

Online Formative Assessments in English Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

Some changes occur in the assessment process in the English teaching and learning process during the pandemic Covid-19. The integration of technology in the assessment process becomes a crucial need for the English teachers to run the online or blended English teaching. For that reason, this present study presents the the current implementation of online formative assessment in private and public junior high school in Semarang and the challenges that the English teachers face during the implementation. In this study, the writers carried out descriptive qualitative research design in which it used observation and an interview as the instruments. Two English teachers were involved in this study. The findings show that the implementation of online formative assessment runs well in both private and public junior high school. It is proved by the use of some online formative assessment tools during English teaching and learning such as Quizizz, Google Form, Socrative, Kahoot!, and Microsoft Teams routinely. On the other hand, during the implementation of online formative assessment, the English teachers also face some problems; students' academic dishonesty and teachers' poor computer skills. Finally, it is suggested that the English teachers need to improve their computer and digital literacy for supporting the implementation of online formative assessments during the online and blended English teaching.

Keywords: English language teaching; online formative assessment; teachers' challenges

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1. Introduction

A pandemic is something that occurs or its impact has a large scale, almost all over the world. It has an impact not only on human resources but also impacts the environment, economy, lifestyle, and education. The most serious impacts occurred in the economic and education sectors. Almost all countries in the world have experienced a very significant economic decline. For education, face-to-face is now prohibited and replaced with online teaching and learning (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020).

Education is identical to learning between teachers and students or lecturers and students. Before affected by the impact of the pandemic, exactly using face-to-face meetings greeted us without fear of catching the virus that we know as Covid-19 (Ferdig et al., 2020). For now, the government prohibits face-to-face learning that can gather large numbers of people. The government appealed to schools to replace face-to-face meetings with online meetings, by making maximum use of existing technology.

Technology always knows by obtaining certain results, solving certain problems, completing certain tasks using certain skills, using and utilizing assets (Wahab et al., 2011). As time goes by, technology is developing very fast, until the internet is found. Communicating previously only using voice, now with the assistance of internet, it can use for video call, browsing, stalking, etc. Finally, it can be used in education where teachers/lecturers can still teach even if they do not meet face to face.

In addition to educational needs in teaching and learning technology also used to measure the level of students' understanding of the material that is commonly called assessment. Assessment is an important component process of teaching and learning, which has many definitions in education (Wiyaka et al., 2020). Also, Weeden et al. (2002) state that is the main part of raising quality is assessment. However, assessment also used to measure the teachers' ability by assessment (Evriana, 2020).

In classroom activities, there are two types of assessment usually use by teachers are formative and summative assessments. Bell and Cowie (2001) states that formative assessment is the process used by teachers and students to recognize and respond to student learning to enhance that learning, during the learning. The process of understand and respond by the teachers to the students during the learning is called formative assessment. Formative assessment is assessing the students' comprehension, learning necessary, and improvement connects with a certain unit of materials (Karimi & Shafiee, 2014). Besides, the main purpose of formative assessment is to find out information about how the process of teaching and learning so could enhance to reach better learning outcomes (Zahaf, 2019). Meanwhile, summative assessment is commonly used to take measurements of what students have well informed at the end of a course. A summative assessment is implemented through an examination or a test.

As explained above, formative assessment helps the teachers make an interactive teaching-learning process (Prastikawati et al, 2020). As a simple example, when the teacher asks students to make a self-assessment of their test. Then, the teacher checked and commented on their test. It will help the students know their strengths and weaknesses of what they have done. They will clearly understand the material and improve their

weaknesses. Further, formative assessment is a useful tool in both online and offline learning situations (Evriana, 2020). Some benefits can be derived for students during their learning. First, online formative assessment permitted the students to reach the assessment deadline in flexible time. Then, the students will be given quick feedback in their learning process to help learn their weakness (Prastikawati et al., 2020). Additionally, another research also stated that the online formative assessment degrades the students' stress level before they have summative assessments on their final examination (Kingston & Nash, 2011; Ninomiya, 2016).

Some previous studies have showed positive findings on formative assessment. Weurlander et al. (2012) conducted a study on students' experiences during the implementation of formative. There were 70 students involved. The findings of the study mentioned that the students were more motivated and aware from what the students have learned during the implementation of formative assessment. In the same vein, Widiastuti and Saukah (2017) explored the teachers' perception on formative assessment in EFL Classroom. Unfortunately, the finding showed that the English teachers had lack of knowledge on formative assessment implementation. This study implies that the implementation of English foreign language teachers on formative assessment needs urgent intensive training and should be integrated into the classroom on how to follow up actions.

Seeing the importance of implementation of online formative assessments in teaching and assessing. In this study, the writers focus to find out the implementation of online formative assessments in English classes in a public junior high school and a private junior high school in Semarang. Further, this present study presents the challenges that the English teachers face during the implementation of online formative assessment. In addition, two junior high schools, one public and one private schools in Semarang, Central Java province, are chosen as the setting of the study. It is based on the previous observation that these two schools have implemented online formative assessments in English teaching and learning during the pandemic Covid-19.

1.1. Research Question

Based on the previous background, it is crucial to make an investigation how the English teachers utilize online formative assessments in their English teaching. This current study is guided by some research questions, as follows:

1. How is the implementation of online formative assessment in public school?
2. How is the implementation of online formative assessment in private school?
3. What are the challenges faced by the English teachers in implementing online formative assessment in English teaching?

2. Method

In this study, the writers carried out a qualitative approach as the design of the study. Qualitative research is kind of educational research in which the research depends on the participant's view, ask a broad, general question; collecting data from the participant with largely words/text, depict and analyze these theme words, and arrange the research in a subjective, biased manner (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Newton, 2016; Shorten & Smith, 2017).

In this study, the writers investigate the process of the implementation of online formative assessments in English teaching and learning.

This study took place in two junior high schools in Semarang, one is public and another is private. Two English teachers were invited and involved as the participants of this study. The consideration of choosing those two English teachers was their experiences in implementing online formative assessment in the classroom.

To obtain the data, the writers used two instruments. In this case, the research instrument was a tool for collecting data (Kawulich, 2012). The data collection is an important step in research because in research the main objective is to obtain data (Creswell & Creswell, 2005). The writers used observation and interview as the instruments of this study.

a) Observation

Observation is what can be seen by the writers (Schensul et al., 1999). Also, Angrosino (2007) states that observation is something by taking notes on what happened, sometimes using instruments and recording them for specific purposes. This study is used participant observation. It is needed to analyze the practice of online formative assessment in English teaching. the observation is aimed to record implementation of online formative assessment in English teaching and learning. Moreover, the writers used structured observation, which is designed systematically. Especially on this pandemic, the writers will do online observation. The writers will join the online learning through any platform that is used by both of the schools.

b) Interview

According to Esterberg (2002), interview is a meeting of two people to exchange the information and idea through question and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic. Thus, the writers used semi-structured interview which is done with an online meeting due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

After collecting the data, the writers analyzed all the data descriptively in which the writers connected the data from observation and from interview. Further, the data gained from interviews was analysed using coding technique. It was transcribed and presented qualitatively.

3. Findings and Discussion

a. Findings

This study focuses on three objectives; 1) investigating the implementation of online formative assessment in a public school, 2) investigating the implementation of online formative assessment in a private school 3) describing the challenges faced by the English teachers in implementing online formative assessment. For those objectives, this finding of this study is divided into four findings.

1) The Implementation of Online Formative Assessment in a Public School

The writers made observations by attending 8 online meetings held by Mr. Joko (pseudonym). Based on the results of these observations, the writers get several important points regarding the implementation of the online formative assessment conducted by Mr. Joko. The school has been implementing the 2013 curriculum and during the pandemic Covid-19 has also account for several online formative assessment platforms. These

online formative assessments were implemented regularly by Mr. Joko during English teaching and learning.

Based on the observation that the writers carried out for two months, there were some online platforms-based formative assessments.

a. Quizizz

When all the materials have been delivered by the teacher and proceeded to the next material, he used the Quizizz application as a tool to measure students' understanding of the material presented by him. From the 8 meetings the writers participated in, the teacher used the Quizizz application in 4 meetings. From the 4 meetings, multiple choice questions were given. The teacher conducted an online assessment using the Quizizz application only to find out how students understand the material, and it would not affect the students' grades.

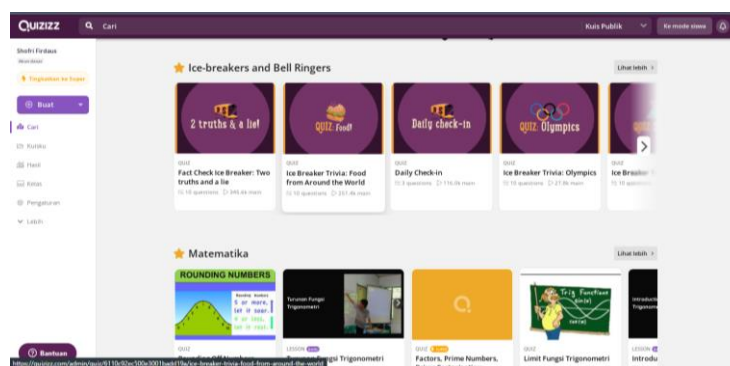


Figure 1. Kahoot

b. Microsoft Teams

Mr. Joko uses the Microsoft Office Teams application to carry out an online formative assessment related to writing skills. Microsoft Office Teams was used by him 2 times out of 8 meetings attended by the writers.

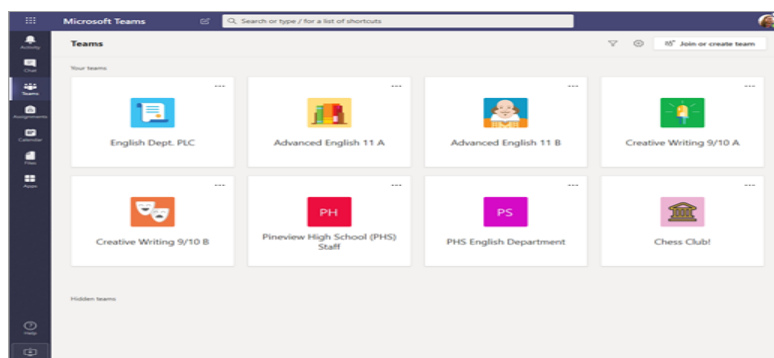


Figure 2. Microsoft Teams

Initially, students will be asked to make a text related to the material that has been delivered. The text is created using Microsoft Office Word, and then uploaded to the Microsoft Office Teams application. Next, the teacher will choose randomly, the results of the answers from students. The teacher then asked one of the students who

was using a laptop to share the screen, and displayed the answers he chose. Each answer will be discussed together to find out where the error is and what needs to be corrected in the text. Finally, the teacher will provide feedback on each of the answer texts, which is the essence of the formative online assessment.

c. Kahoot!

The Kahoot application is used by the teacher after delivering material related to tenses. He used the Kahoot application 1 time from 8 meetings attended by the writers.

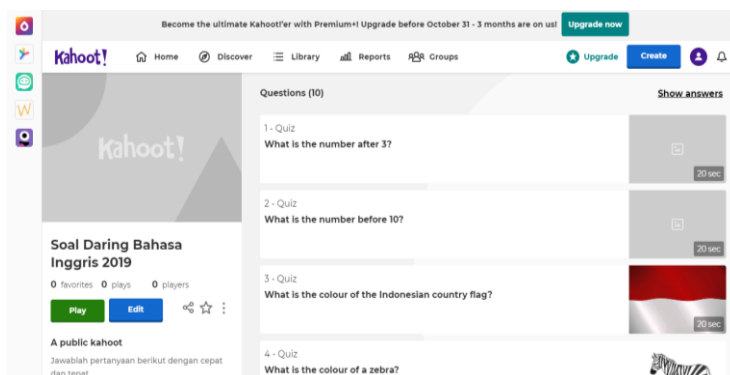


Figure 3. Kahoot

First, the teacher made some questions about tenses. After the questions are completed, the teacher will share the number code that students use to enter the online formative assessment-based game. Finally, the teacher will see the final result in the form of scores through the leaderboards in the Kahoot application as a reference material to determine the learning progress of students.

d. Google forms

The teacher did not use Google Forms to find out students' understanding of the material, but rather to find out students' difficulties in learning. He uses this as a reflection for himself and students, so that each other knows what things need to be improved or added in learning.

Figure 4. Google Forms

In filling out the forms, the teacher asked students to fill them out outside of class hours. This is intended so that students can fill out these forms freely and think carefully about

things that need to be improved or added in learning. the teacher used Google Forms 1 time out of 8 meetings attended by the writers.

Meanwhile, based on the interview session with Mr. Joko revealed the similar findings. He admitted that he used some online platforms to realize the implementation of formative assessment during online English teaching. This fact is supported by the excerpt of the interview below.

“I usually use online platforms in my English teaching such as Google Forms, Quizizz, Kahoot, and Microsoft Teams. They are easy platforms for me and my students to access”

“I need to make sure that my students can access the online platforms in my formative assessment. This is because they come from several and different economic background. So, I ensure that those platform are free of charge.”

Based on his information, the use of those online formative assessment is based on the ease of those platforms. In this case, Mr. Joko did not only consider the ease of those platforms for himself only, but he also consider it for his students. His consideration is made up due to the various socio-economic background from his students.

2) The implementation of Online Formative Assessment in Private School

The second objective of this study is investigating the implementation of online formative assessment in a private school. Similar to previous one, an observation was conducted for two months in an English class. An English teacher named Mr. Dono (pseudonym) was also involved as the participant of this study. The findings showed that the teacher implemented online formative assessments during the English teaching and learning. The platforms that he used is quite different with the platforms used by previous participant.

a. Socrative

Socrative is used by Mr. Dono to conduct an online formative assessment related to material on expressions of gratitude. He used socrative once in eight meetings. The formative assessment-based online game that he uses in the Socrative application is true false and short answer.

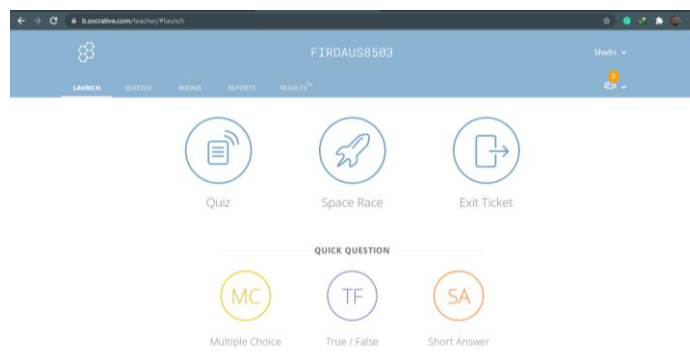


Figure 5. Socrative

The questions have been prepared by the teacher and students only need to enter the online room through the pin number prepared by the teacher. After students successfully enter the online room, the teacher will start the game and all students will start answering questions.

b. Kahoot!

From the eight meetings attended by the writers, six of them the teacher used Kahoot! as an online formative assessment platform. He uses a multiple choice question model whose questions are related to the material presented by him. The results of each online assessment will be displayed and shown to students. This is intended as an evaluation material for the teacher and his students. If the results of the online formative assessment are not satisfactory, then the teacher will consciously repeat the material and ask students which parts of the material are difficult for students to understand.

c. Microsoft Office Teams

Microsoft Office Teams is used by the teacher for students' progress in writing material. He used Microsoft Office Teams once out of 8 online meetings attended by the writers. The material is that students are asked to make the past tense. After that, the teacher asked students who use laptop to share the screen and display the answers from all students. Finally, the teacher and the students discussed each student's answer and commented on the answer. It can be used as an evaluation for students to improve their understanding of the past tense.

The finding from the observation was also supported by the interview. The teacher admitted that he preferred to use those online formative assessment based on the students' requests. His students mentioned that they had known with those online platforms so that they were familiar how to use them. The excerpt from the interview with Mr. the teacher reveals about this information.

"I was asked by my students to use those platform since they have known it from the other teachers. So, I think it's a good idea to use those platforms as my online formative tools"

During the interview, he also mentioned that he did not find the problems of students' internet connection since the students' parents had supported well. The parents' support becomes crucial during online English learning since all the learning setting moves to online and blended.

"My students are supported by their parents in having online English learning. I do not find the problem of internet connection. Even, the school is open for the students who have this problem because there is a wi-fi at school so some of them can come to school..."

Based on the interview, the problem of internet connection is also prevented by the school. In this case, SMP Nusa Putra provides WIFI in which the students who are having trouble in internet connection are given the opportunity by coming to schools.

b. Discussion

The findings of the study has summarized well that English teachers in both public and private schools have implemented some online formative assessments well during the

English teaching and learning process. The implementation of online formative assessment is considered as a necessary for the English teachers since they need to monitor the students' learning progress. Considering this need, the English teachers (Mr. Joko and Mr. Dono) carried out some online formative assessment platforms or tools such as Quizizz, Kahoot!, Microsoft Office Teams, Google Form, and Socrative. They utilized those platforms because they are free of charge, easy to use, and well-known by the students.

The first platform used by the English teachers is Quizizz. Quizizz is an online game application that can be used to conduct online testing (Zhao, 2019). Teachers can use this application to give questions to students, and students answer them through their gadgets or mobile phone. Quizizz can also display student ratings directly, which can help teachers find out how far students are able to the lessons that have been delivered. Moreover, Quizizz test results can be downloaded to be used as teacher's evaluation materials for students. Quizizz as a game-based learning application certainly brings many benefits to students. With its interactivity, Quizizz can provide direct feedback that is beneficial to students. This is in accordance with what is one of the advantages of using games in learning. As mentioned by the English teachers in this study, they get benefit from using Quizizz for they need to present an sophisticated tools for students' assessment process. This finding confirms the study from Glendon and Ulrich (2005) mentioning that inserting game during the assessment process may bring a new advantage for the students so that they can directly get their feedback. In addition, it gives students clear, actionable tasks and promises them immediate rewards instead of vague long-term benefits (Lee & Hammer, 2011).

The next platform used by the English teachers is Kahoot!. In this study, the English teachers used Kahoot! as a mini quiz for check the students learning progress without grading their score. Similar to Quizizz, Kahoot! is also regarded as an interactive game-based assessment. According to Kapsalis et al. (2020), Kahoot! is a game developed by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. The free-based game has several features in it, such as: nicknames, points, leaderboards timelines, and sound effects. There are several things that teachers can do in games, such as: making quizzes, delivering discussions, and making surveys. In this study, the English teacher make several questions according to the context that has been discussed, then students can answer these questions using their gadgets through the link provided by the teacher. If all students have answered the question, then the scores of all students who take the assessment will come out through the leaderboards. Overall, the English teachers need to present Kahoot! to provide a new atmosphere of assessment processes to be more fun and interesting (Mu & Paparas, 2015).

The third platform that is used by the English teachers is Microsoft Office Teams. According to Hubbard and Bailey (2018), Microsoft Office Teams is one super application that provides various features in it. Microsoft Teams is part of Office 360. This application now has around 120 million active users. Microsoft Teams can bring together several people in a group where they can interact online and up-to-date. This application is one of the effective technology-based learning tools to help teachers in online teaching. In this

study the English teachers used Microsoft Office Teams as an application to check students' understanding of the material about writing skills. The English teachers asked students to make text or sentences using Microsoft Office word. Then, the results of the answers from students are displayed through online meetings and discussed together.

After those platforms, the english teachers utilized Google Form as the online formative tool. Google forms is an online application tool whose function is to fill out questionnaires or even surveys whose results can be obtained in real time and for free. Google forms was first launched in 2008 as part of sheets. According to Jazil et al. (2020), Google Forms can be modified in the learning process as software for conducting online tests or assessments or the learning process. The writers get an important point regarding the use of Google Forms in online formative assessment. The writers find the fact that the use of Google forms is not only to get information about students' understanding of the material, but Google forms can also be an application to get information about what things need to be evaluated by teachers and students. For teachers, the evaluation can also be a consideration for further learning. then for students, they are expected to honestly explain about the obstacles students in understanding the material given.

The last of online formative platform implemented by the English teachers is Socrative. Socrative is a new and unique way of assessing your student's learning. Real time questioning, and visualization of results, you can see how well your students are mastering your content. It can be modified and adapted to Common Core Standarts. Socrative is able to helps teachers address the problem areas of their students while meeting their personal education needs (Awedh et al., 2015). This education website allows you to create quizzes, exit slips, and even a race, which allows students to compete against one another in class. Teachers login through their device and select an activity which controls the flow of questions and games. Students simply login with their device and interact real time with the content. Moreover, socrative is quick and easy assessment. Student responses are visually represented for multiple choice, true/false and short answer questions.

4. Conclusion

Based on findings of this study, some conclusions can be stated. First, as a public school, the first school has held an online meeting using Google Meet or Zoom. English teacher also use several applications that support online formative assessment such as Quizziz, Google Forms, Kahoot!, and Microsoft Office Teams. In this school, the online formative assessment activities are carried out regularly by the English teacher. In addition, as a private school the second school also uses several supporting applications such as Socrative, Kahoot!, and Microsoft Office Teams and is routinely carried out in 8 meetings attended by the writers. In those 8 meetings the teacher used Socrative 1 time, Kahoot! 6 times, and Microsoft Office Teams 1 time. This regular implementation of online formative assessments have showed that both public and private school have implemented online formative assessment well during the pandemic Covid-19 to support their teaching and learning progress. However,

further study should be more specific to investigate the effectiveness of online formative assessment to improve students' English language skills. In addition, the teachers' experiences on implementation of online formative assessment must be also considered to examine whether it influences the teachers' effective implementation or not.

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