



### The Washback of Formative Assessment in EFL Instructions

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#### Abstract

Assessment is a critical component in the process of teaching and learning. Without an effective assessment, it is impossible to know whether students have learned the lesson. This research aimed to investigate the washback of a formative assessment in EFL instructions. This study was a case study conducted at SMA Negeri 2 Singkep. The data were collected by using observation guidelines, questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. This study has findings: 1) Good perception of formative assessment. It was drawn from interview questions and observation guidelines which showed that the teacher claimed to have good experience in implementing formative assessment, teacher figured out assessment importance, and teacher assumed by using supported media to address formative assessment. 2) Positive washback on EFL teaching. It was drawn from document analysis, observation, and interview which the results showed that the teacher provided good attention on the lesson plan, the teacher was successful on students' engagement, the teacher used systematic instruction and understandable language use. 3) Positive washback on EFL learning. It was drawn from questionnaires and observation which the results showed students had good participation in doing a task, students had responsibility in learning, and students and the teacher had a kind relationship in the classroom. In conclusion, it is recommended that the teacher should understand more the formative assessment and readiness of the students. We suggested teachers provide oral and written advice or feedback that is written down on students' writing tasks or another subject.

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching English might be challenging for English teachers nowadays (Mumary, 2017; Omondi, Barasa & Omulando, 2012). Teacher is supposed to be skillful to make students understand well about English lesson (Jakfar, 2013). when teaching English, teachers meet unique students, contexts and goals (Jakfar, 2013). In this case teachers have to consider those things to teach English well. In fact, The teachers are hard to achieve the students' goals and competence, moreover they do not provide an appropriate feedback to the students who are lack of motivation in learning language.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) the teachers have to consider some of careful consideration to teach English. First, teachers have to consider students needs. Teachers have to know what students' goals, motivation, and necessity in learning. Second, teachers have to consider about students characteristics. Teachers may meet unique students in a classroom which students who have different ability for comprehending a lesson. In this case teachers are challenged to guide and give attention more for students. Third, teachers are supposed to consider the cultural context.

Assessment is considered to be a critical component in the process of teaching and learning. Without an effective assessment program it is impossible to know whether students have learned, whether teaching has been effective, or how best to address student learning needs (McMillan, Venable & Varier, 2013). The students of class XII do not comprehend what teacher instructed to them and they do not have idea what to do next after they did an activity. The problem of teaching and learning in a class of SMAN 2 Singkep is as a basis of the study.

Formative assessment is important to create a closer link, essentially a relationship, between assessment and learning which focus on what happens in the classroom, on the nature of interactions between teachers and students, as well as on the quality of their

educational experience, therefore formative assessment affirms that teachers should make assessment a force for student support, motivation and growth, rather than judgement to achieve student's goal (Butt, 2010; Brink & Batz 2017; Mcmillan, Venable & Varier 2013).

The investigation which is conducted by Suryoputro and Akip (2016), Rostami *et al*, (2012), Munoz and Alvarez (2009), Green (2013), Safa and Goodarzi (2014), Kirkpatrick (2012), Beikmahdavi (2016), Azadi & Gholami (2013) and Sukyadi & Mardiani (2011), Syafei (2010) have not focused on the washback of formative assessment.

The studies which are investigated by Ongange *et.al* (2018), Arrafaii & Sumarni (2018), Widiastuti & Saukah (2017) McMillan, Venable & Varier (2013) Guadu & Boersma (2018) Quyen & Khairani (2016) Shore *et.al* (2016) have only focused on the problems that instructors faced in providing the instructions at primary school. The previous study which is conducted by Aji & Hartono, (2019) the study only focuses on teacher's practice of assessment and oral performance. The study is lack of investigation on students and student's writing.

This study focuses on how the formative assessment provides washback in EFL instructions which the subject of research is English teacher and students of SMA N 2 Singkep. The investigation look deeper in how teachers provide the instructions for the students, how the formative assessment provide the washback in EFL teaching and learning process, and how the teachers motivate the students by implementing formative assessment in order to achieve the competencies.

The significance of the study are that theoretically it contributes to the teacher how to implement formative assessment which promote positive washback in EFL instructions, pedagogically it contributes the enhancement of the learners and teacher by using the feedback for learning in future work, practically it contributes to the parent, educators at senior, junior, elementary, or university level regarding a deliberate process of the washback of formative assessment in

order to provide specific, actionable, and immediate feedback in EFL instructions.

## METHOD

This study employs qualitative study. Qualitative research is chosen as this study focuses on teacher's perspectives and practice of formative assessment, the washback of formative assessment in EFL teaching, and the washback of formative assessment in EFL learning. Furthermore to gather information on the issues multiple data source is needed such as observation guideline, interview, document analysis, and questionnaire.

The main unit analysis is the teacher's perception and practice of formative assessment, teacher's instruction during teaching and learning process, the washback of formative assessment towards students and teacher in teaching and learning process, teaching material, learning material, and the students' writing task. The research subject is senior high school students grade XII and 1 English teacher.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this part, the result of the investigation of the study is presented. It includes teacher's good perception on formative assessment which is drawn from interview questions and observation guideline, positive washback on EFL teaching is drawn from document analysis, observation, and interview, lastly positive washback on EFL learning is drawn from questionnaire and observation are presented as well.

### Teacher's Good Perception on Formative Assessment

Based on the classroom observation (31/10/2019), the teacher started the lesson by explaining the lesson she taught, the goal of the lesson and what the students should achieve with the lesson. Secondly, the teacher engaged the students in explaining the material by asking question, instruction, discussion, so that

the students were enthusiastic. After the teacher explained the material, she instructed the students to do some tasks in order to know how far the students' understanding about the lesson. In doing tasks, the teacher monitored the students one by one and provided suggestion to the students. The teacher also instructed the students to do their task in a whiteboard. This activity was utilized by teacher to promote self-assessment among the students in classroom. The activity also promoted peer assessment among the students. Next, the teacher instructed the students to do a task individually. Based on the preliminary data, the tasks were provided by some written feedback, and grade.

The data from interview and observation, it can be stated that the English teacher of SMA N 2 Singkep explains that formative assessment is crucial for teachers and students. The formative assessment can assist the teacher to know students' understanding about the lesson. There were a lot of benefits when teacher use formative assessment for students.

English teacher used computer and internet connection to support their students in learning English especially application letter topic. After the teacher explained the goal the lesson and the material, the teacher instructed the students to doing tasks by using computer with internet connection individually. Teacher let the students to use the learning media, and gave a chance to the students in using various learning sources.

Furthermore, the teacher has an opinion that by using computer and internet connection as media, the teacher is easy to instruct the students to look for the example of the task, and to type the task by using computer. After the students are done with their task, the teacher gives suggestion towards the task, so the English teacher of SMA N 2 Singkep thinks that the implementation of formative assessment will be better.

The findings above are different from the study conducted by Tang (2013) which the study found that the focus is only on students

not teacher which the finding of the study is a comparison between students who are assessed by formative assessment and summative assessment. In fact, the current study focused on the teacher's practice, understanding, and perspective about formative assessment. The current study also conducted a deeper investigation on formative assessment.

The findings above also fill gap on the investigation about formative assessment which have not focused on the English Foreign Language instructions at senior high school yet. It has only focused on the problems that instructors faced in providing the instructions at primary school (Ongange *et.al*, 2018; Arrafaii & Sumarni, 2018; Widiastuti & Saukah, 2017; McMillan, Venable & Varier, 2013; Guadu & Boersma, 2018; Quyen & Khairani, 2016; Shore *et.al*, 2016).

#### **Positive Washback on EFL Teaching**

The English teacher noticed that without good preparation, it will be confused to give instruction to the students in classroom. The finding was taken from teacher's interview which support the collected data. The lesson plan has guided the teacher to teach English systematically. It started from opening activity, core activity, and closing activity. According to document analysis guideline, the indicators had been successfully designed in accordance to the output standard (*SKL*), core competence (*KI*), and basic competence (*KD*).

Based on the collected data taken from classroom observation (31/10/2019), the teacher completely developed students' active participation through interaction among teacher, students, and learning source, responded students' positive participation, appreciated students responses, gave chance to the students to actively participate through group work, and discuss with friend. But based on the observation data, the teacher applied the students to work individually and in group.

The teacher preferred the students to work or do the task individually. The reason was that the teacher thinks that by working individually, the teacher can make sure that the

students understand the lesson. The teacher also could assess and find out the students' ability in finishing a task, if students worked in group, the students would be cheating, the task would be copied and pasted from the others.

Based on the collected data drawn by classroom observation (31/10/2019), the English teacher was partially complete using English in giving instruction. In explaining the learning material, the teacher also use bilingual language. The English teacher used English and Bahasa Indonesia in order to make the students understand well what have been instructed by the English teacher. But in fact, the English teacher is completely set the class into English learning environment and give chance to the students to practice using English during learning activity.

In addition, The teacher used bilingual language such as English and Bahasa Indonesia because the students did not understand what the teacher instructed. She stated that using bilingual language is to make sure the students comprehend the lesson in classroom. In fact, even though her English is not good, the teacher tried to make classroom to be English learning environment, and give a chance to the students to practice using English during learning activity.

The findings above are different from the study conducted by Suryoputro and Akip (2016) Rostami *et al* (2012), Munoz and Alvarez (2009), Green (2013) Safa and Goodarzi (2014) Kirkpatrick (2012) Beikmahdavi (2016) Azadi & Gholami (2013), Sukyadi & Mardiani (2011), Syafei (2010) which the study found that the investigation regarding the washback of language assessment was on portfolio assessment, task-based assesment, and oral assessment system. In fact, the current study identified a gap to investigate the washback of formative assessment in EFL instruction which the subject of the researcher is an English teacher and students class XII of SMA N 2 Singkep.

### **Positive Washback on EFL Learning**

The data was compiled by applying classroom observation and questionnaire sheet. Based on the data collected by observation check, it was found that the students were confident in questioning during learning process in classroom, students responded the teacher's instruction, and students actively participated in group work, discussed the learning materials with their friends, and participated in assessing another student's task done on a whiteboard.

Based on the data compiled by using questionnaire sheet, it is found that the students showed that they are confident in speaking English during learning process in classroom, and they did not feel anxious or stressed while doing a task, because the teacher enhanced, developed, and gave a chance to involving in learning process for the students.

Based on questionnaire sheet, the students mostly believed that they received some feedback and advice in detail in order to solve and improve the mistake done by the students. In this case, it was related to the finding of first research problem which the teacher provided some feedback, suggestion and advice for students in order to make the students knew their mistake and solve it, so they knew next step of the learning material.

Based on the data collected by using questionnaire sheet, it was found that formative assessment provided washback in EFL learning. The washback was that the students have good relationship with English teacher. Based on the observation checklist, the students had good relationship with the teacher. The relationship conducted between students and teacher shows that the students are interested in learning English and giving question and motivated in following learning process.

Another finding was taken from questionnaire sheet. The finding was that the students are enthusiastic in doing task instructed by the teacher. Based on the questionnaire sheet, the students mostly admitted that the teacher paid attention on individual student's need. The teacher

facilitated some simplicity for the students, so the students are able to learn the English material in easy way, and to understand the English topic theoretically and practically.

The findings above are different from the study conducted by Aji and Hartono (2019) which the study did not see on students side. The study only investigated the oral performance such as teacher's oral instruction. In fact, the current study investigates EFL learning which the subject of the research is students class XII of SMA N 2 Singkep. The current study investigates the teacher's written feedback on student's writing.

### **CONCLUSION**

The teacher's perception of formative assessment at SMAN 2 Singkep shows that an English teacher stated some good perceptions regarding formative assessment practice and understanding. The formative assessment can help the teacher to find out the students' comprehension regarding the material which has been taught by the teacher. Secondly, the washback provision of formative assessment in EFL teaching shows that positive washback in EFL teaching which the teacher has good preparation in designing lesson plan and achieving competence. The lesson plan has guided the teacher to teach English systematically. It started from opening activity, core activity, and closing activity. The washback provision of formative assessment in EFL learning shows that positive washback in EFL learning which the students are successful on learning participation. The students were confident in questioning during the learning process in the classroom, students responded to the teacher's instruction, and students actively participated in group work, discussed the learning materials with their friends, and participated in assessing another student's task done on a whiteboard. The students also have good responsibility in improving English learning and good relationship between the teacher and the students in a classroom.

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