Jordanian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Communicative Language Evaluation

Nayel Al-Shara'h, Abdullah Abu Nabaah and Afag Khzouz *

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation. The study aimed basically to answer the following questions:

1. What are Jordanian EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation due to gender?
3. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation due to qualification?
4. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation due to experience?

The sample of the study consisted of 76 Jordanian EFL teachers, 25 teachers responded to an open questionnaire, which was intended to help develop the closed questionnaire, the main research tool, 51 teachers responded to the latter questionnaire. The analysis of data collected from the second questionnaire showed that EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation were to some extent positive. Further, there were no statistically significant differences at (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation that could be ascribed to gender, qualification, or experience. In light of the findings, it was recommended that further research studies should be conducted on the actual communicative language assessment practices and on the congruence between teaching and assessment of English. It was also recommended that awareness of communicative language assessment practices, especially alternative, non-testing ones should be raised among EFL teachers.

Keywords: EFL Teachers' Perceptions, Communicative Language Teaching, Communicative Language Evaluation, Assessment Practices.

INTRODUCTION

Theoretical Background and Review of Related Literature

Evaluation has always been regarded as an essential component of the instructional process; to say it more clearly, where there is teaching or learning, there should be Evaluation. This component becomes more important when it comes to language instruction, particularly when we know that language Evaluation may function as both motivation and reinforcement for teachers and learners. Tests, for instance, can foster the learning, emphasize the course objectives and indicate where students need to improve. For teachers, assessment will diagnose their

own efforts, show if they have been effective in their instruction, show if the instructions are clear or not and indicate if the results reflect accurately how students have been responding to their assigned work in the class (Madsen, 1983; Arter, 2009). Both assessment and teaching are interrelated. It is impossible to work in either field without being constantly concerned with the other. Tests may be constructed as devices to reinforce and motivate students' learning (Heaton, 1988).

Shaaban (2001) points out that assessment is needed to help teachers and administrators make decisions about students' linguistic abilities, their placement in appropriate levels, and their achievement. He adds that assessment becomes a diagnostic tool that provides feedback to the learner and the teacher about the suitability of the curriculum and instructional material, the effectiveness of the teaching methods and the strengths and weaknesses of the students. Furthermore, it

demonstrates to students that they are making progress, which can boost motivation. All this encourages students to do more and the teacher to work on refining the process of learning rather than its product. This is also supported by many recent research studies in the field of education that have emphasized the importance of assessment and evaluation in student learning (Arter, 2009; Brookhart & Durkin, 2003; Assessment Reform Groop, 2002; Brookhart, 2001).

Since teachers are interested in the fruit of their work during the year, attention to the evaluation should be paid. And since teaching communicatively is what we are concerned with, evaluating communicatively is what we need. Mukattash (1981) criticized evaluation practices of English in Jordan. He stated that the majority of teachers of English still resorted to tests as the sole instrument for evaluating students' achievement, despite the fact that classroom teaching learning activities were based on situations, which required real language practice. The absence of good, concrete evaluation in such situations is bound to encourage students to take their work less seriously.

Communicative language Teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. And its origins are to be found in the changes in the British language teaching dating from the late 1960s. Language was taught by practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities. The British applied linguists felt the need for focusing in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on the mere mastery of the structures. As the scope of communicative language teaching has expanded by time, teachers have come to explore pedagogical means for *real life* or *life-like* communication in the classroom. They are trying to get their learners to develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy. Teachers have also come to equip their students with tools for generating unrehearsed language performance when they leave classrooms (Brown, 1994).

Bynom (2001) mentioned that the communicative approach to language teaching has gained dominance since the late 1970s and early 1980s. Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a set of three competences: a grammatical competence, how grammatical rules are actually applied in written and oral real life situations; a sociolinguistic competence, how to use appropriate language for a given situation; and a strategic competence, how to use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. All of these competences combine to produce the communicative competence required. They add that since there was a theoretical distinction between competence and performance, the learner had to be tested not only on his/her knowledge, but also on his/ her ability to put it to use in a communicative situation. Skehan, cited in Weir (1990: 7), says that:

What we need is a theory which guides and predicts how an underlining communicative competence is manifested in actual performance; how situations are related to one another, how competence can be assessed by examples of performance on actual tests; what components communicative competence actually has; and how these interrelate… Since such definitive theories do not exist, testers have to do the best they can with such theories as are available.

Basanta (1995) holds the view that teaching and testing are inseparable aspects of the teachers' task. Furthermore, language assessment has an essential role in the development of students' communicative competence. However, this area seems to be neglected and lagged far behind developments in language teaching. English as Basanta says, is taught through communicative textbooks that provide neither accompanying tests nor any guidance for test construction. Since teachers are alone in constructing tests to measure their students' progress and performance, they write traditional grammar based items in a discrete point format that doesn't fit the communicative orientation of the textbook or the underlying teaching principles. Basanta adds that testing puts you face to face with your own effectiveness as a teacher as well as with the program, course book, materials and methods. Testing tells teachers how successful their teaching has been. It also tells students how well they are progressing, which may stimulate them to take learning more seriously. Testing can identify areas for remedial work by identifying students' strengths and weaknesses.

Weir (1990:14) points out that the only difference between teaching and testing within the communicative paradigm relates to the amount of help that is available to the student from the teacher or his/ her peers. The researcher agrees with Basanta (1995) that a test of communicative competence should test usage as well as the ability to use the language appropriately. There should be a complete harmony between teaching and testing specifications if teachers want testing to accord with teaching.

Brown (1987) elaborates on the characteristics of the communicative language tests that they have to test grammatical, discoursal, sociolinguistic, illocutionary, and strategic competences. They have to be pragmatic in that they require the learner to use language naturally for genuine communication and to relate to thoughts and feelings; i.e to put authentic language to use within context. They should be direct and should test the learner in a variety of language functions.

Brown (2005) mentioned that there are five requirements for setting up a communicative test. These include meaningful communication, authentic situation, unpredictable language input, creative language output, and integrated language skills. First, the test needs to be based on communication that is meaningful to the students, that is, it meets their personal needs. It should promote and activate language which is useful for them. Making use of authentic situations can increase the likelihood that meaningful communication will be achieved. More importantly, "language can not be meaningful if it is devoid of context" (p. 21).

Kitao and Kitao (1996) hold the view that communicative language tests are those, which make an effort to test language in a way that reflects the way language is used in real communication. The emphasis is placed on appropriateness rather than the ability to form grammatically correct sentences. And if students are encouraged to study for more communicative tasks, this can only have a positive effect on their language learning.

Thanh Ha and Phuong Anh (1999) conducted a study questioning if there was communicative language testing at the University of Economics (UE). According to the authors, the UE claimed that it had been using the communicative approach in language testing for the past few years. The study investigated two interrelated aspects of testing from the teacher's side: the UE staff's perceptions of what constituted communicative language testing, and the quality of the tests being used at the UE. The authors' methods of investigation included survey questionnaires and a systematic analysis of the content. The results showed something contrary to the claim of the UE. In other words, communicative language testing had not been effected. The study suggested that language testing practices at the UE should be standardized, and recommended using the operational framework developed for the study as a guide for constructing and validating future English language tests to be used at the UE.

Tahbub and Diab (1999) conducted a study to explore the extent to which teachers of English in primary government schools practiced the communicative approach. The sample of the study consisted of 24 English Language teachers, 9 male, and 15 female, who were selected randomly from 11 government primary schools in Amman. A 3-point observation scale was specifically developed to identify the teachers' behaviors. After attending lessons with each of the sample members and recording the teachers' behaviors, the data was analyzed, using standard descriptive statistical measures. The results of the research indicated an absence of a minimum level of adherence to the theoretical principles of the communicative approach as reflected in the teachers observed behaviors. The study also reported some problems facing the teachers in relation to the application of the communicative approach and the way student learning is evaluated and assessed.

In a study conducted by Salman (1998), the researcher tried to pursue the correlation between teachers' attitudes towards the communicative approach and teachers' implementation of the approach inside the English Language classroom; taking into consideration variables such as the educational settings, teachers' experience, the students' level, the region and gender variables. The sample of the study consisted of 70 male and female English teachers in public schools in the Northern districts of the West Bank. The findings showed that teachers' attitudes towards the communicative approach and their degree of implementation proved to be positive. Results also proved that there was a strong correlation between teachers' attitudes and their implementation of the communicative approach.

To conclude, one can notice from this review that very few studies were conducted on the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation. However, all the above-mentioned studies seemed to indicate that teachers to some extent do teach communicatively. But evaluating students communicatively is still ineffective. Further, few studies have been conducted on the congruence between English teaching and assessment practices, especially in EFL settings, and there seems to be a gap between what teachers teach and what they really assess and evaluate.

Statement of the Problem

In the 1980s, the Ministry of Education in Jordan introduced comprehensive changes in its Educational system encompassing educational programs, teaching materials, teacher education, curricula and evaluation. It

adopted a learner-centered approach with a notional functional orientation, paying special attention to values and content, recommending techniques for teaching English language skills to Jordanian learners and suggesting formal and informal methods of evaluation. The guidelines of English Language Curriculum defines evaluation as the process of finding out whether or not and to what degree pupils have achieved a set of specific objectives. It is also stated that the content and methods used in the process of evaluation must be in harmony with the stated behavioral objectives of the course. Such important objectives should be reflected in evaluation tasks in order to make achievements of evaluation valid and meaningful. Communicative language evaluation aims at assessing the student's communicative ability when he/she is put in a certain social context. It concentrates on language use rather than usage (Jordan's Ministry of Education, 1990).

English Language curriculum in Jordan is supposed or designed to be based on the communicative approach. The teaching practices indicate that teachers use the communicative approach. However, the question that may arise here is: do assessment practices of English Language teachers in Jordanian schools reflect what they teach?

Despite the fact that EFL teachers are supposed to teach English communicatively, actual assessment practices do not seem to be so. It appears that there is a lack of congruence between the way teachers teach and the way they evaluate students' learning. Hence comes the importance of a research study that explores whether Jordanian EFL teachers are aware of communicative language assessment. The present study aims to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language assessment practices.

Purpose and Questions of the Study

Most of the English language assessment practices at Jordanian schools appear to take the form of formal testing. Such formal assessment may reflect the lack of teachers' knowledge of communicative language assessment. Thus, it is believed that a study that investigates how EFL teachers perceive communicative language evaluation is necessary. The present study aims to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation. More specifically, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are Jordanian EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation?

2. Are there any statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation due to gender?

3. Are there any statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation due to qualification?

4. Are there any statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation due to experience?

Significance of the Study

As noted above, there seems to be a wide gap between the way teachers teach English and the way they assess their students. This study could be the first of its kind in Jordan, which deals with teachers' awareness of communicative language evaluation. It is true that most Jordanian EFL teachers have been fully prepared to teach English in a communicative way. However, they fail to realize the reason for their students' poor achievement, which could be ascribed to teachers' practices of evaluation. The significance of the study stems from the fact that English language assessment practices in schools seem to sacrifice communicative competence or fluency in favor of the linguistic competence or accuracy. Such mismatch may threaten the reliability, validity, practicality and authenticity of the evaluation process.

Operational Definitions of Terms

Upper Basic Education Stage refers to the 8th, 9th and 10th grades at governmental schools in Jordan.

Communicative Language Evaluation refers to assessment practices EFL teachers are supposed to use in classrooms that are based on communicative language teaching, and involve alternative assessment techniques other than formal tests.

Limitation of the Study

The generalization of the findings of the study is limited to the responses of a sample of 51 upper basic stage teachers of English Language in governmental schools in the City of Madaba in Jordan.

METHOD AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all male and female English Language teachers of the Upper Basic Education Stage in the government schools in the City of

Madaba in Jordan. There were 91 teachers distributed in 33 schools: 44 male teachers in 15 male schools and 47 female teachers in 18 female schools.

With regard to sampling, two samples participated in the present study. The first sample consisted of 25 teachers who were requested to respond to an open questionnaire. The second sample of the study consisted of 51 teachers who participated in responding to a closed questionnaire.

Instrumentation

As indicated above, two surveys were used in the present study to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of the communicative language evaluation. While the first survey comprised one open-ended question, the second comprised seventy closed items seeking information about communicative language evaluation with respect to the four language skills. The first questionnaire requested teachers to say what methods or ways of evaluation they use in evaluating their students in the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The purpose of this questionnaire was to help develop the closed questionnaire, the main research instrument of the present study. The closed questionnaire asked participant teachers to check the extent or degree to which they perceived themselves apply communicative language assessment in evaluating their students in the four skills. A five-point scale was used, where always represented 5, usually 4, sometimes 3, rarely 2, and never 1.

With respect to *validity*, the first survey was revised and edited, then it was piloted with five EFL teachers to check if there was any ambiguity. The respondents' comments indicated no difficulty with the wording of the survey. On the other hand, as part of the initial development of the second questionnaire, the researchers consulted a jury of ten people: six of them were university faculty members specializing in TEFL at the University of Jordan and Al-Zaytouneh University, two supervisors of English and two experienced English language teachers. The experts' comments were taken into consideration.

Regarding the *reliability* of the second questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each dimension or skill. The reliability coefficients ranged between 0.87 for the listening skill, 0.89 for the reading skill, 0.91 for the speaking skill, and 0.92 for the writing skill.

Research Procedures

To conduct the present study, the following procedures were done:

1. The researchers distributed the first questionnaire to the schools a month before distributing the second one.
2. The researchers reviewed teachers' answers on how they evaluated their students in the four language skills.
3. The researchers developed the second questionnaire based on readings in communicative approach evaluation, and teachers' answers to the first questionnaire.
4. A month later, the researchers distributed the second questionnaire.
5. The researchers contacted the principals of the schools and explained the purpose of the study to them.
6. The researchers met the English teachers at schools, and explained the objectives and the procedures of the questionnaire.
7. The participant teachers answered the questionnaire according to their own beliefs and practices.
8. The questionnaire was coded and then the data were analyzed statistically.

Research Design and Statistical Analysis

The present study is both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative part was represented in the first part of the study, where 25 participants had to answer in writing an open-ended question on the assessment practices of English Language teaching. The quantitative part was represented in completing the closed questionnaires (70 items) by 51 teachers. While the first part was analyzed using frequencies and percentages, the second part was analyzed statistically, using mean scores, standard deviations, t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

FINDINGS

Findings Based on the First Questionnaire

The question of the first survey questionnaire asked EFL teachers about the ways and methods which they used in evaluating their students, with respect to the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Responses to the question were examined to find out if there were certain patterns of the methods used in evaluation. Table 1 shows the results of this investigation.

Table (1)
Percentages of teachers' responses to the open questionnaire (N= 25)

	Part One: Speaking skill	**No. of teachers out of 25**	**Percentage %**
1	I encourage my students to speak regardless of their grammatical errors.	6	24%
2	I ask my students to talk about familiar topics for a limited duration of time.	3	12%
3	I ask my students to participate in a dialogue, a debate, and a classroom conversation.	6	24%
4	I use role-plays in my class	4	16%
5	I ask my students to say what is going to happen in pictures.	8	32%
6	I encourage my students to express themselves using their own words.	4	16%
7	I ask my students to describe certain pictures in the textbook or in other resources.	2	8%
	Part Two: Reading skill		
8	I ask my students to read carefully and answer inferential questions.	14	56%
9	I ask my students to read aloud.	8	32%
10	I check my students' pronunciation.	4	16%
11	I ask my students to identify the main idea or ideas in a paragraph or an article.	1	4%
	Part Three: Writing skill		
12	I ask my students to write answers to questions on a dialogue.	2	8%
13	I ask my students to write a summary.	5	20%
14	I ask my students to write letters.	4	16%
15	I ask my students to write free writing.	2	8%
16	I ask my students to write paragraphs by expanding notes or guidelines.	11	44%
17	I give my students a dictation test.	5	20%
18	I encourage my students to write essays, fiction and poetry.	2	8%
19	I ask my students to use words in meaningful sentences.	3	12%
	Part Four: Listening skill		
20	I ask my students to listen to a dialogue, a story or a conversation, and then answer some questions on it.	21	84%
21	I ask my students to pay attention to stress and intonation.	1	4%
22	I ask my students to listen to the radio broadcasts or to television shows to get some expressions used.	1	4%
23	I ask my students to take notes.	1	4%

Looking at Part One (speaking) of Table 1, it is noted that 32% of teachers say that they ask their students what is going to happen in pictures. 24% of teachers mention that they ask their students to participate in a dialogue, a debate and classroom conversation. Also, the same percentage encourages their students to speak regardless of grammatical mistakes. In contrast, only 4% of those teachers encourage their students to participate in oral interviews.

The distribution of responses on Part Two (reading) appears to show that 56% of the teachers ask their students to read carefully and answer inferential questions but only 4% ask their students to identify the main idea or ideas of a paragraph or an article.

Part Three is concerned with writing. The findings indicate that 44% of the teachers ask their students to write paragraphs by expanding notes or guidelines.

It is apparent from Part Four (listening) that 84% of the teachers reported that they asked their students to listen to a dialogue, a story or a conversation to answer questions on it while the other four statements scored only 4%.

As has already been noted, the highest percentage was for the listening skill. (84% mentioned that they asked

their students to listen to a dialogue, a story or a conversation as to answer some questions on it). On the other hand, the lowest percentage was shared by the speaking skill, (4% of the sample said that they encouraged their students to participate in oral interviews), reading skill (4% of the sample said that they asked their students to identify the main idea or ideas in a paragraph or an article) and listening skill (4% of the sample mentioned that they asked their students to pay attention to stress and intonation. Also 4% asked their students to listen to the radio broadcasts or to television shows to get some expressions used. Further, 4% used dictation to measure their students' listening comprehension).

With regard to the writing skill, the percentages ranged between 8% for Item 12 (I ask my students to

write answers to questions on a dialogue), Item 15 (I ask my students to write free writing) and Item18 (I encourage my students to write essays, fiction and poetry), and 44% for Item 16 (I ask my students to write paragraphs by expanding notes or guidelines).

Findings Based on the Closed Questionnaire

For further examination of the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language assessment, a closed questionnaire, which was partly based on the data collected through the previous open questionnaire and mainly on the related literature, was used as a main research instrument. This survey questionnaire comprised 70 closed items. Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 show the mean scores and standard deviations of EFL teachers' responses to the second questionnaire.

Table (2)

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of EFL teachers' responses to the speaking skill (N=51)

Speaking Skill	Mean scores	Std Deviation
1. Encouraging students to speak regardless of grammatical errors	4.06	.81
2. Focusing on fluency rather than accuracy	3.37	1.07
3. Asking students direct questions	4.04	.75
4. Discussing problem-solving activities	4.02	1.08
5. Asking students to describe pictures	4.30	.93
6. Asking students to say events of pictures	3.96	1.15
7. Asking students to continue story	3.26	1.01
8. Giving students chance to end a story	3.29	1.05
9. Using maps, charts and graphs to check specking	3.54	1.01
10. Asking students to describe events	3.80	.88
11. Asking students to read aloud	4.35	.880
12. Asking students to imitate what they read	3.65	1.09
13. Using role-plays	3.63	1.23
14. Asking my students open-ended questions	3.45	1.29
15. Encouraging students to participate in oral interviews	4.06	1.06
16. Asking students to participate in dialogues, debates	4.33	.84
17. Asking students to narrate stories or tell jokes	3.00	1.11
18. Asking students to give instructions orally	3.27	.96
19. Asking students to talk about familiar topics	3.51	.95
20. Allowing students to engage in formal talks or speeches	3.35	1.06
21. Encouraging students to express themselves using their own words	4.20	.92
TOTAL	3.73	.59

Looking at the means and the standard deviations in the table above, we notice that EFL teachers' perceptions of the communicative language evaluation in the speaking skill were ranging between 3.00 and 4.35 out of 5. This shows positive understanding of communicative language

evaluation. Except for a few statements, most teachers' responses were above 3.50. The highest mean score (Item 11 - I ask my students to read aloud) was 4.35, followed by Item 16 (I ask my students to participate in a dialogue, a debate, and a classroom conversation) with a mean score of

4.33 and the lowest was 3.00 (Item 17: I ask students to   narrate stories or tell jokes).

Table (3)

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of EFL teachers' responses to the Reading Skill (N=51)

Reading skill	Mean scores	Std Deviation
22. Asking students to read then answer inferential questions	4.49	.70
23. Asking students to skim and answer general questions	4.31	.84
24. Asking students to scan and answer specific questions	4.30	.91
25. Asking students to read an unfamiliar passage orally	3.25	1.21
26. Asking students to answer questions on the contents	4.39	.87
27. Asking students to give definitions or explanations	4.10	.85
28. Providing students with selected forms, advertisements	3.16	1.10
29. Using paraphrase questions to check students comprehension	3.72	.97
30. Using reading cloze tests	3.41	.96
31. Asking students to identify the main idea or ideas in a paragraph or article	4.18	.87
32. Asking students to infer the meaning of new vocabularies from the context	4.27	.78
33. Checking students reading speed	3.51	1.07
34. Asking students to distinguish the writer's purpose	3.10	1.01
35. Asking students to be aware of the contextual relationships in the text	3.29	1.17
36.Asking students to read critically and comment on what they read	3.37	1.08
TOTAL	3.79	.63

It is obvious from the table above that teachers' perceptions of the communicative language evaluation in the reading skill ranged between 3.10 and 4.49. This shows convenient perceptions of communicative evaluation in the reading skill. Item 22 (I ask my students to read carefully and answer inferential questions) with 4.49 mean score registered the highest degree or level of teachers' perceptions in this skill. The lowest mean score was 3.10 (Item 34: I as my students to distinguish the writer's purpose).

Table (4)

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of EFL teachers' responses to the Writing Skill (N=51)

Writing skill	Mean scores	Std Deviation
37. Asking students to punctuate a piece of writing correctly.	4.29	.86
38. Asking students to write full words for numerals, symbols and abbreviations.	3.51	1.01
39. Asking students to write paragraphs by expanding notes	3.88	.89
40. Asking students to write a short text using information	3.76	1.03
41. Asking students to write short notes on a longer text.	3.49	1.03
42. Asking students to write a summary of texts.	3.47	1.00
43. Asking students to write formal and informal letters	3.53	1.08
44. Asking students to extract information from a text and express it in a tabular or a graphic form.	2.96	1.15
45. Asking students to construct sentences from scrambled words.	3.35	1.06
46. Asking students to put dialogue sentences in the correct order.	3.67	1.13
47. Asking students to write answers to questions on a dialogue.	4.08	.91
48. Asking students to translate from their native language into the target language and vice versa.	3.27	1.30
49. Asking students to change a narrative form into a dialogue.	2.73	1.10
50. Asking students to rewrite a story from another person's point of view.	2.68	1.04
51. Asking students to rewrite a passage, changing tenses of verbs.	3.20	1.02
52. Asking students to formulate questions on a passage.	3.30	.89

Writing skill	Mean scores	Std Deviation
53. Asking students to create situations	2.82	1.01
54. Giving students a cloze test.	3.29	1.01
55. Encouraging students to write essays, fiction and poetry.	2.98	1.27
56. Asking students to join sentences using connectives, coordinators and adverbials.	3.70	.97
57. Asking students to make a written description of a picture	3.70	.99
58. Giving students a dictation test.	4.06	1.01
59. Asking my students to write freely on a familiar topic.	3.78	1.08
TOTAL	3.46	.60

It is apparent from Table 4 that the means and standard deviations show that teachers' perceptions of the communicative language evaluation in the writing skill were more varied and ranging between 2.68 and 4.29.

The highest mean score was 4.29 (Item 37: I ask my students to punctuate a piece of writing correctly) and the lowest mean score was 2.68 (Item 50: I ask my students to rewrite a story from another person's point of view).

Table (5)

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of EFL teachers' responses to the Listening Skill (N=51)

Listening skill	Mean	Std Deviation
60. Asking students to listen to a dialogue, a story or a conversation to answer some questions on it.	4.24	1.01
61. Asking students to listen to the radio broadcasts or to television shows to get used to English pronunciation.	3.37	1.15
62. Asking students to listen to the radio broadcasts or to television shows to get some expressions used.	3.29	1.24
63. Giving oral instructions that my students have to follow.	4.35	.77
64. Observing the quality of students' interaction through their gestures, questions and comments in participating in oral activities.	4.00	1.04
65. Asking students to indicate whether two sounds are the same or different.	3.82	1.18
66. Asking students to tick words of the same rhyme.	3.82	1.12
67. Asking students to pay attention to stress and intonation.	3.76	1.03
68. Using authentic texts to assess listening comprehension.	3.18	1.05
69. Using dictation to measure my students' listening comprehension.	3.63	1.31
70. Asking students to take notes.	3.90	1.17
TOTAL	3.75	.72

Looking at the means and the standard deviations in the table above, we can see that teachers' perceptions of the communicative language evaluation in the listening skill were ranging between 3.18 and 4.35. Item 63 (I give oral instructions that my students have to follow) scored the highest mean score (4.35). This is followed by Item 60 (I ask my students to listen to a dialogue, a story or a conversation to answer some questions on it) with a mean score of 4.24. The lowest mean score was 3.18 for Item 68 (I use authentic texts to assess listening comprehension.

Table 6 and Table 7 respectively show the results of the t-test of EFL participant teachers' perceptions

according to gender and qualification.

As can be noted in Table 6, there were no statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) in the participant teachers' perceptions of communicative language assessment that can be ascribed to gender.

As can be seen in the above table, there were no statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of the communicative language evaluation that can be ascribed to qualification.

Table 8 shows the results of the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for EFL teachers' perceptions with respect to their experience.

Table (6)

Results of the T-Test of EFL participant teachers' perceptions with respect to gender (N=51)

Skill	Gender				t-test for Equality of Means	
	Male		Female			
	Mean	Std Deviation	Mean	Std Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Listening	3.72	.75	3.77	.72	-.24	.80
Speaking	3.60	.58	3.82	.59	-1.3	.20
Reading	3.58	.60	3.93	.61	-2.0	.05
Writing	3.31	.53	3.57	.64	-1.5	.13
TOTAL	3.52	.54	3.75	.57	-1.5	.15

Degree of freedom (d.f) = 49.

Table (7)

Results of the T-Test of EFL participant teachers' perceptions with respect to qualification (N=51)

Skill	Qualification				t-test for Equality of Means	
	English Literature (N=30)		TEFL Specialists (N=21)			
	Mean	Std Deviation	Mean	Std Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Listening	3.73	.68	3.77	.80	-.18	.86
Speaking	3.68	.50	3.81	.70	-.80	.43
Reading	3.76	.56	3.83	.72	-.38	.70
Writing	3.40	.51	3.55	.73	-.86	.40
TOTAL	3.61	.49	3.72	.67	-.67	.51

Degree of freedom (d.f) = 49

Table (8)

Results of One-way Analysis of Variance of EFL participant teachers' perceptions with respect to experience (N=51)

Skill	1-4 years		5-10 years		> 10 years		TOTAL	
	Means	Std. Deviations	Means	Std. Deviations	Means	Std. Deviations	Means	Std. Deviations
Listening	3.73	.62	4.01	.61	3.63	.88	3.75	.72
Speaking	3.72	.38	3.67	.67	3.77	.76	3.73	.59
Reading	3.80	.46	3.89	.67	3.73	.78	3.79	.63
Writing	3.38	.38	3.58	.64	3.48	.79	3.46	.60
TOTAL	3.63	.35	3.74	.59	3.65	.75	3.66	.57

		Sum of Squares	d.f	Mean square	F	Sig
Listening TOTAL	Between Groups	.949	2	.474	.899	.414
	Within Groups	25.319	48	.527		
	Total	26.268	50			
Speaking TOTAL	Between Groups	.076	2	.038	.104	.901
	Within Groups	17.355	48	.362		
	Total	17.430	50			
Reading	Between Groups	.158	2	.079	.195	.823

TOTAL	Within Groups	19.443	48	.405		
	Total	19.601	50			
Writing TOTAL	Between Groups	.296	2	.148	.395	.676
	Within Groups	17.963	48	.374		
	Total	18.259	50			
TOTAL	Between Groups	.09	2	.045	.135	.874
	Within Groups	15.959	48	.332		
	Total	16.049	50			

As is seen in Table 8, the results of the One-way analysis of variance showed that there were no statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) in the participant teachers' perceptions of the communicative language evaluation that can be ascribed to experience.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the present study are discussed and interpreted with reference to the questions of the study. As noted above, the study used two questionnaires: an open-ended questionnaire and a closed one. Section 5.1 is concerned with the discussion of findings based on the first questionnaire. Section 5.2 discusses the findings based on the second questionnaire.

Discussion of the Findings Based on the First Questionnaire

As noted in Table 1, teachers do not appear to be fully aware of communicative language assessment. This finding comes opposite to what the guidelines of the English Language curriculum in the Basic Stage expect from EFL teachers.

This finding is consistent with the findings of a number of research studies conducted in the field of communicative language which showed that EFL teacher' practices do not appear to be relevant to the communicative approach (Tahbub and Diab, 1999; Thanh Ha and Phuong Anh, 1999; Sauvignon and Wang, 2003).

However, the purpose of the open-ended questionnaire was to help develop the second and main research tool, the closed questionnaire. In what follows is the discussion of findings based on the second questionnaire.

Discussion of Findings Based on the Second Questionnaire

The second questionnaire in the present study was intended to deal with how EFL teachers perceive communicative language assessment, and whether gender, qualification and experience have an effect on their perceptions of communicative language assessment.

4.2.1 Discussion of findings relating to the first question: What are Jordanian EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language assessment?

The first question tried to find out EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation. The results of the data collected, presented in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 indicated that teachers show positive perceptions. This can be revealed through the total mean score which is 3.66 out of 4 for the four skills together: listening, speaking, reading and writing. More specifically, the total score of the participant teachers' perceptions of communicative language evaluation with respect to the speaking skill was 3.73 out of 5.00, indicating positive perceptions. For the reading skill, the mean score was 3.79 out of 5.00, which also indicates that the EFL teachers' perceptions were positive. With regard to the listening skill, the mean score was 3.75 our of 5.00, which is also positive. However, the total mean score of the writing skill seems to be a little problematic since it is 3.46 out of 5.00. This may indicate that the participant teachers' perceptions of this skill are not as positive as of the other language skills. This finding could be attributed to the EFL teachers' use of traditional techniques in teaching the writing skill. They do not, for instance, focus on functional writing such as writing reports, filling out applications, and responding to advertisements; most of the topics assigned in the writing lessons focus on expository writing.

4.2.2 Discussions of findings relating to the second question: Are there any statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language assessment that are ascribed to gender?

The results of the statistical analysis of the collected data, presented in Table 6, show that there were no

statistically significant differences in the participant teachers' perceptions of the communicative language evaluation that can be ascribed to gender. This may indicate that male and female teachers are aware of communicative methods of assessments regardless of the gender variable. This finding may be justified when we know that all male and female teachers have similar training courses both at the pre- and in-service levels.

4.2.3. Discussions of findings relating to the third question: Are there any statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language assessment that are ascribed to qualification?

The results of the statistical analysis of the collected data, presented in Table 7, show that there were no statistically significant differences in the participant teachers' perceptions of the communicative language evaluation that can be ascribed to qualification. This finding may be attributed to the participant teachers' use of the same teachers' book, which is provided for them by the Ministry of Education.

4.2.4. Discussions of findings relating to the fourth question: Are there any statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) in the EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative language assessment that are ascribed to

experience?

No statistically significant differences appear to be ascribed to experience. Since the Ministry of Education adopted the communicative approach in the mid 1980s, teachers began to think of what they were doing in class. This awareness is believed to enhance teachers' perceptions of the communicative language evaluation. All newly-appointed teachers are supposed to have in-service training programs conducted by the Ministry of Education. Such programs and courses provide novice teachers with practical steps of teaching and assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the present study, it is recommended that:

1. Teachers of English need to emphasize the communicative methods of evaluations. Equipping Teachers with strategies and providing them with techniques might encourage them to become more aware users of communicative strategies of evaluation.

2. Further studies should be conducted in this field, that may explore EFL teachers' actual use of communicative language evaluation.

REFERENCES

Arter, J. 2009. Classroom assessment for student learning (CASL) perspective on the JCSEE student evaluation standards. Paper presented at AERA 2009 in the Division H Symposium, *JCSEE National Conference on Benchmarking Student Evaluation Practices*.

Basanta, C.P. 1995. Coming to grips with progress testing: some guidelines for its design, *Forum*, 33(3): 55.

Retrieved May 13, 2004, from http:// exchanges.state.gov/ forum/ vols/ vol33/ no3/ p55.htm.

Brookhart, S.M. 2001. Successful students' formative and summative uses of assessment information, *Assessment in Education*, 8(2): 153-169.

Brookhart, S.M. and Durkin, D. 2003. Classroom assessment, student motivation, and achievement in high school social studies classes, *Applied Measurement in Education*, 16(1): 27-54.

Brown, H.D. 1987. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall.

Brown, H.D. 1994. *Teaching by principles: An interaction approach to language pedagogy*, New York: Prentice Hall

Regents.

Bynom, A. 2001. Testing Basic concepts: Basic Terminology, *English Teaching Professional*, No. (20). Retrieved April 20, 2004, from www3. telus.net/ linguisticsissues/ testing.htm.

Canale, M. and Swain, M. 1980. Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to second language teaching and testing, *Applied linguistics*, L.1(1): 1-47.

Heaton, J.B. 1988. *Writing English Language Tests*, (2ⁿᵈ ed). London: Longman.

Kitao, S. and Kitao, K. 1996. Testing Communicative Competence, *Internet TESL Journal*, 2(5). Retrieved January 2, 2005, from http:// iteslj.org/ Articles.org/ Kitao-Testing.html.

Madsen, H.S. 1983. *Techniques in Testing*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Ministry of Education. 1990. *English language curriculum and its general guidelines for the basic education stage*, Amman: Jordan: Central Press.

Mukattash, L. 1981. The evaluation and testing of English in Jordan: A Critique, *ELT Journal*, 35(4): 450-454.

Salman, S. 1998. *Teachers' Attitudes Towards the use of the*

communicative and its effect on the implementation of teaching English inside classes at public schools in the northern districts of the west bank, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, AN-Najah National University, Nablus.

Savignon, S.J. and Wang, C. (2003). Communicative language teaching in EFL contexts: learner attitudes and perceptions, *IRAL*, 41(3): 223-249.

Shaaban, K. 2001. Assessment of young learners. *Forum*, 39(4), p. 16, Retrieved May 3, 2004, from http:// exchanges. state. gov/ forum/ vols/ vol39/ no4/ p16.htm.

Tahbub, M. & Diab, T. 1999. The communicative Approach as practiced by teachers of English for the Basic Stage in Jordan: an Analytical Study, *Dirasat Journal*, 26 (1): 128-141.

Thanh Ha, N. Th and Phuong Anh, V. Th. 1999. Is there communicative language testing at the university of Economics? The fourth international conference on language and development, Hanoi, Vietnam. Retrieved November 12, 2004, from http:// www. languages. ait.ac.th/ hanoi/ nttha. htm.

Thompson. G. 1996. Some misconceptions about communicative language teaching, *ELT Journal*, 50(1): 9-15.

Weir, C.J. 1990. *Communicative Language Testing*, London: Prentice Hall International.

*

51   25   (76)   .
                                    :   .
                                                                         .1
                            (0.05=α)   .2

                            (0   05 = α)   .3

                            (0   05 = α)   .4

(T-   )
                                        (ANOVA)   Test
05 =α)   .
                                                      (0
                                    .

                                    .
                                            :
                                    .