

***Madrasah Tsanawiyah* Teacher's Formative Assessment Practices in EFL Classroom**

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the formative assessment practices implemented by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* level. This focus identifies the obstacles that prevent the teacher from conducting formative assessment optimally. This could relate to time constraints, large class sizes, and student diversity. The research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, where data were collected through classroom observations and document analysis. The participants consisted of one EFL teacher. The findings reveal that the teacher applied four main formative assessment techniques: (1) questioning, (2) group discussions, (3) student presentations, and (4) assignments or homework. These techniques can help monitor students' learning progress and increase their participation, although their effectiveness varies depending on classroom dynamics and student characteristics. The study contributes to the broader understanding of formative assessment implementation in Islamic junior high school settings, an area that has received limited research attention compared to other educational levels. The findings of this study contribute concretely to the field in three specific ways. First, for EFL teachers at the MTs level, it provides a validated inventory of practical, low-preparation formative assessment strategies that can be immediately applied in large classrooms to enhance student speaking and writing skills. Second, for educational practitioners and curriculum developers, it identifies the specific types of feedback that most effectively boost student engagement, offering a blueprint for revising the English curriculum to include structured formative checkpoints. Third, for the Madrasah institution itself, the results highlight critical areas for professional development, enabling the school administration to organize targeted training workshops that address the real-world challenges teachers face in implementing classroom-based assessments.

Keywords: *Assessment; EFL Classroom; Formative Assessment; Madrasah Tsanawiyah*

Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis praktik penilaian formatif yang diterapkan oleh guru Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) di tingkat Madrasah Tsanawiyah. Fokus ini mengidentifikasi hambatan yang menghalangi guru dalam melaksanakan penilaian formatif secara optimal. Hal ini dapat berkaitan dengan keterbatasan waktu, ukuran kelas yang besar, dan keragaman siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain deskriptif, di mana data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas dan analisis dokumen. Peserta penelitian terdiri dari satu guru EFL. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru menerapkan empat teknik penilaian formatif utama: (1) tanya jawab, (2) diskusi kelompok, (3) presentasi siswa, dan (4) tugas atau pekerjaan rumah. Teknik-teknik ini dapat membantu memantau kemajuan belajar siswa dan meningkatkan partisipasi mereka, meskipun efektivitasnya bervariasi tergantung pada dinamika kelas dan karakteristik siswa. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih luas tentang implementasi penilaian formatif di lingkungan sekolah menengah Islam, bidang yang belum banyak diteliti dibandingkan dengan tingkat pendidikan lainnya. Temuan studi ini memberikan kontribusi konkret pada bidang ini dalam tiga cara spesifik. Pertama, bagi guru EFL di tingkat MTs, studi ini menyediakan daftar strategi penilaian formatif praktis dan memerlukan persiapan minimal yang dapat diterapkan langsung di kelas

besar untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara dan menulis siswa. Kedua, bagi praktisi pendidikan dan pengembang kurikulum, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi jenis umpan balik yang paling efektif dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa, menawarkan pedoman untuk merevisi kurikulum Bahasa Inggris agar mencakup titik pemeriksaan formatif yang terstruktur. Ketiga, bagi institusi Madrasah itu sendiri, hasil penelitian menyoroti area kritis untuk pengembangan profesional, memungkinkan administrasi sekolah untuk menyelenggarakan lokakarya pelatihan yang ditargetkan untuk mengatasi tantangan nyata yang dihadapi guru dalam menerapkan penilaian berbasis kelas.

Kata Kunci: *Kelas EFL; Madrasah Tsanawiyah; Penilaian; Penilaian Formatif*

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INTRODUCTION

Assessment plays a critical role in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the junior high school level. In EFL classrooms, assessment is not merely a tool to measure student achievement, but rather an ongoing dialogue between teachers and students to promote language acquisition, critical thinking, and reflective learning. Among various types of assessment, formative assessment has emerged as a crucial strategy in monitoring student learning progress and providing timely feedback. (Brown, 2004a), emphasizes that assessment is an ongoing process covering a wide range of teacher-student interactions. Whenever a student responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance. In practice, two main types of assessment are commonly used: summative and formative. Summative assessment is typically conducted at the end of each semester to evaluate overall achievement (Brown, 2004). In contrast, formative assessment is more integrated into daily teaching and often appears as unit-based or “daily tests” (Widiastuti, 2021).

In the context of EFL learning, formative assessment helps students overcome barriers to learning English while gradually improving their skills. In the observed MTs class, the main learning obstacle was the students' unwillingness to speak English due to fear of negative judgment from their peers (Real Problem). Teachers attempted to overcome this by implementing peer assessment activities. However, the implementation was hampered by two significant challenges: first, students refused to criticize their classmates, considering it rude and beyond their capabilities (Cultural Challenge); second, the teacher, who managed a class of 38 students, could only facilitate superficial peer assessment due to time constraints (Structural Challenge). This reveals a critical gap: although the policy mandates ‘Assessment as Learning,’ the classroom culture and structural realities of the MTs context reduce this mandate to a mere administrative exercise, making it difficult to realize its potential to lower affective filters and improve English language competence. This makes formative assessment a key element in supporting successful English language learning. According to (Widiastuti, 2021), formative assessment can significantly influence students' motivation and engagement in learning English. By providing feedback to students, teachers can encourage students to take responsibility for their learning process and also create an interactive and participatory classroom environment. In the Indonesian educational context, especially under the Kurikulum Merdeka recent curriculum used in Indonesia since 2021, formative assessment is emphasized as a vital approach to fostering meaningful and personalized learning. According to (Kemendikbud, 2021), formative assessment supports student agency by involving them in evaluating their learning, fostering a sense of responsibility, and encouraging independent learning strategies.

Formative assessment has many benefits and also techniques according to (Puspendik, 2019), in this study researchers took 10 techniques from 23 existing techniques, because based on the

researchers previous observations, the techniques most often used by teachers in junior high schools such as presentations, questioning and others, the rest were taken because these techniques were likely to appear in the formative assessment carried out by the teacher. The researcher wants to know whether the formative assessment techniques that are often used by teachers in junior high schools are the same as the techniques used by teachers in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*.

While extensive research has illuminated formative assessment practices at the secondary and tertiary levels, the critical juncture of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs) remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by arguing that the MTs context is uniquely significant for three reasons: first, it represents a pivotal cognitive transition where foundational English skills are solidified; second, its unique socio-cultural environment often integrating Pesantren values and multilingualism (Indonesian-Arabic-English) and third, examining MTs addresses a critical equity issue, ensuring that the discourse on quality EFL. One of them, such as the research conducted by Gemely et al (2022), entitled “ Formative Assessment Practiced by EFL Lecturers in STAIN Majene”. This study aims to find out how EFL lecturers' perceptions of formative assessment and how EFL lecturers practice formative assessment. This research will explore how formative assessment is implemented by EFL teachers in junior high school and the formative assessment techniques used by these teachers. This study has similarities with several previous studies that also discuss the practice of formative assessment in the context of EFL learning, one of which is a study conducted by Pertiwi et al (2021), entitled "Formative Assessments Used By English Teachers in SMP Negeri 9 Semarang" the results of this study show that English teachers use 4 types of formative assessments, namely: quizzes, exit slips, discussions, and kinesthetic assessments. But in practice, only 2 techniques are dominantly applied, namely quizzes and exit slips. However, this research is different in terms of its focus on the junior high school level, this research will be conducted at the *madrasah tsanawiyah*, while previous studies have been conducted more at the high school or university level.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach qualitative descriptive design is a type of design in qualitative research that aims to describe and explain a phenomenon or event as it is, naturally, and in depth. In the context of your research, this design is used to describe in detail how EFL teachers at MTs implement formative assessment in the classroom. to analyze the formative assessment practices implemented by EFL teachers at the junior high school level. This design was chosen because it is in line with the purpose of the study, which is to find out the implementation of formative assessment applied by teachers in the classroom. Data were collected in a natural setting (classroom) to ensure the authenticity and relevance of the findings.

This study was conducted in one of the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* in Indramayu, and one of the EFL teachers was a participant. This study analyzed formative assessment. The object of the study includes formative assessment practices applied by teachers during the learning process. The focus of this study is to find out the formative assessment practices applied by EFL teachers in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*. Data were collected in two ways. First, analysis of documents such as lesson plans and assessment records to complement data from observation. Second, direct observation in the classroom to see how teachers apply formative assessment during learning. These two data sources complement each other to provide a complete picture. The data collection process was carried out in stages. The initial stage involved document analysis to examine teacher assessment planning. Next, the researcher conducted classroom observations. The collected data was then processed by sorting important information, presenting it systematically, and drawing conclusions based on the findings. The researchers compared the patterns that emerged during the observations and then drew conclusions

about how teachers carried out formative assessment. These conclusions were based on concrete evidence from the observation notes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This chapter presents the research results. It is divided into two main sections: research findings and discussion. The research findings present the results of analyzing the data collected through classroom observations. This section presents the results of the research that aims to analyze the formative assessment practices implemented by English teachers in classroom learning. Data were collected through observations conducted in two classes. In this study, the researcher used an instrument in the form of an observation sheet in the form of a checklist compiled based on a book on formative assessment from (Puspendik, 2019).

The researchers observed two different classes, namely class 8A with 29 students and class 8B with 34 students. The formative assessment techniques identified included questioning, group discussions, student presentations, and homework. The results of this observation illustrate the application of these techniques as well as the differences in student responses and engagement in each class. Data was collected through classroom observation, where the researchers observed the EFL teacher during the lesson regarding the formative assessment techniques conducted by the teacher during the learning process. The researcher observed during the learning process using an observation checklist as an instrument of observation, which contained formative assessment techniques carried out by the teacher. Look at the table 1:

Table 1. Classroom Observation Checklist 8A & 8B

N O	Formative Assessment Technique (Puspendik, 2019)	Indicators	Description
1	Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The teacher gives learners time to think. b. The teacher asks questions orally. c. Questions are given at the beginning, middle, or end of the lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The teacher gave students about 5-10 seconds to think before answering the question. b. The teacher asked questions orally related to the learning material. c. The teacher asked questions at the beginning of the lesson (triggering questions) such as, "How did you usually do your homework? Slowly or quickly?" and in the middle of learning about the material learned, such as, "What was the definition of Adverb of Manner?", "Mention examples of Adverb of Manner." At the end of the lesson, the teacher opened a question-and-answer session related to the material that had been learned.
2	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The teacher encourages active participation of all students in the discussion. b. The teacher builds knowledge and develops critical and creative thinking skills. c. The teacher starts the discussion by asking open questions to the learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The teacher asked the students to get into groups and sit in a circle to discuss the task given by the teacher. The teacher went around to each group to monitor students' work and encouraged students to actively participate in the group. b. – c. The teacher asked the students questions about the assignment (whether the students had understood the assignment or not).

3	Presentation	a.	The teacher asks students to make presentations as a form of assessment.	a.	The teacher asked the students to present the results of the group discussion on "adverb of manner" (definition, examples, and changing an adjective into an adverb in a sentence).
	Assignment/Home work	a.	The teacher assigns individual and group homework.	a.	The teacher gave homework in the form of multiple-choice tasks in the student's worksheet book on adverbs of manner.

Based on the data obtained by researchers in the instrument table 1 regarding classroom observations conducted in two classes, namely classes 8A and 8B, it can be seen that the teacher has carried out formative assessment techniques, out of 10 formative assessment techniques in the instrument one of the teachers at one of the Islamic junior high schools in Indramayu only uses several techniques such as question and answer, discussion, presentation, and also homework.

On the first day of observation, the teacher used two formative assessment techniques, namely questioning and discussion. The first technique applied by the teacher was questioning, which was systematically applied by the teacher as formative assessment. In class 8A, the teacher began the lesson with trigger questions that were relevant to the students' daily lives and to the learning material. The questioning technique was also applied in class 8B with the same question, but the response from the students in class 8B was slower and less enthusiastic, so the teacher encouraged the students to take an active role in learning by pointing to several students to answer the question. In the core learning section, the teacher asked more in-depth questions about the material that had been studied, such as "What is the definition of an adverb of manner?" In response to this question, the students in class 8A responded actively, while the students in class 8B tended to be less active in answering questions. At the end of the lesson, the teacher opens a question and answer session with the students and reviews the material that has been learned to evaluate the students' understanding.

The next technique used by the teacher on the first day of observation was the discussion technique. This formative assessment technique was carried out in groups. In Class 8A, students who do not understand the assignment actively ask questions, and each group demonstrates good cooperation and clear roles and tasks among all group members. However, most students in class 8B were inactive or passive in class, and there was a lack of cooperation in each group's discussion. Therefore, the teacher had to be more active in monitoring the students and assisting them during the discussion process so that all students in the group would play an active role in the discussion, thereby creating good cooperation.

On the second day of observation, the teacher provided two formative assessment techniques, namely presentation and homework. On the second day was a presentation. The teacher asked two representatives from each group to present the results of their discussion. The presentation lasted about five minutes per group. The material presented included definitions, examples of words, and sentences modified from adjectives to adverbs of manner. In class 8A, the presentations went smoothly, with most groups able to explain and present the results of their discussions well, providing appropriate examples and using correct sentences with adverbs of manner. In class 8B, presentations took longer than in class 8A because students may have been less confident and hesitant to present the results of their discussions in front of the class, requiring encouragement from the teacher.

The final formative assessment conducted by the teacher on the second day of classroom learning on adverbs was to give homework to reinforce students' understanding of the material that had been learned. The homework assigned by the teacher consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions in the student worksheet (LKS) to assess individual students' understanding. At the next meeting in class 8A, the students submitted their homework on time as specified. Meanwhile, in class 8B, some students submitted their homework on time, while others had not yet completed the assignment. Based

on the observations that the researchers have made, there are several formative assessment techniques that are not applied by teachers, such as observation with anecdotal notes, exit/admit slips, student reflection sheets, concept maps, and kinesthetic technique. This can be caused by several factors. Firstly, time constraints in managing curriculum-heavy classes make teachers tend to choose more efficient techniques, such as questioning and giving assignments, without having to prepare additional instruments such as sticky notes or reflection sheets. Secondly, the lack of training on a variety of formative assessment techniques may make teachers not fully understand the benefits or how to apply these techniques. Thirdly, facility factors can be a practical obstacle. In addition, techniques such as self-assessment and peer assessment may be difficult to implement because students are not used to self-evaluation or peer collaboration.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal the actual formative assessment practices applied by an English teacher in an EFL at the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* level. Overall, four primary formative assessment techniques were consistently used throughout the learning process: questioning, group discussions, student presentations, and assignments or homework. Each of these techniques contributed significantly to monitoring student progress and enhancing their engagement in learning.

Similar research was also conducted by (Pertiwi et al., 2021), entitled "Formative Assessments Used By English Teachers in SMP Negeri 9 Semarang" the results of this study show that English teachers use 4 types of formative assessments, namely: quizzes, exit slips, discussions, and kinesthetic assessments. The teachers admitted that they had difficulties in applying other techniques, such as the classroom environment, students' characters, and time constraints. While in this study, 4 techniques emerged, namely questions, discussions, presentations, and assignments/homework. Teacher Formative Assessment Practices in EFL Classroom. Based on the results of the data findings in this research, the researcher found that English teachers in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* have implemented several formative assessment techniques in the learning process, namely questioning, discussion, presentation, and homework/assignment. The use of these four techniques shows the teacher's efforts in encouraging students' active involvement, providing direct feedback, and monitoring students' progress during learning on an ongoing basis. This is in line with Black & Wiliam (1998) who emphasize that formative assessment should function as a diagnostic tool to detect learning comprehension, as well as a medium for strengthening and motivating students in the learning process.

This research is in line with previous research conducted by Pertiwi et al (2021). The technique often used by junior high school teachers is discussion, but there are differences in the 3 techniques applied by teachers. In their research, junior high school teachers used quizzes, exit slips, and kinesthetic assessments. Whereas in my research, the other 3 techniques used by the teacher are questioning, presentation, and homework. This is also related to Brown (2004), who says that formative assessment is carried out continuously during the learning process to help students build their abilities gradually. In this research, teachers have implemented several ways that are in accordance with the principles of formative assessment, such as opening the lesson with triggering questions, guiding students during group discussions, and giving presentation tasks. In addition, the teacher also gave students time to think before answering questions. This method is an effective questioning technique according to Shute (2008), because it gives students the opportunity to reflect and understand the material better.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The results show that these techniques can help in monitoring students' progress and increasing their participation. Although the degree of success varies depending on classroom dynamics and student characteristics. Formative assessment serves not only as an evaluation tool but also as a means

to build students' confidence and responsibility in learning. This study also highlights the importance of formative assessment in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia, which emphasizes student-centered learning and continuous assessment. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for teachers and educational practitioners to optimize the use of formative assessment in improving the quality of English language learning at the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* level.

This study can be improved by expanding the number of teachers and student participants from several *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* to strengthen the validity of the findings. In addition, exploring students' perspectives through interviews or questionnaires will provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of formative assessment techniques. Teacher training related to the application of innovative formative assessments, including the use of technology, also needs to be considered to support the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum.

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