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Impacts of AI-driven Formative Assessment Model on EFL Teachers' Assessment Literacy

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Abstract: The English Curriculum Standards for Senior High School (2017 Edition, 2025 Revision) advocates the integration of formative and summative assessment throughout teaching procedures and competency-oriented assessment design, which raises higher requirements for teachers' assessment competence. While artificial intelligence brings new opportunities to classroom formative assessment, few studies explore how AI-enabled assessment shapes EFL teachers' professional assessment ability. This study addresses two research questions: how AI-driven formative assessment influences EFL teachers' assessment literacy, and what obstacles teachers meet when applying this model. Based on literature review, this paper verifies that the AI-based assessment improves teachers' assessment literacy in four dimensions: data interpretation, feedback quality, assessment understanding and assessment mindset. Meanwhile, four persistent barriers including technical instability, insufficient training, inadequate infrastructure and ethical risks restrict its classroom application. The results provide references for teacher training, school support systems and teachers' self-directed professional growth, enriching relevant discussion on teacher competency development in the digital era. As a literature review, this paper lacks empirical data and fails to cover contextual differences across diverse education settings; follow-up empirical research is required for further verification and optimization.

Keywords: The AI-driven Formative Assessment Model, EFL Teachers, Assessment Literacy, Teacher Professional Development, Formative Assessment.

1. Introduction

(1) Research Background

Formative assessment has long been recognized as a cornerstone of effective language teaching and learning. Unlike summative assessment, which measures learning outcomes at the end of an instructional period, formative assessment is embedded in the day-to-day teaching process and serves to monitor student progress, identify learning gaps, and inform instructional adjustments[12]. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, formative assessment is particularly critical, as language learning is a gradual and iterative process that requires ongoing feedback and timely intervention.

In recent years, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence has begun to reshape classroom assessment practices across educational settings. The AI-driven formative assessment model, implemented through various technological tools such as automated writing evaluation systems (e.g., Pigai, Grammarly), speech assessment and pronunciation training applications (e.g., Xunfei, Liulishuo), and learning analytics dashboards (e.g., Canvas Analytics)-has become increasingly accessible to EFL teachers. These tools offer capabilities that were previously unavailable or impractical in traditional classroom settings: real-time scoring, fine-grained error analysis, individualized feedback, and longitudinal tracking of student performance. As a result, the nature of classroom assessment is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Assessment is no longer confined to periodic quizzes or end-of-unit tests; it is becoming more continuous, more data-rich, and more responsive to individual learner needs.

This technological shift brings new demands on EFL teachers. Teachers are now expected not only to understand the principles of sound assessment but also to effectively select, implement, and interpret data generated within the AI-driven formative assessment model. The ability to engage with the AI-driven formative assessment model for formative assessment purposes is becoming an increasingly important component of teachers' professional competence. Consequently, a pressing question emerges: How does the AI-driven formative assessment model influence EFL teachers' assessment literacy?

(2) Research Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it aims to examine the specific impacts of the AI-driven formative assessment model on EFL teachers' assessment literacy, with particular attention to the dimensions of assessment competence that are most significantly affected. Second, it seeks to identify and analyze the challenges that teachers face when integrating this model into their assessment practices, as understanding these obstacles is essential for designing effective professional development interventions.

This paper holds both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it responds to a relatively underexplored area in the existing literature. While a growing body of research has examined the effectiveness of AI tools in supporting student learning outcomes and the broader integration of technology into language education, relatively few studies have focused systematically on how this model reshapes teachers' assessment literacy-a core component of teacher professional competence. By synthesizing and critically engaging with available literature, this paper contributes conceptual clarity to an underexplored area.

Practically, the findings of this paper offer valuable implications for multiple stakeholders. For teacher educators and professional development providers, the analysis provides guidance on what competencies to prioritize in training programs. For school administrators, it highlights the support structures that need to be in place for successful technology integration. For individual teachers, it offers a framework for self-reflection on their own assessment

practices in the AI era[9].

(3) Structure of the Paper

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Chapter 2 presents a review of relevant literature, beginning with the conceptualization of teacher assessment literacy, followed by an overview of the AI-driven formative assessment model and its core features, and concluding with an identification of the research gap that this paper seeks to address. Chapter 3 presents the findings and discussion, organized around the two research questions. The positive influences of the AI-driven formative assessment model are examined along four dimensions, followed by an analysis of the persistent challenges teachers face. Chapter 4 concludes the paper with a summary of the key arguments, a discussion of the implications for teacher professional development, and an acknowledgment of the limitations of this study.

2. Literature Review

(1) Formative Assessment

The concept of formative assessment originated with Scriven's in 1967 distinction between formative and summative evaluation and was later extended to classroom instruction by Bloom and others, who emphasized its diagnostic and improvement functions[2]. He defined it as "all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities"-a process centered on eliciting, interpreting, and using evidence to inform instructional decisions.

Unlike summative assessment, which measures outcomes at the end of instruction, formative assessment is fundamentally oriented toward assessment for learning. Mei and Wang further advanced the notion of assessment as learning, emphasizing that assessment should be embedded within the learning process itself[12]. Within this framework, teachers function not merely as judges of learning outcomes but as diagnosticians and facilitators of the learning process. In EFL contexts, formative assessment is particularly vital-language learning is gradual and iterative, requiring ongoing feedback and timely intervention, which constitutes the practical impetus for introducing the AI-driven model examined in this study.

(2) Teacher Assessment Literacy

The concept of assessment literacy has evolved considerably since its initial introduction into the educational literature. Stiggins first brought this term to the forefront of scholarly attention, defining it as teachers' understanding of the principles and practices of sound assessment. According to Stiggins, an assessment-literate teacher should know what is being assessed, why it is being assessed, how to develop appropriate assessment instruments, and how to interpret and use assessment results effectively[1]. This foundational work established assessment literacy as a core component of teacher professional competence, distinguishing it from general pedagogical knowledge or content knowledge.

Building upon this foundation, in 2016, Xu and Brown developed a more comprehensive and nuanced framework: TALiP framework (Teacher Assessment Literacy in Practice) that has gained wide acceptance in the field of language education. Their six-dimensional model conceptualizes teacher assessment literacy as comprising: (1) knowledge of assessment purposes, content, and methods; (2) skills in designing and selecting appropriate assessment tasks; (3) abilities in scoring, interpreting, and communicating assessment results; (4) awareness of the ethical and social implications of assessment; (5) understanding of the relationships between assessment and learning; and (6) the capacity for critical reflection on assessment practices. This framework is particularly valuable because it moves beyond a purely technical view of assessment and acknowledges the complex, context-dependent nature of teachers' assessment work[7].

In the specific context of EFL teaching, assessment literacy takes on additional dimensions. Language teachers are expected to assess not only declarative knowledge but also procedural skills, communicative competence, and intercultural awareness-constructs that are inherently more difficult to measure than factual knowledge[4]. Furthermore, EFL teachers often work in contexts where assessment policies are externally imposed, requiring them to navigate tensions between summative accountability and formative purposes. The present paper adopts Xu and Brown's framework as its primary theoretical lens, as its six dimensions provide a sufficiently detailed structure for analyzing the specific ways in which the AI-driven formative assessment model influences teachers' assessment knowledge, skills, beliefs, and practices[7].

(3) The AI-driven Formative Assessment Model

The "AI-driven Formative Assessment Model" examined in this study does not refer to any specific category of applications or software tools. Rather, it is conceptualized as an assessment philosophy and pedagogical model that integrates the capabilities of artificial intelligence into the core of classroom evaluation.

The theoretical foundation of this concept can be traced to the intersection of the formative assessment tradition and recent research on AI applications in education. As intelligent technologies become embedded in classroom instruction, researchers have begun to re-examine the functions and forms of assessment from a "technology-empowered" perspective[16]. Drawing upon Xu and Brown's framework of teacher assessment literacy, this study defines the "AI-driven Formative Assessment Model" as a novel assessment ecosystem characterized by human-AI collaboration and oriented toward continuous instructional improvement[7].

The model encompasses three interrelated dimensions:

First, in terms of assessment philosophy, it advocates embedding AI into the entire "teaching-learning-assessment" continuum, so that assessment is no longer isolated from instruction but forms a continuous interactive cycle with teaching and learning. This echoes the core tenet of formative assessment that positions "assessment as learning"[13].

Second, in terms of assessment methods, it leverages intelligent algorithms for real-time data analytics, automated diagnosis, and personalized feedback, achieving a level of frequency and immediacy that traditional paper-and-pencil tests cannot attain. This addresses, at a technical level, the long-standing practical dilemma faced by teachers who wish to understand student learning in a timely manner but are constrained by available means.

Third, in terms of assessment agency, AI within this model is not merely a tool that passively executes instructions. Instead, it functions as a co-assessor and a provider of learning analytics, forming a human-AI collaborative assessment ecosystem with the teacher.

It should be noted that this model manifests in various practical forms, including automated writing evaluation systems (e.g., Pigai), speech assessment applications (e.g.,

Xunfei), and learning analytics dashboards (e.g., Canvas Analytics). These tools are the technical carriers of the model, but the model itself points to a broader assessment philosophy and framework. In this study, references to the AI-driven Formative Assessment Model consistently denote this comprehensive concept encompassing philosophy, methods, and agency, rather than an operational discussion of any single tool[11].

(4) The AI-driven Formative Assessment Model and Teacher Assessment Literacy: A Less Explored Area

A considerable body of research has examined the relationship between technology and teacher assessment literacy. Several studies have investigated how the introduction of technology-enhanced assessment tools influences teachers' assessment practices, revealing that such tools can both facilitate and complicate teachers' assessment work[3,6]. Some researchers have explored teachers' perceptions of technology-based assessment, documenting both enthusiasm and resistance. Others have focused on the training and professional support required for teachers to effectively use digital assessment tools[19].

More specifically, recent years have witnessed a growing interest in AI applications within language education. Studies have examined the effectiveness of AI-powered tools in improving student outcomes, including writing accuracy, speaking fluency, and vocabulary acquisition[10]. Researchers have also investigated the technical features of these tools and their pedagogical applications. However, the majority of this research has concentrated on student learning outcomes and the technological capabilities of the tools themselves.

What remains comparatively less examined is the teacher-side of this equation. While some studies have touched upon teachers' perceptions of AI tools or their acceptance of technology, relatively few have engaged systematically with the question of how the AI-driven formative assessment model shapes teachers' assessment literacy itself. The existing literature offers limited insight into whether and how teachers' assessment knowledge, skills, and beliefs evolve through sustained engagement with the model. Studies have not yet provided a clear picture of which specific dimensions of assessment literacy are most affected, nor have they adequately addressed the obstacles that constrain teachers' effective implementation of the model[15]. This underexplored area merits further scholarly attention, as understanding the interface between the AI-driven formative assessment model and teacher assessment literacy has important implications for both teacher education and professional development in the digital age.

3. Findings and Discussion

(1) Positive Influences on Teacher Assessment Literacy

This section addresses the first research question: How does the AI-driven formative assessment model influence EFL teachers' classroom assessment literacy? Based on Xu and Brown's TALiP framework, the development of teacher assessment literacy involves three main aspects: the accumulation of assessment knowledge, the renewal of assessment conceptions, and ongoing decision-making and adjustment in practice[7]. Drawing upon these three aspects, this paper identifies four specific dimensions through which the AI model influences teacher assessment literacy: data interpretation skills, feedback quality and efficiency, broadening of assessment approaches, and reshaping of assessment beliefs. These dimensions are interrelated in practice and collectively contribute to the enhancement of teachers' assessment literacy.

(a) Enhanced Data Interpretation Skills

The use of the AI-driven formative assessment model provides teachers with access to fine-grained learning data that was previously unavailable or impractical to collect in traditional classroom settings. These data include item-level accuracy rates, response times, common error patterns, individual learning trajectories, and comparative class performance metrics. To make meaningful use of such data, teachers must develop the capacity to interpret what the numbers signify, identify patterns that indicate learning difficulties, and translate these insights into instructional decisions[1].

This process directly cultivates teachers' data interpretation skills, which corresponds to the "decision-making" dimension of assessment literacy as outlined by Xu and Brown[7]. Teachers are no longer reliant solely on intuition or general impressions when evaluating student progress; they are increasingly equipped to make evidence-informed pedagogical judgments. For instance, when a teacher notices through an analytics dashboard that a significant portion of the class is struggling with a particular grammatical structure, the teacher can promptly adjust the lesson plan to provide targeted reinforcement. This shift from experience-based to data-informed decision-making represents a meaningful enhancement of teachers' assessment competence.

(b) Improved Feedback Quality and Efficiency

Within the AI-driven formative assessment model, the technological components are capable of generating preliminary feedback on student work, including automated essay scoring, pronunciation evaluation, and grammatical error identification. This immediate, consistent, and detailed feedback provides a foundation upon which teachers can build. Rather than spending excessive time on mechanical correction, teachers can focus their efforts on selecting the most relevant AI-generated comments, supplementing them with contextualized explanations, and personalizing feedback to address individual student needs[18].

This transformed practice signals a fundamental shift in the teacher's role-from being the sole provider of feedback to becoming a reviewer and deepener of AI-generated feedback. This role shift corresponds to the "skills" dimension of assessment literacy, specifically the ability to provide effective feedback. Moreover, feedback is no longer confined to end-of-task or end-of-unit comments; it can be integrated throughout the learning process, enabling more timely and responsive formative interactions. The qualitative improvement in feedback practices-greater specificity, timeliness, and personalization-represents a significant advancement in teachers' assessment skills, though it also requires teachers to develop new competencies in evaluating and refining AI-generated outputs.

(c) Broadened Understanding of Assessment Approaches

Through sustained engagement with the AI-driven formative assessment model, teachers are exposed to a wider range of assessment methods than those traditionally employed in EFL classrooms. These include real-time response systems, continuous progress tracking, visual data presentations, adaptive quizzes, and automated diagnostic reports.

This expansion corresponds to the "knowledge" dimension of assessment literacy[7]. Teachers develop a more diverse

understanding of what formative assessment can look like. The traditional view that "assessment equals testing" is gradually challenged as teachers encounter alternative ways of collecting and interpreting student learning evidence.

However, it is important to note that this change operates primarily at the informational level-teachers are acquiring new knowledge about available tools and methods. This is essentially an enlargement of their assessment toolkit. While this knowledge is necessary for informed decision-making, knowing about more methods does not necessarily mean that teachers have changed their fundamental views about assessment.

(d) Shifts in Assessment Beliefs and Perceptions

The AI-driven formative assessment model also influences teachers at a deeper level-their fundamental beliefs about assessment. This dimension is more central to assessment literacy yet more resistant to change[7]. While knowledge is about what tools exist, beliefs are about what assessment should be and who the teacher is as an assessor.

The implementation of the model prompts teachers to rethink several deep-rooted assumptions:

First, teachers reconsider the source of assessment authority. Traditionally, the teacher holds exclusive power to evaluate. As teachers see that AI can provide useful and reliable judgments, they begin to accept a more shared model of evaluation authority.

Second, teachers expand their understanding of what counts as valid evidence of learning. They move beyond a narrow focus on right/wrong answers toward a broader appreciation of process data, progress patterns, and multiple forms of performance evidence.

Third, teachers experience a shift in their professional role identity, from being the sole judge of student performance to becoming an organizer and critical decision-maker who integrates AI-generated insights with their own professional judgment.

These shifts are significant because beliefs change much more slowly than knowledge, yet they exert a stronger and more lasting influence on actual classroom practice[5]. When teachers' assessment beliefs are genuinely transformed, the resulting changes in practice are more likely to be sustained and deep-seated.

(e) Summary

The four dimensions identified above-data interpretation skills, feedback quality and efficiency, breadth of assessment approaches, and assessment beliefs-collectively demonstrate that the influence of the AI-driven formative assessment model on teacher assessment literacy is multi-faceted. It operates at both technical and conceptual levels, affecting what teachers know, what they can do, and what they believe about assessment. This multi-dimensional influence suggests that professional development efforts should attend not only to the operational aspects of engaging with the model but also to the conceptual and belief-related dimensions of teacher change. A narrow focus on technical training may produce surface-level adoption without deeper transformation.

(2) Persistent Challenges

This section addresses the second research question: What challenges do EFL teachers encounter when integrating the AI-driven formative assessment model into their classroom assessment practices? Four categories of challenges are identified, each operating at a different level of the educational system-ranging from tool-specific issues to institutional constraints.

Firstly, technical reliability constitutes the most immediate challenge. The technological components of the model are not infallible; they can produce erroneous judgments, particularly when confronted with non-standard language use, creative expressions, or context-dependent meanings that fall outside their training data. Teachers who repeatedly encounter such errors develop justified skepticism toward the tools, and their willingness to incorporate the model into regular assessment practices diminishes accordingly. The technical limitations of current AI systems thus present a significant barrier to consistent and trusting use.

Secondly, insufficient teacher training compounds the technical challenges. The majority of EFL teachers have not received systematic professional development on how to effectively engage with, implement, and interpret data from the AI-driven formative assessment model[17]. Most teachers rely on self-directed exploration-a process that is often fragmented, inefficient, and prone to the formation of incomplete or inaccurate understandings. Without structured training, teachers may be unaware of the full range of functionalities available to them, lack strategies for evaluating tool quality and output accuracy, and fail to integrate AI-generated data with their professional judgment[8]. This training deficit represents a critical gap that limits the extent to which the model can positively influence teacher assessment literacy.

Thirdly, limited infrastructure further constrains the integration of the model, especially in under-resourced educational settings. Stable internet connections, adequate hardware, and reliable power supplies are prerequisites for the effective use of most AI-powered tools. In less developed regions, these conditions are not reliably met, rendering the sustained use of such tools impractical. Even when tools are technically accessible, schools may lack the technical support staff needed to address malfunctions or connectivity issues. The infrastructure divide thus exacerbates existing inequalities in educational quality between well-resourced and under-resourced institutions[14].

Fourthly, ethical concerns surrounding student data privacy present a fourth category of challenge. AI-powered assessment tools typically require the collection and processing of student data, including written work, voice recordings, and performance records. Teachers often lack clear guidance regarding what data is being collected, how it is stored, who has access to it, and for what purposes it may be used. The absence of explicit institutional policies on data governance leaves teachers uncertain about their responsibilities and exposes them to potential privacy violations. This ethical ambiguity can deter teachers from adopting AI tools, particularly when working with minors, and may inadvertently lead to practices that compromise student privacy even when teachers have good intentions.

(3) Relationship between Influences and Challenges

An important observation emerging from the analysis above is that the positive influences and the persistent challenges are not entirely separate. They interact in ways that can amplify or mitigate each other. For instance, the improvement in feedback efficiency (3.1.2) depends partly on the technical reliability of the technological components-when reliability is compromised, the efficiency gain is offset by the time teachers must spend verifying and correcting AI-generated output. Similarly, the expansion of teachers' understanding of assessment approaches (3.1.3) may be constrained by insufficient training. Teachers may not be

aware of available technological carriers or may not understand how to interpret the data they generate.

This interconnection suggests that efforts to maximize the positive influences of the AI-driven formative assessment model must simultaneously address the challenges that threaten to undermine them. Professional development programs, for instance, would benefit from adopting an integrated approach that treats technical skill development, critical evaluation of AI output, and ethical decision-making as interconnected competencies rather than separate training modules.

(4) Summary

This section has addressed the two research questions guiding this paper. In response to RQ1, the analysis identified four dimensions through which the AI-driven formative assessment model positively influences EFL teachers' classroom assessment literacy: data interpretation skills, feedback quality and efficiency, understanding of assessment approaches, and assessment beliefs. In response to RQ2, four categories of persistent challenges were identified: technical reliability, insufficient training, limited infrastructure, and ethical concerns. The analysis also revealed that these influences and challenges are interconnected, jointly shaping the extent to which the model can be effectively integrated into classroom practice.

4. Conclusion and Implications

(1) Summary of the Study

Drawing upon Xu and Brown's six-dimensional framework of teacher assessment literacy, this paper has examined the impacts of the AI-driven formative assessment model on EFL teachers' classroom assessment competence. The analysis proceeded in two directions. On the positive side, four dimensions of influence were identified: enhanced data interpretation skills that strengthen teachers' decision-making capacities; improved feedback quality and efficiency that reshape feedback practices; broadened understanding of assessment approaches that enriches teachers' knowledge base; and shifts in assessment beliefs that signal deeper, more sustainable professional change. On the challenging side, four categories of constraints were found to limit effective integration: technical reliability, insufficient training, limited infrastructure, and ethical concerns surrounding student data privacy. The analysis further revealed that these two dimensions are not independent-technical, individual, institutional, and regulatory factors interact to shape the overall impact of the model on teacher assessment literacy.

(2) Implications for Teacher Professional Development

The findings of this paper carry several implications for teacher professional development at multiple levels.

At the pre-service education level, teacher training programs should incorporate modules on AI-related assessment literacy into their curricula. Prospective teachers need opportunities to understand the capabilities and limitations of the AI-driven formative assessment model, develop skills in interpreting AI-generated data, and reflect on the ethical considerations involved in using such tools. Integrating these competencies into pre-service training would better prepare future teachers for the technologically enhanced classrooms they will enter.

At the in-service training level, professional development programs should move beyond a narrow focus on technical operations: "how to use the technological components" and embrace a broader agenda of cultivating assessment decision-making competence. Teachers need support in evaluating tool outputs critically, integrating AI-generated insights with their professional judgment, and adapting their assessment practices in response to new technological possibilities. Training that addresses these higher-order competencies is more likely to produce meaningful and lasting changes in teacher practice. At the school level, institutional support structures are essential. Schools should establish clear guidelines for the ethical use of AI-driven assessment practices, including explicit policies on student data collection, storage, access, and usage. Such policies would provide teachers with the clarity and confidence they need to adopt AI tools responsibly. Additionally, schools should invest in the necessary infrastructure such as reliable internet, adequate hardware, and technical support to enable sustained use of these tools.

At the individual teacher level, self-reflection is a crucial yet often overlooked component of professional growth. Teachers are encouraged to critically examine how their own assessment beliefs and perceptions are evolving through engagement with the model. Keeping reflective journals, participating in peer discussion, and systematically reviewing one's assessment practices can help teachers make explicit the often tacit changes in their assessment beliefs, thereby reinforcing and consolidating their professional development.

(3) Limitations and Future Directions

This paper has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis is primarily theoretical in nature, synthesizing and interpreting existing literature rather than presenting empirical data. While this approach has enabled a systematic conceptual exploration of the relationship between AI tools and teacher assessment literacy, empirical research is needed to validate and refine the findings. Future studies could employ surveys, interviews, or classroom observations to investigate how teachers' assessment literacy actually changes through sustained engagement with AI-driven formative assessment model.

Second, the paper has treated EFL teachers as a relatively homogeneous group, without fully accounting for variations across educational levels (primary, secondary, tertiary), institutional contexts (well-resourced versus under-resourced schools), or different configurations of the model. The ways in which the model influences teacher assessment literacy may differ considerably across these contexts. Future research could adopt a more differentiated approach, comparing teachers at different career stages or across different educational settings to provide a more nuanced understanding of the phenomena discussed in this paper.

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