The Practice of Formative Assessment by Indonesian Vocational School’s English Teachers during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Bukhori 1, Siti Amaliah 2
1Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau
2Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau
E-mail: bukhori@uin-suska.ac.id

Abstract

This study aimed to describe how Indonesian vocational school’s English teachers implemented formative assessment methods amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data was gathered through interviews. Two English teachers from one of public vocational school in Rokan Hulu Regency, Indonesia participated in the study. The data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman three-step process, which included data condensation or reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. The findings revealed that vocational school’s English teachers utilized both online and offline formative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Online formative assessment was implemented by using Google Classroom and Google Forms, while offline methods included quizzes, questioning and group discussions, short-answer tasks, listening cloze, role play, reading aloud, mind mapping, and dialogue writing. The teachers encountered various challenges in implementing these assessments, such as a lack of human resources, limited internet connectivity in students’ homes, and some students lacking access to mobile devices. Additionally, student engagement and motivation were identified as concerns. Nevertheless, the teachers devised solutions to overcome these obstacles, including providing Wi-Fi in designated areas, encouraging students to use their parents’ or friends’ devices, and actively engaging with less interested students.

Keywords: Formative Assessment, English Teachers, COVID-19 Pandemic

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana guru sekolah kejuruan di Indonesia menerapkan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara. Dua guru Bahasa Inggris dari satu sekolah kejuruan di Kecamatan Rokan Hulu, Indonesia, berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Proses analisis data mengikuti langkah-langkah Miles dan Huberman, yang meliputi pengurangan data, penampiran data, dan menarik dan memverifikasi kesimpulan. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa guru sekolah kejuruan menggunakan metode tes formatif online dan offline saat pandemi COVID-19. Metode pengujian online meliputi penggunaan Google Classroom dan Google Forms,
sementara metode pengujian offline mencakup quiz, pengajuan pertanyaan, diskusi kelompok, tugas dengan jawaban singkat, tes cloze mendengarkan, role play, membaca nyaring, pembuatan mind map, dan penulisan dialog. Guru menemui berbagai tantangan dalam menerapkan ini, seperti kekurangan sumber daya manusia, keterbatasan koneksi internet di rumah siswa, dan beberapa siswa tidak memiliki akses ke perangkat telepon seluler. Selain itu, keterlibatan dan motivasi siswa juga menjadi perhatian. Namun demikian, guru mengembangkan solusi untuk mengatasi masalah ini, seperti memberikan Wi-Fi di ruang tertentu, mendorong siswa untuk menggunakan perangkat mereka atau perangkat orang tua mereka, dan secara aktif terlibat membantu siswa yang minat belajarnya rendah.

Kata kunci: Pengujian Formatif, Guru Bahasa Inggris, Pandemi COVID-19

Introduction

Formative assessment holds significant influence in today's curriculum. It involves evaluating students' competencies and skills through an ongoing process that aims to shape their progress and facilitate further growth. This assessment method is employed to identify students' learning needs, comprehension levels, and advancements in specific learning modules. By utilizing formative assessment, teachers can identify areas where students struggle and make necessary adjustments to the curriculum. This approach involves teachers engaging with students' thinking, making judgments about their level of understanding, and using the obtained information to meet the established learning objectives.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia in 2020 has caused significant disruptions in various aspects of education, including the evaluation process. Prior to the pandemic, teachers had the convenience of assessing their students through real-time evaluation during face-to-face interactions, allowing them to monitor their progress effectively. However, in the context of offline learning, teachers have had to adjust their assessment approaches. As a result of the shift to online learning, teachers have modified their assessment methods accordingly. One prevalent approach in measuring student

---

progress during online learning is through the assignment of exercises\(^6\).

Formative assessment proves to be a valuable tool in both online and offline learning settings, as emphasized by Evriana\(^7\). Given the circumstances of the pandemic era, teachers have commonly employed formative evaluations by assigning tasks and quizzes to their students\(^8\). In the realm of online education, the term "online formative assessment" refers to an evaluation method wherein students employ online resources to assess their own understanding\(^9\). In terms of formative evaluation, the process remains largely similar whether students are engaged in online or in-person learning, with the notable difference being the utilization of media or technology with an internet connection\(^10\).

Based on the explanation above, an investigation how the English teachers implemented online and offline formative assessment during COVID-19 pandemic is crucial. However, limited studies on implementation of formative assessment during COVID-19 pandemic especially in Indonesian context are found. In this regard, most of previous studies focused on perception of online formative assessment conducted at Secondary School, Junior High School, Primary School and University (e.g. Astiandani & Anam, 2021., Kristiyanti, et.al, 2021., Remmi & Hashim, 2021., Tran & Ma, 2021., Alharbi, et.al, 2021); perspective and practice on online formative assessment conducted at University and Senior High School (e.g. Yulianto & Mujtahid, 2021., Nurfiqah & Yusuf, 2020); the implementation of online formative assessment (e.g. Kristiyanti, 2021); Conception of online formative assessment conducted at Junior High School (e.g. Listyowati, et.al, 2021); attitudes toward online formative assessment conducted at Senior High School (Anisa, 2021); formative assessment and self-regulated during pandemic era conducted at Junior and Senior High School (e.g. Fatmawati, et.al, 2021); impact of online formative assessment conducted at University (e.g. Nhu & Thin, 2019); formative assessment performed in the pandemic era conducted at Senior High School (e.g. Robiasih & Lestari, 2021); and developing online formative assessment conducted at Senior High School (e.g. Puspitayani, 2020).

Moreover, other studies concern on formative assessment during offline learning and perception of formative assessment conducted at Vocational High School and University (e.g. Akter & Khan, 2020., Wijaya, 2022); formative assessment in EFL classroom conducted at University and Senior High School (e.g. Widiastuti & Saukah, 2017); formative


\(^8\)Hasti Robiasih & Titi Lestari, Formative Assessment Performed by High School Teachers in the Pandemic Era. (Serang: Loquen: English Studies Journal, 2020) p. 80-87.


assessments strategy conducted at University (e.g. Milawati, 2017); the implementation of formative assessment conducted at Secondary School (e.g. Nurhayati, 2020); formative assessment used by teachers conducted at Junior High School (e.g. Pertiwi, et.al, 2021); understanding formative assessment (e.g. Ridhwan, 2017); investigating formative assessment (e.g. Suherman, 2019); beliefs and practices of formative assessment conducted at University (e.g. Guadu & Boersma, 2018); impact of formative assessment conducted at University (e.g. Sahibzada & Himat, 2019); attitudes and competence in formative assessment conducted at Senior High School (e.g. Rachmawati & Purwati, 2021); and formative assessment tools conducted at University (e.g. Alharbi & Meccawy, 2020).

Drawing from the preceding explanation, the researcher established the problem using the following inquiries: a) How did English teachers carry out online and offline formative assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic? b) What challenges did English teachers encounter while implementing online and offline formative assessments? To answer the research questions, this research will use the following conceptual framework.

**Figure 1**
Formative assessment in online and offline English learning

**Method**

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design to explore the implementation of formative assessment by English teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research was conducted at one of vocational high schools in Rokan Hulu,
Riau. The selection of this location was based on identified issues concerning formative assessments conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Purposive sampling was used to select two English teachers as participants for this study. These teachers were actively involved in implementing both online and offline formative assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data was collected through interviews and documentation. The researcher utilized the Miles and Huberman data analysis technique, which involves three steps: data condensation or reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions.

Findings dan Discussion

The result of analysis indicated that the English teachers applied online and offline formative assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Online formative assessment

During COVID-19 pandemic, the English teachers used some applications and e-learning platforms in doing formative assessment such as google classroom, google form, and WhatsApp. Specifically, English teacher 1 used google classroom and google forms as an E-learning platform, WhatsApp as an application as well as cellphone, laptop and supporting books for online formative assessment tools. The teacher stated:

Talking about the tool, first, we use a laptop, cellphone, network, then supporting books. Then also with various applications, such as google forms, google classroom and we also need a WhatsApp group.11

Similarly, English teacher 2 also used Google classroom as an E-learning platform for online formative assessment tools. Initially, teacher 2 used WhatsApp as an online formative assessment application. Because it was not optimal for online formative assessment, he finally switched to use Google classroom for online formative assessment tools. The teacher commented:

The first thing was that we went online at the time, we used a WA group, shared video links there, sent assignments through there too. But then, students are rotated to enter. For example, Monday class A-A, Tuesday for example class B-B who enter. When they went to class, they brought the tasks that had been given through the WhatsApp group that had just been submitted. We detect that such activities are less than optimal. Because in the WhatsApp group, the more chats will be buried. Then we switched to google classroom, using the drive, first uploaded to the drive and then submitted in google classroom. 12

In implementing online formative assessment the English teachers faced some constraints. The constraints were lack of human resources, network and electricity constraints. In this regard, the teacher mentioned several constrains experienced by him

11Teacher 1. Interview. Rokan Hulu: September 2022
12Teacher 2. Interview. Rokan Hulu: September 2022
and students in online formative assessment tools. It comprised the lack of human resources in editing videos that were more interesting for learning and network constraints because the area around the school network was indeed difficult. Teacher 1 commented:

Yes, of course, we still lack human resources. For example, in editing videos that are more interesting, we still have limitations. Constraints in the network too. Understandably in this area of the village, especially around this school, the cellular network is indeed difficult. Luckily we have wifi here. Sometimes the problem is turning off the lights. Sometimes we can send a good network, the problem is the same with the children. Sometimes there are those whose territory or village doesn’t even have a network. There are also those who say the package is out of stock. There are also those who do not have a cellphone. They have to borrow a parent’s cellphone or a neighbor’s cellphone.13

Another teacher faced several constraints in implementing online formative assessment. He described that sometimes when the lights went out, the network would disappear and online learning activities would also be disrupted. Moreover, there was once a Telkomsel network fire, so assignments could not be uploaded and could not communicate anything with students. Then there were areas where students did not have a network, students did not have internet packages and some did not have cellphone. Teacher 2 said:

The constraints is sometimes like this, when the lights went out. At the time, there was also a Telkomsel network fire, so we couldn’t upload assignments, couldn’t communicate anything with students. Then, there are student areas where there is no network. Sometimes the reason is that they don’t have packages, there are also students who don’t have cellphone.14

To overcome the aforementioned problems related to online formative assessment, the teachers did some actions. Teacher 1 said that the school has made wifi for certain rooms. If the constraints were from the students themselves, such as not having a cellphone, it was recommended to be able to use a parent’s or friend’s cellphone. The teacher commented:

To overcome those constraints, if we are at this school with a cellular network, our school has made wifi for certain rooms, for example in the office and then the library. But not all rooms reach the network. So the solution is like that. And if it’s a problem from children who don’t have cellphone, we suggest trying to use a parent’s cellphone or a friend’s cellphone15

Meanwhile, teacher 2 overcame the constraints such as the problem of the Telkomsel network being burned, the learning was delayed so it would be repeated again. What should have been taught this week was finally delivered on the next week. The

13Teacher 1. Interview. Rokan Hulu: September 2022
14Teacher 2. Interview. Rokan Hulu: September 2022
15Teacher 1. Interview. Rokan Hulu: September 2022
teacher explained:

To overcome this, if it was a network problem, such as the fire earlier, it would be repeated again. In the end, it was delayed. What should have been taught this week was finally delivered on the next week.\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{Offline formative assessment}

For offline learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, the English teachers used oral and writing assessment such as quizzes and questioning, group discussion and listening practice. Teacher 1 said that he provided PPT and learning videos delivered directly. Formative assessment was implemented orally and writing, such as quizzes and questioning. Reading comprehension was assessed in writing. The teacher said:

For assessment in direct learning, offline, for delivering material we provide ppt, learning videos that are delivered directly. Then we apply formative assessment by giving orally and in writing, such as quizzes and questioning.\textsuperscript{17}

Additionally, teacher 1 stated:

...by giving perception questions to children. For example in learning descriptive text. So how can the children understand the descriptive text by asking questions, for example, we show a historical place "how to describe a historical place". Then our children give lighter questions, such as what picture is this?”, “where is the historical place?”. Then, what kind of activity is the picture hown? Then we ask them to discuss with their group to describe some historical places, especially those in our area. For example, the lord Tambusai’s seven-layered bull.\textsuperscript{18}

For offline formative assessment of reading, Teacher 2 asked students to read a text or dialogue. Students were asked to come in front of the class and then assessed how their pronunciation, intonation and fluency. In writing students were asked to make a dialogue or text in speaking was a role play, where students asked to make a dialogue and then practiced it with a video like playing a drama role. The teacher argued:

In English, there are speaking, listening, writing and reading. For reading, I ask students to read a text. Ask students to read a dialogue. Then, they were asked to come forward and were asked to pronounce the pronunciation correctly. I assessed how well the intonation was, how smooth it was. Then for writing, students are asked to make a dialogue or a text. Yes, if the writing is in the form of writing/portfolio, it will be submitted later to me. If for speaking, it can be in the form of role play. Once I did students were asked to make a dialogue and then practice it with a video. Like, playing a drama

\textsuperscript{16}Teacher 2. \textit{Interview.} Rokan Hulu: September 2022
\textsuperscript{17}Teacher 1. \textit{Interview.} Rokan Hulu: September 2022
\textsuperscript{18}Teacher 1. \textit{Interview.} Rokan Hulu: September 2022
The constraints in conducting offline formative assessments derived from the
students. Teacher 1 said that not all students were active in learning English. Some of them
were super active. Some other students were active and some other students were less
understanding and less motivated. The students argued that English was not practiced in
everyday life. They had never seen a foreigner and had never seen the use of English
directly in their daily activities. The teacher stated:

The constraint is that not all students are super active. Among the 36 people
who are super active there may be about 5 people, the middle ones are
around 15 people. And there are some who don’t understand, are less
motivated. Because according to them, most of them don’t have English.
practiced in everyday life. Even we who live in this village have never seen
foreigners/foreigners. We have never seen the use of English in real life in
our daily lives.

Teacher 2 stated that not all students were willing to submit the assignments given.
Many students were not interested in English. Pandemic made them uninterested in lesson
since it needed them to think. They were also dizzy with assignment. They had no
intention and interest in learning and only relied on one or two of their friends. Even
though they were not prohibited from discussing but not cheating. In fact, students were
less interested in doing the assignments given. The teacher commented:

The constraint is that not all students want to submit assignments. Even
though it has been made, please look for each group. However, right after
delivery, not all of them send. As well as other tasks. Also, especially during
the pandemic, students are holding cellphone more, students are spending
more time in their rooms, traveling, playing games, watching YouTube,
chatting. They prefer it that way. They are not so interested in lessons that
make them think, they are dizzy with assignments and so on. The effects of
the pandemic, in which students are only asked to do assignments via google
class, wa group and so on, are felt when learning is offline. So, students are
not interested, do not intend to learn. So if given a small task they only rely
on one or two of their friends. One can get the other all for the reason of
working together and so on. Even though I have already said that discussion
is welcome, not prohibited but not cheating. But in reality, students are not
able to do their assignments, they are the type that is less interested.

In facing the problem dealing with offline formative assessment, the teachers
provided some tips. Teacher 1 provided an approach to students with a persuasive
approach or from heart to heart approach. The teacher asked students the shortcomings
and try to provide motivation. Teacher 1 also developed vocabulary about daily activities.
The teacher argued:

19Teacher 2. Interview. Rokan Hulu: September 2022
20Teacher 1. Interview. Rokan Hulu: September 2022
The solution is approach. Students who are less interested are approached. For example, sometimes they are sitting relaxed under a tree while taking a relaxing break. I come over and join them and they are asked where it went wrong. So it’s more of a persuasive, heart-to-heart approach. Maybe there they is more open than learning in class. If they are asked in class which one they don’t understand, sometimes they are embarrassed. But when they are relaxed, sitting in the garden, under a tree, we come and chat. We ask them to explore where the shortcomings are. Trying to provide motivation. And we even give daily activity vocabularies

Similarly, Teacher 2 also gave the same treatment as teacher 1 did. Teacher 2 revealed that the solution was giving students an approach. Students were asked why they did not submit the assignment. They responded that it was because they did not understand. They also had another reason such inability in doing group work for group assignments. The teacher said:

Probably an approach. Why they did not submit, maybe because they did not understand or for some reason. Sometimes there are those who want to do temporary work on tasks such as groups, other friends are not compact. So, more approach, what is the problem, what are the constraints, why not make these tasks. Do you not understand the material or because of other constrains.21

The aforementioned findings have relationship with the finding by Inoue and Pengnate (2018). They state, google classroom also minimizes the costs incurred due to the use of stationery and other materials that are more affordable, and can minimize the energy spent on time. In google form can make multiple choice questions and the results of the assessment can be directly out in excel form.22 This correlated with the theory by Keeler and Miller (2015). He states, google forms provides data from students instantly after students hit submit. Since all students answer together in one spreadsheet, it’s easy to get an idea of student understanding. Google forms provide features such as multiple versions, question banks, time limit settings, and so on.23 This finding supports the research findings conducted by Agung et.al, (2018). They state, google forms exercise establishes efficient, effective and attractive activities to the students.24 The findings also relevant to research conducted by Astiandani and Anam (2021). They stated that there are three main constraints in carrying out online formative assessments such as slow/non-existent

---

21 Teacher 2. Interview. Rokan Hulu: September 2022
22 Inoue, M., & Pengnate, W. Belief in Foreign Language Learning and Satisfaction with Using Google Classroom to Submit Online Homework of Undergraduate Students. (In 2018 5th International Conference on Business and Industrial Research (ICBIR, 1998) pp. 618-621
internet connection, lack of facilities, additional time required during the creation or execution of the test.\textsuperscript{25}

Moreover, findings of this study also support the theory about quizzes by Nitko (2003). He states that quiz can be used as formative assessment and it has high validity in diagnosing individuals’ needs, group’ needs and also planning instruction.\textsuperscript{26} Black, et.al (2003) also states that asking using better questions will provide opportunities for students to think more deeply and provide insight or deep understanding of the level and depth of student understanding. In addition, Black and William (1998) argue that classroom discussions can provide a wealth of information about students’ learning and their understanding of basic concepts. Teachers can initiate discussions by asking open-ended questions to students. The goal is to build knowledge and develop critical and creative thinking skills. Discussion allows students to increase their insight and understanding while wasting time misinformation, and expand and explain stored knowledge.\textsuperscript{27}

Additionally, the findings of this research relate to theory by Brown (2004) about how short-answer task, the reading section is presented, and the test taker reads the required questions answered in one or two sentences. He adds that questions may cover the same specifications shown for the TOEFL reading, but written in question form. It can be difficult to ensure that students can achieve the desired criteria. Teachers also need to develop consistent specifications for acceptable student responses and be prepared to allow the necessary time to complete their evaluations.\textsuperscript{28} Related to listening cloze by Oller, this technique is very good, flexibility and can be done in such a way as to break the text somewhat less standard dictation.\textsuperscript{29} In terms of role play, Brown (2004) argues that role play is a common pedagogical activity used in communicative English classes. It frees students to be somewhat creative in their linguistic output. In some versions, role play allows some rehearsal time so that students can map out what they are going to say. It also has the effect of lowering anxieties as students can, even for few moments, take on the persona of someone other than themselves.\textsuperscript{30} Dealing with mind mapping, Buzan (2006) states mind mapping lies in its dynamic form. It is drawn in the shape of a brain cell and designed to encourage your brain to work in the same way that is fast, efficient, and in a natural style.\textsuperscript{31} Moreover, Hirai (2010) states reading aloud is a strategy in which students or teachers can read a paragraph aloud. This helps them understand pronunciation of

---


\textsuperscript{26} Nitko. \textit{Educational Assessment of Students (Third Edition)}. (New Jersey: Prentice hall, Inc., 2001)


\textsuperscript{31} Buzan, T. \textit{Buzan Study Skills Handbook: The Shortcut to Success in Your Studies with Mind Mapping, Speed Reading and Winning Memory Techniques (Mind Set)}. (BBC Active, 2006).
words, pauses, and emphasis on words in fragments, thereby providing acceptance model for academic language and enrolment.\textsuperscript{32}

However, this research finding challenge research finding by Wiyaka, Prastikawati and Adi (2019). They stated there were the constraints in formative assessment such as lack of knowledge about formative assessment, teacher time management, the absence of clear guidelines on formative assessment\textsuperscript{33}. This research finding is also contrasts to research finding by Akom (2010) who found that infrastructure problems play a role in teaching not being able to use formative assessment in the classroom\textsuperscript{34}. It is also contrast to research finding by Al-Mofti (2020) who found that there were four constraints in formative assessment, including inability of instructors to create classroom activities and assessment criteria to integrate formative strategy, students cannot give an assessment at all to their peers and assist in using formative assessment strategies in class activities, inability to use direct feedback to students due to the large number of them in each class and to include feedback in group activities, the nature of the formative assessment that does not take much time is carried out in a limited time in class\textsuperscript{35}.

\textbf{Conclusion}

There were various ways of formative assessment used by the English teachers at vocational high school during covid-19 pandemic. It depends on the situation and condition of the students and facilities of the school. The constraints of doing formative assessment are also vary among the teachers. To overcome the problems, every English teacher has his or her tips. It is flexible based on the priority and the complexity of the problem.

\textbf{References}


Akom, G. V. (2010). \textit{Using formative assessment despite the constraints of high stakes testing and limited resources: A case study of chemistry teachers in Anglophone Cameroon}. Western Michigan University. Western Michigan University, Ann Arbor


\textsuperscript{34}George Viche Akom. \textit{Using formative assessment despite the constraints of high stakes testing and limited resources: A case study of chemistry teachers in Anglophone Cameroon}. (Ann Arbor: Western Michigan University. Western Michigan University, 2010)

\textsuperscript{35}Khaldoon Waleed Husam Al-Mofti. \textit{Challenges of Implementing Formative Assessment by Iraqi EFL Instructors at University Level}. (Koya: Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 3(1), 2020), p.181-189


Anisa, M.D. (2021) Students’ Attitudes toward Online Formative Assessment in English Language Learning in SMA Negeri 1 Kembang. Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Profesi Pendidik. Vol. 7 No. 2


