saying "no quality without evaluation and no benefit from evaluation that does not lead to quality."

2. Study Objective:

To identify the most commonly used methods by teachers (Arabic language teachers in the middle school stage as a model) to evaluate their students' learning.

3. Study Concepts:

- **Educational Assessment:** It is the process by which the success of the educational process in achieving the desired objectives is governed, i.e., knowing the extent to which the desired changes in the learners' behavior are achieved, or it is a systematic process based on scientific principles aimed at making precise and objective judgments on the inputs, processes, and outputs of any educational system, and then identifying the strengths and weaknesses in each of them in preparation for making appropriate decisions to rectify what may be revealed. (Allam, 2004) in this study, It is the evaluation of students' learning in the Arabic language subject by teachers in the middle education stage.

- **Modern Trends:** It refers to alternative assessment, defined by (Mokadem, 2009) as: the assessment based on the idea of forming a comprehensive picture of the learner in light of a set of alternatives (performance assessment, concept maps, peer assessment, self-assessment, observation, and interview...) Procedurally: it can be defined as the degree obtained by the Arabic language teacher in the middle education stage in each of the modern assessment methods included in the questionnaire prepared for this purpose by Mohamed Attia Afana (2011).

4. Study Boundaries:

- **Spatially:** The study was conducted at some middle schools in the municipalities of Al-Abadia and Al-Attaf in the state of Ain Defla.

- **Humanly:** The study was limited to teachers of the Arabic language and its literature at some middle schools in the mentioned municipalities.

- **Temporally:** The study was conducted in its theoretical and applied aspects during the period from 05/02/2024 to 25/05/2024.

5. Theoretical Framework:

Referring to the literature of educational measurement and evaluation, we notice many terms or concepts synonymous with the concept of alternative assessment, such as: authentic assessment, constructive assessment, contextual assessment, qualitative assessment, proficiency assessment, balanced assessment, direct assessment, naturalistic assessment, and others (Allam, 2004, p. 31).

The methods of alternative or authentic assessment focus on: "Assessing the learner's ability to perform at a high level in real-life tasks, similar to those he will encounter in his future life. These methods also attempt to provide a comprehensive picture of the learner in all aspects of the educational process" (Al-Sharif, 2014, p. 05).

The alternative assessment methods are characterized by a set of features according to (Mokadem, 2009, p. 09), which are:

- Focus on measuring actual performance or "process and product," i.e., what the student can produce? And how does he do that? This is through what he has learned of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. This means that assessment goes beyond just answering a set of alternatives, as is the case in true/false tests, to something deeper than that. It is the transition from the question "what does he know?" to the question "what can he do with what he knows?"

- It measures a wide range of types of performance, capabilities, and higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, critique, evaluation, problem-solving, innovation, and implementation.

-It provides feedback for both the student to improve their learning strategies, and for the teacher to develop their teaching skills, and for the curriculum to develop and renew it.

Providing feedback for the management to develop the supportive aspects of the educational process, such as providing educational resources, facilities, equipment, laboratories, and library, and supporting the educational climate, student services, organization within the institution, administration, and others... as well as providing accurate, comprehensive information about the student to aid in making academic decisions.

Modern trends of educational assessment methods:

Among the most important methods, we find:

• Portfolios:

Portfolios are defined as "records of learning and assessment in which representative samples of learners' work are collected to demonstrate their level of achievement, progress, and efforts, including both learning outcomes and processes, and may focus on a specific academic field or more." (Zeitoun and Al-banna, 2001, p. 02)

Portfolios include cumulative records containing a large collection of documents that serve as evidence compiled about the learner's level of knowledge, experiences, skills, attitudes, values, and preparations, while working with teachers and sharing in accomplishing tasks, research, practical reports, or following and discussing various news and reports, or producing research papers. Based on these documents, the learner's abilities are determined, relying on these documents alongside other indicators to accurately and objectively judge the extent of the learner's proficiency. (Al-Sharif, 2014)

• Performance Assessment:

It is a measure in which tasks are used to obtain information about the quality of the student's learning and his ability to apply the knowledge and skills he has learned in several educational subjects and in multiple situations, to show that he is capable of achieving an educational goal through performance.

Examples of performance assessment include giving an oral presentation on a specific topic, preparing a research project, summarizing a book, managing a dialogue, conducting a scientific experiment, writing an article on a specific topic, writing a report on a specific incident, collecting sources from the internet, and others. (Mokadem, 2009)

• Concept Maps:

These are two-dimensional or multi-dimensional graphic diagrams that reflect the concepts of the content structure of the text, organized in a sequential manner in a hierarchical form, with the main concept placed at the top of the map and the less general concepts classified under it in lower levels, with links that illustrate the relationships between the main and sub-concepts. (Younis, 2004, p.100)

•Self-assessment:

It is the student's ability to observe, analyze, and judge his performance based on clear standards, then develop plans to improve and enhance performance through mutual cooperation between the student and the teacher. Modern education tends to adopt this approach and encourage it to be done in collaboration with other methods.

• Peer Assessment:

It is a type of assessment carried out by the student's peers, including formative assessment and summative assessment of the educational task or activity by the student's peer or a group of peers. (Afana, 2010)

• Observation-Based Assessment:

Observation is one of the real assessment tools through which the teacher can determine the progress of his students through their actions, words, and general behavior, using tools such as assessment lists that include a list of behaviors and their corresponding evaluations (numeric, qualitative).

• Interview-Based Assessment:

It is a meeting between the teacher and the student, where the teacher is given the opportunity to obtain information related to the student's ideas and attitudes about a specific topic, and the reasons behind a

specific behavior. The best interviews are those that include a series of pre-prepared questions. (Al-Sarraf, 2002)

6. Methodological Procedures for the Field Study:

6.1. Study Method:

The descriptive method was adopted for its suitability for the study purposes.

6.2. Study Sample:

The survey study sample consisted of 30 Arabic language teachers, aiming to verify the psychometric properties of the tool first, and to ensure that the tool items are clear and suitable for the sample individuals. As for the primary study sample, it consisted of 50 teachers and a school at the intermediate education stage.

6.3. Study Tool and its Psychometric Properties:

After reviewing a number of previous studies related to the study problem, the questionnaire prepared by Mohammed Attia Afana (2011) was chosen, and the following table illustrates the psychometric properties of the questionnaire after its application to the standardization sample.

Table (1): Psychometric Characteristics of the Questionnaire

Reliability Sample = 30 teachers		Validity Sample = 30 teachers		
Stability Coefficient (Application 02 after 20 days)	Cronbach's Alpha	correlation coefficient of each item with its dimension Score.	The correlation coefficient of each dimension with the total Score	The Terminal Comparison Upper Group=10 Lower Group=10
0.82	0.75	All statistically significant at 0.05 or 0.01	All statistically significant at 0.05 or 0.01	T value of statistical significance at 0.05

It is evident from the table that the questionnaire is characterized by acceptable stability and validity coefficients, making it suitable for use on the primary study sample.

6.4. Statistical methods: were used to achieve the study's objective, including repetitions, percentages, mean, standard deviation, and relative weight, relying on the SPSS v.25 program.

7. Results:

Presentation and analysis of the results of the question: What are the most commonly used assessment methods by Arabic language teachers in the middle school stage?

The study reached the following results: The methods used by Arabic language teachers to evaluate their students' learning vary, and there is a tendency to use some modern methods, The most commonly used assessment methods by teachers are illustrated in the following table.

Table (2): the most commonly used assessment methods by Arabic language teachers

Dimensions of the questionnaire	Repetitions and percentages					Mean	Standard deviation	Relative weight	Utilization degree
	Very few	Few	Average	Large	Very large				
Performance evaluation	/	/	10	25	15	3.28	0.47	65.6%	Average
	/	/	20%	50%	30%				
Portfolio	48	2	/	/	/	1.82	1.09	36.4%	few
	96%	4%	/	/	/				
Self- assessment	4	/	7	13	26	3.76	1.20	75.2%	large
	8%		14%	26%	52%				
Peer evaluation	5	8	19	18	/	3.14	1.05	62.8%	Average
	10%	16%	38%	36%	/				
Evaluation by observation	/	4	8	14	24	4.01	0.84	80.2%	large
	/	8%	16%	28%	48%				
Evaluation by written tests	/	/	/	17	33	4.38	0.48	87.6%	Very large
	/	/	/	34%	66%				
Evaluation by interview	/	/	4	17	29	4.10	0.53	8%	large
	/	/	8%	34%	58%				
Evaluation by concept maps	50	/	/	/	/	1.20	1.27	24%	Very few
	100%	/	/	/	/				

We notice through the table that the sample individuals of middle school teachers adopt various methods in evaluating their students. We also notice their inclination towards using some modern methods such as:

interview-based evaluation, observation-based evaluation, and self-evaluation, which was used to a great extent.

In addition, they do not dispense with written tests, which were used to a very large extent. As for peer evaluation and performance-based evaluation, their usage was moderate, which is considered a positive indicator of some teachers' familiarity with and knowledge of modern evaluation methods and their keenness to apply them in line with the new curricula and modern teaching strategies.

This is because most of the teachers are newcomers and have received training courses in modern evaluation methods. However, the use of file-based evaluation was low among the sample individuals, and concept mapping evaluation was very low.

Individuals in the sample primarily use written tests to evaluate their students, followed by interviews, observations, self-assessment, peer assessment, performance-based assessment, and finally assessment through portfolios and concept maps.

It is noted from the table that evaluation through written tests ranked first in terms of usage, with a relative weight of 87.6%, an arithmetic mean of 4.38, and a standard deviation of 0.48. It is also observed that 86% of the sample individuals use written tests to evaluate their students to a very large extent, while 14% use them to a large extent. This can be attributed to the teacher's familiarity with this type of method, believing it measures students' skill levels, allowing the identification of weaknesses and strengths in the students' ability to write in their own language.

Additionally, it can measure various educational outcomes, assist teachers in monitoring students' linguistic and intellectual developments, and achieve curriculum objectives focusing on the field of expression, which is seen as the real domain for linguistic and intellectual advancement according to Arabic language teachers.

In the second rank in terms of usage, we find: the interview-based evaluation, where its relative weight was 82%, with an arithmetic mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.53, indicating the convergence of the sample individuals' responses and their proximity to the arithmetic mean. We also note that 58% of the sample individuals use this evaluation method to a very high degree, 34% to a high degree, and 8% to a moderate degree. Some teachers prefer oral tests in evaluation, which may be attributed to the nature of the subject itself, as the Arabic language requires oral reading, reciting poetry, expression, and conversation, making this method suitable.

Additionally, teachers are accustomed to this type of evaluation regardless of their proficiency in using it. In the third rank, we find observation-based evaluation with a relative weight of 80.2%, an arithmetic mean of 4.01, and a standard deviation of 0.84, indicating the convergence of the sample individuals' responses and their proximity to the arithmetic mean.

We also note that 48% of the sample use it to a very high degree, 28% to a high degree, 16% to a moderate degree, and the rest to a low degree. This is a process in which the teacher directs his various senses towards the learner in order to actively monitor and evaluate his skills. Teachers are keen on observing students' work through their participation in class, interaction with lessons, preparation for them, noting their notebooks, and their interest in writing lessons and completing homework, in addition to the keenness of the educational institution's management and inspectors on that.

In the fourth rank, we find self-assessment with a relative weight of 75.2%, an arithmetic mean of 3.76, and a standard deviation of 1.20, indicating that the sample individuals' responses have begun to show a kind of dispersion from each other and from their arithmetic mean. It is also observed that 52% of the teachers use it to a very large extent, 26% to a large extent, 14% to a moderate extent, and the rest to a very small extent.

Teachers believe that students' self-recognition of their oral and written mistakes and their discovery of them themselves motivates them to improve their oral performance such as reading, poetic performance, and writing, and also gives them confidence and motivation to learn.

In the fifth and sixth ranks, we find performance-based assessment and peer assessment with relative weights of 65.6% and 62.8% respectively, and arithmetic means of 3.28 and 3.14 respectively, with standard deviations of 0.47 and 1.05 respectively, at a moderate level of use, where 30% of the sample individuals use performance-based assessment to a very large extent, 50% to a large extent, and 20% to a moderate extent. There are no teachers who use peer assessment to a very large extent; 36% use it to a large extent, 38% to a moderate extent, 16% to a small extent, and 8% to a very small extent, which is generally acceptable because there is an initiative on their part to implement this method.

Some teachers assign students to give explanatory presentations to clarify certain tasks and ideas. They conduct debates between two teams for argumentation and discussion on a certain topic, poetry and literary competitions, role-playing and simulation... and evaluate the students for their activities and work, although some teachers see it as a waste of time due to the density of the program and the overcrowding of the departments.

In addition, some teachers believe that the students at this stage are not mature enough and will not be able to evaluate their own work and that of their peers efficiently, which makes some of them neglect this type of evaluation and see it as more suitable for secondary or university education.

As for the last ranks: the seventh and eighth, we find the evaluation by achievement files and evaluation by concept maps with relative weights of 36.4% and 24% respectively, and arithmetic means of 1.82 and 1.20 respectively, and standard deviations of 1.09 and 1.27 respectively with very little use. 4% of the sample use the evaluation by achievement files to a small extent, and 96% use it to a very small extent, indicating the

teachers' lack of interest in this method of evaluating their students, as this method relies on purposeful compilation of students' work and its review to judge their performance, where teachers lack the skill to deal with this aspect of evaluation methods.

They also find it difficult to create a separate file for each student and monitor his/her development and evaluation based on it due to the large number of students in one class, the density of the curriculum, and the limited time, as it consumes a great deal of time and effort on the part of the teacher. Teachers also find it difficult to choose the type of content of the work file subject to evaluation.

As for the last method in terms of the degree of use represented in the concept map, we find that all sample individuals use this method to a very low degree. This is attributed to many teachers' lack of awareness of this type of assessment, which we noticed when applying the questionnaire as they were inquiring about it.

It is clear that they have not received training in this method, as some teachers pointed out that it does not suit the nature of the subject, as the concept map is a representation of meaning through visual structures of a specific field of knowledge suitable for knowledge that can take hierarchical structures, such as natural science, for example.

Our study results relatively agreed with some previous studies, such as the study of Mohammed Afana (2010) and the study of Rima Zakaria (2007), especially regarding teachers' reliance on written tests to a very large extent in student assessment, while the use of other methods remains variable.

The results of the study of Maashi and Al-Muqhim (2017) show a poor teachers' use of alternative evaluation, The performance based evaluation comes first in ranking while peer evaluation comes fifth. The main difficulties encountered are the large numbers of students in a classroom and the lack of teaching aids.

Agus Riwanda and others (2021) have reached that the assessment methods most often used by teachers are multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, and performance.

Conclusion:

Teachers still heavily rely on written exams in evaluating their students' learning, in addition to interviews, which may consist of interrogations or oral exams, and observation, which is closer to traditional assessment practices that they are accustomed to. Meanwhile, other assessment methods such as concept mapping, achievement files... remain at the bottom of the usage scale due to the density of the curriculum and the overcrowding of classes.

Although we have noticed some positive points in their interest in some modern methods such as performance assessment, self-assessment, and peer assessment to a moderate extent.

we can therefore include some suggestions that may benefit educational decision-makers in improving and developing the assessment process:

- Revisiting the current educational practices that rely on achievement tests, as it is no longer acceptable for teachers and students to continue understanding assessment as synonymous with exams, with the organization of training programs, courses, and periodic workshops in the use of modern methods in educational assessment.
- Developing the curricula, especially the measurement and educational assessment curricula in the colleges that graduate teachers and professors, to include modern assessment methods.
- Modifying the educational curricula so that teachers can use alternative assessment methods without fearing the completion of lessons, and including the appropriate assessment method for each study unit to suit its content.
- There should be strict supervision by supervisors and managers in this matter, and an accurate evaluation of the extent to which teachers use modern assessment methods and their efficiency in doing so.

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