

Tertiary EFL Lecturer's Assessment Beliefs and Practices in English Listening

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i4.2950>

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Listening assessment plays an important role in supporting effective language learning and evaluating students' listening proficiency in EFL classrooms. However, limited research has examined how lecturers' beliefs about listening assessment are reflected in their actual classroom practices, particularly in Indonesian higher education contexts. This study aims to investigate an EFL lecturer's beliefs about listening assessment and how these beliefs are enacted in classroom assessment practices at Muhammadiyah University of Kendari. A qualitative case study design was employed involving one experienced EFL lecturer who taught English listening courses and was responsible for designing and implementing listening assessments. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that the lecturer believes listening assessment should be fair, reliable, valid, and accountable. These beliefs are reflected in the implementation of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, the use of varied assessment techniques, and the selection of authentic and credible listening materials aligned with learning objectives. The study concludes that there is a strong alignment between the lecturer's assessment beliefs and classroom practices. These findings contribute to a better understanding of listening assessment in higher education and provide practical insights for EFL lecturers seeking to develop more effective and consistent assessment practices.

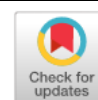
Keywords: *Lecturer Beliefs, Listening Assessment, Assessment Practices, EFL Classroom, Higher Education.*

Article History:

Received 02nd July 2026

Accepted 28th July 2026

Published 31st July 2026



INTRODUCTION

Listening is an essential skill in learning English as a foreign language because it allows learners to receive and process spoken language input. It serves as the foundation for developing other language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. Gilakjani & Sabouri (2017) state that listening plays a significant role in language acquisition because it provides learners with linguistic input that supports communication and language development. Therefore, effective listening instruction and assessment are important components of English language teaching.

Given the importance of listening in language learning, assessing students' listening abilities is equally important to ensure that learning objectives are achieved effectively. Assessment is an essential component of the teaching and learning process because it provides information about students' learning progress, achievement, and areas that require improvement. In language education, assessment serves not only as a tool for measuring learning outcomes but also as a means of supporting learning and informing instructional decisions. Brown & Abeywickrama (2019) define language assessment as a systematic process of collecting and interpreting information about learners' language abilities to make informed educational decisions. Similarly, Black & Wiliam (2009) argue that assessment should be

integrated into the learning process and used to enhance students' learning through continuous feedback and reflection. In the context of listening instruction, assessment enables teachers to evaluate students' listening comprehension, identify learning difficulties, and determine the effectiveness of instructional practices. Therefore, listening assessment plays a crucial role in supporting both student learning and instructional improvement.

Teachers' beliefs are considered an important factor influencing classroom practices. Teacher beliefs refer to personal principles, values, and assumptions that teachers hold about teaching and learning processes. Borg (2003) explains that teachers' beliefs influence instructional decisions, teaching strategies, and assessment practices in the classroom. In the context of listening instruction, teachers' beliefs may determine how listening activities are designed and how students' listening abilities are evaluated.

Teachers' assessment beliefs refer to the principles, values, and assumptions that shape how teachers design, implement, and interpret assessment in the teaching and learning process. According to, Borg (2003) teachers' beliefs are fundamental cognitive constructs that influence instructional decisions, including assessment practices, although their implementation may also be affected by contextual factors such as institutional policies and available resources. In the context of listening instruction, effective assessment should not only measure learners' comprehension but also provide meaningful information that supports learning through valid, reliable, fair, and authentic assessment procedures (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Recent studies further emphasize that lecturers' beliefs strongly influence the selection of assessment methods, feedback practices, and listening materials, ultimately affecting students' learning experiences and outcomes (Giraldo, 2022; Lam, 2023; Xu & Brown, 2021). Contemporary perspectives on assessment also advocate assessment for learning, in which diagnostic and formative assessments are integrated with summative evaluation to promote continuous learning and learner development rather than merely measuring achievement (Black & Wiliam, 2021). Therefore, examining lecturers' beliefs alongside their classroom assessment practices provides a comprehensive understanding of how theoretical principles of listening assessment are translated into authentic EFL teaching practice.

Several previous studies have investigated the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. Sah & Shah (2020) examined teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening and found that listening instruction often receives less attention compared to other language skills. Their study emphasized that understanding teachers' beliefs is important in improving listening instruction. Similarly, Su & Yang (2020) explored how professional development programs influenced teachers' beliefs about teaching listening. The results showed that teachers' perspectives toward listening instruction changed positively after participating in training workshops.

Another study conducted by Wang & Lam (2023) explored the relationship between teachers' beliefs and instructional practices in oral communication classes. The findings revealed that teachers' classroom practices were generally aligned with their beliefs, although contextual factors such as institutional policies and students' characteristics sometimes influenced their teaching practices. Furthermore, Abad (2023) found that although teachers believed that listening skills could be systematically taught, their classroom practices often focused on completing listening tasks rather than developing listening strategies.

Despite the growing number of studies examining teacher beliefs in language teaching, research focusing specifically on lecturers' beliefs about listening assessment in tertiary EFL contexts remains limited. Most previous studies focused on teaching strategies rather than assessment practices. Therefore, examining lecturers' beliefs about listening assessment is important in understanding how they evaluate students' listening abilities and how these beliefs influence their assessment methods.

Based on this research gap, this study aims to explore lecturers' beliefs about listening assessment and examine how these beliefs are reflected in classroom assessment practices at Muhammadiyah University of Kendari. This study is significant for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing body of research on teacher

cognition and language assessment by providing insights into how lecturers' beliefs about listening assessment are reflected in their classroom practices within an Indonesian tertiary EFL context. Given the limited research focusing specifically on listening assessment beliefs in higher education, this study helps address an existing gap in the literature. Practically, the findings may provide useful information for EFL lecturers, teacher educators, and curriculum developers in designing listening assessment practices that are aligned with educational objectives and students' learning needs. Furthermore, the study may raise awareness of the importance of assessment literacy in supporting effective listening instruction and assessment in higher education. The research question guiding this study is: (1) What are the lecturer's assessment beliefs about teaching listening in English classes at Muhammadiyah University of Kendari? (2) How are these beliefs reflected in the lecturer's classroom assessment practices?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to investigate an EFL lecturer's assessment beliefs and practices in English listening at Muhammadiyah University of Kendari. The case study design was chosen because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin & Campbell, 2018). This approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on exploring how a lecturer perceived listening assessment and how these beliefs were reflected in classroom assessment practices.

The participant of this study was one EFL lecturer who taught English listening courses at Muhammadiyah University of Kendari. The participant was selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) having experience in teaching listening courses, (2) being responsible for conducting listening assessments, and (3) actively teaching English listening during the period of data collection. The participant was expected to provide rich information regarding assessment beliefs and practices in English listening.

Data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. First, one classroom observation was conducted to obtain an initial understanding of the lecturer's listening assessment practices. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted in two sessions, each lasting approximately 15–20 minutes, to explore the lecturer's beliefs regarding the purpose of assessment, assessment techniques, assessment types, learning media, listening materials, and challenges in listening assessment. Third, document analysis was conducted on lesson plans, assessment instruments, listening tasks, and other instructional materials used by the lecturer. The use of multiple data collection methods enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive data and strengthen the credibility of the findings through triangulation.

Data were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun & Clarke (2006), which involved familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were analysed repeatedly to identify recurring patterns related to listening assessment beliefs and practices. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from observation, interviews, and document analysis. According to Creswell & Poth (2018), the use of multiple data sources can enhance the credibility of qualitative findings by allowing researchers to cross-check information from different perspectives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Eight main themes emerged from this study: instructors' beliefs regarding listening skills assessment, the objectives of listening skills assessment, the types of listening skills assessment used, listening skills assessment techniques, the use of instructional media in listening skills assessment, sources of listening instructional materials, challenges in listening skills assessment, and factors influencing instructors' beliefs regarding assessment. These themes

illustrate how beliefs regarding listening skills assessment are applied in assessment practices in college-level English listening skills courses.

Lecturer's Beliefs about Listening Assessment

The interview results indicate that the lecturer strongly believes that assessment plays a crucial role in the teaching-and-learning process. According to the lecturer, assessment must be conducted fairly, reliably, and accountably to ensure the accuracy of student learning evaluations.

The lecturer stated:

"It is very important for an instructor or teacher to be convinced of the importance of conducting assessment fairly, reliably, and accountably."

This belief shows that lecturers view assessment not only as a tool to measure student performance but also as a professional responsibility that must be carried out with care. Additionally, results from follow-up interviews indicate that there is no significant difference between the concept of assessment considered ideal and the assessment practices implemented in the classroom. The lecturer explained that the assessment plans developed before the learning process began were consistently applied during the listening-based learning process in the classroom.

The lecturer explained:

"What I plan outside the classroom or before class begins is also what I strive to implement in the classroom, both for assessment and for listening-based learning."

This demonstrates consistency between the lecturer beliefs and the implementation of listening assessment in teaching practice. The findings of this study indicate that lecturer believe that the assessment of listening skills must be conducted in a fair, reliable, and accountable manner. The alignment between lecturer beliefs and classroom practices may stem from their strong understanding of the importance of assessment in language learning. Borg (2003) explains that teachers' beliefs influence their classroom decisions, teaching strategies, and assessment practices. In this study, the lecturer demonstrated an awareness that assessment should support students' learning development and provide accurate information about students' abilities. Therefore, the lecturer endeavored to implement assessment practices consistent with these professional beliefs.

Purpose of Listening Assessment

The lecturer explained that the main purpose of listening assessment is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' listening abilities. In addition, assessment results can be used as a reference to improve future teaching and learning processes.

The lecturer explained:

"The purpose of assessment is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students listening abilities and to serve as a reference for improving future learning."

This shows that assessments are used both to evaluate students' understanding and to guide improvements in teaching. Findings from follow-up interviews also indicate that lecturer strive to ensure that students' answers truly reflect their listening skills. To ensure this, lecturer seek clarification directly through question-and-answer sessions after students complete listening assignments.

The lecturer stated:

"I usually conduct a direct Q&A to ensure that they truly understand what they heard."

Through this process, the lecturer asks students to explain why they chose a particular answer and to describe the audio segment they listened to. This approach is used to ensure that students' answers are not merely guessed but are genuinely based on their understanding of the listening material.

The findings indicate that listening assessment is viewed not only as a tool for measuring learning outcomes but also as a means of improving future instruction. This perspective reflects the concept of assessment for learning proposed by Black & Wiliam (2009), who argue that assessment should be integrated into the learning process and used to support student development. Through clarification sessions and direct questioning, the lecturer attempts to verify students' actual understanding of listening materials. Vandergrift & Goh (2012) similarly emphasize that listening assessment should help teachers identify learners' strengths and difficulties so that instruction can be adjusted to meet students' needs.

Types of Listening Assessment Used

Based on the interview results, the lecturer applies three types of assessment in listening classes: diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment. Diagnostic assessment is used to identify students' initial listening ability before instruction begins. Formative assessment is conducted during the learning process to monitor students' progress. Meanwhile, summative assessment is used to evaluate students' overall achievement at the end of the learning process.

The lecturer explained:

"Diagnostic assessment is used to determine students' initial ability so that the lecturer can choose appropriate teaching materials. Formative assessment is used to monitor students learning progress."

In addition to using diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, the lecturer also explained that the forms of assessment implemented in the classroom generally align with the plans made prior to the start of instruction. The lecturer emphasized that there is no significant difference between the ideal concept of assessment and the assessment practices implemented in the classroom. This indicates consistency between the lecturer beliefs and the implementation of listening assessments in the learning process.

The lecturer explained:

"What I plan outside of class or before class is also what I try to implement in class for both assessment and listening instruction."

This finding indicates that the lecturer strives to maintain alignment between instructional planning and assessment practices so that listening learning objectives can be effectively achieved. The use of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments demonstrates a comprehensive approach to evaluating listening proficiency. According to Brown & Abeywickrama (2019), diagnostic assessment helps identify learners' strengths and weaknesses, formative assessment monitors learning progress, and summative assessment evaluates overall achievement. Similarly, Alderson (2005) argues that language assessment should occur at different stages of learning in order to provide a complete picture of students' language development. The findings therefore indicate that the lecturer attempts to assess listening ability systematically throughout the learning process.

Listening Assessment Techniques

The lecturer uses various types of listening tasks in conducting listening assessments. These tasks include multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and dictation activities. These variations aim to measure students' listening ability in different situations.

According to the lecturer:

"Sometimes I use multiple-choice questions, fill-in tasks, or dictation exercises so that students abilities can be observed in different situations."

The results of the follow-up interview showed that multiple-choice questions remain the most commonly used form of assessment. According to the lecturer, this form of assessment is easier to administer and grade because it comes with clear answer keys. However, the lecturer acknowledged that a wider variety of assessment techniques still needs to be developed in order to measure students' listening skills more thoroughly.

The lecturer explained:

"Perhaps in the future I need to modify exercises such as 'one word only' or ask them to write a summary after listening to something."

In addition, the lecturer has also implemented exercises where students write down what they hear as a listening practice, although this activity has not yet been used as part of formal assessments such as midterms or final exams. The use of multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank exercises, dictation, and summary writing activities reflects an effort to assess listening comprehension from different perspectives. Rost (2011) explains that listening involves a range of cognitive processes, including recognizing sounds, interpreting meaning, and processing spoken information. Therefore, relying on a single assessment format may not adequately capture students' listening abilities. Field (2008) also emphasizes the importance of employing varied listening tasks to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of learners' listening performance. The lecturer's intention to develop additional assessment formats indicates an awareness of the need for more comprehensive listening assessment practices.

Use of Learning Media in Listening Assessment

The research findings indicate that the lecturer does not use digital applications or specialized media for listening assessments. Instead, the lecturer prefers to use listening exercises from existing learning materials and provides answer keys.

The lecturer explained:

"I do not use digital media or specialized applications because the listening exercises already include answer keys and a grading system."

Follow-up interviews revealed that the lecturer has not yet used digital media specifically for conducting listening assessments. This is due to the fact that the learning process is still conducted offline and the questions are primarily multiple-choice. According to the instructor, this assessment model simplifies the grading process because the answers are already available and can be checked immediately.

The lecturer explained:

"Since the learning generally takes place offline and the listening questions are multiple-choice, it is easier to determine correct and incorrect answers because the answer keys are already available."

This finding indicates that the choice of assessment media is influenced by the efficiency of the learning process and the ease of evaluating student learning outcomes. Although digital technologies were not extensively used in the assessment process, the findings demonstrate that practicality and efficiency strongly influence assessment decisions. Chapelle & Douglas (2006) argue that technology can support language assessment by increasing flexibility and providing more authentic testing environments. However, teachers often adapt assessment methods according to contextual conditions and available resources. In this study, the lecturer preferred assessment procedures that were easy to administer and score within an offline learning environment.

Source of Listening Materials

The lecturer tends to use listening materials from established and globally recognized learning resources, rather than authentic materials.

The lecturer stated:

"I often use listening materials from existing learning resources that are credible and widely used globally."

Based on the results of the follow-up interview, the lecturer prefers to use listening materials from reliable learning resources that have been adapted to the learners' proficiency levels. Some of the sources used include the British Council, ESL Launch, and various other English language learning websites. The lecturer explained that these materials were chosen because they provide proficiency level classifications such as A1, A2, B1, and C2, making it easier to adapt the materials to students' abilities.

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The lecturer stated:

"I prefer to use materials from learning resources that are already credible and aligned with students' proficiency levels."

Additionally, the lecturer noted that authentic listening materials are more frequently used as supplementary exercises rather than as part of formal assessments. Authentic materials are used to provide examples of real-world language usage but are not the primary basis for evaluation. The lecturer's preference for structured listening materials from credible learning resources reflects a concern for appropriateness and practicality. Vandergrift & Goh (2012) suggest that listening materials should be matched to learners' proficiency levels to facilitate comprehension and learning development. Likewise, Field (2008) argues that carefully graded listening materials can reduce unnecessary difficulties and help learners focus on developing listening skills. The use of authentic materials as supplementary activities indicates an attempt to balance authenticity with learners' readiness levels.

Challenges in Listening Assessment

Lecturers explained that they did not encounter any significant challenges while administering the listening assessment. This was because the listening materials used came with clear instructions and answer keys, making the evaluation process easier to conduct.

The lecturer explained:

"There were no significant challenges because the questions already had clear guidelines and answer keys."

However, the results of the follow-up interview indicated that the lecturer remained aware of the need to develop new assessment formats so that students' listening skills could be measured in a more varied and in-depth manner. Although the lecturer reported few challenges in implementing listening assessment, listening remains one of the most difficult language skills to assess accurately. Buck (2001) explains that listening comprehension is an internal cognitive process that cannot be directly observed, making assessment particularly challenging. Therefore, even when assessment procedures appear straightforward, ensuring that assessment tasks accurately represent students' listening abilities remains an important consideration. The lecturer's awareness of the need to develop more varied assessment techniques reflects an effort to address this issue.

Factors Influencing Lecturer's Assessment Beliefs

The interview results reveal that the lecturer beliefs about listening assessment are influenced mainly by personal teaching experience and professional training during academic studies.

The lecturer stated:

"My beliefs are influenced by my personal experience and the training I received during my studies."

The findings indicate that teaching experience and professional training play important roles in shaping assessment beliefs. Borg (2003) argues that teacher cognition develops through professional learning experiences and classroom practice. Similarly, Gilakjani & Sabouri (2017) report that teachers' beliefs are influenced by both formal education and practical teaching experiences. These experiences subsequently shape how teachers design instruction and implement assessment in the classroom.

Overall, the findings suggest that the lecturer's assessment beliefs served as an important foundation for classroom assessment practices. Across the different aspects explored in this study, including assessment purposes, assessment types, assessment techniques, learning materials, and assessment procedures, there was a clear consistency between what the lecturer believed and what was implemented in practice. This finding indicates that assessment beliefs play a significant role in guiding assessment-related decisions in listening instruction. Furthermore, the lecturer's professional experience and academic training appear to have contributed to the development of assessment practices that were aligned with instructional goals and students' learning needs. The findings therefore highlight

the importance of developing assessment literacy among EFL lecturers to support effective and meaningful listening assessment in higher education contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined an EFL lecturer's beliefs about listening assessment and how these beliefs were enacted in classroom assessment practices at Muhammadiyah University of Kendari. The findings indicate a strong alignment between the lecturer's assessment beliefs and instructional practices, demonstrating that listening assessment was designed to be fair, valid, reliable, and accountable while serving both evaluative and formative purposes. These beliefs were reflected in the implementation of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, the use of diverse assessment techniques, and the selection of credible listening materials appropriate to students' proficiency levels. The study contributes to the limited body of research on listening assessment in Indonesian higher education by showing how teachers' assessment beliefs influence authentic classroom practices and support assessment for learning. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening lecturers' assessment literacy through continuous professional development to ensure that assessment remains aligned with learning objectives and students' needs. As this study involved only one participant from a single institution, future research should include multiple lecturers and diverse educational contexts to provide broader evidence and a more comprehensive understanding of listening assessment beliefs and practices in EFL higher education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express his deepest gratitude to Ms. Faridawati S.Pd., M.Pd and Ms. Dr. Yulianah Sain., SS., M.Hum for their guidance, encouragement, and valuable suggestions during this research. Special thanks are also extended to the lecturer who participated in this research and provided valuable information that contributed significantly to the findings of this study. The author is also very grateful to my family and friends for their continuous support, patience, and encouragement during the completion of this research.

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