

PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LESSONS WITHIN PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Pavlyuk V.

*PhD in Pedagogics, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages,
Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9612-2218
Uman, Ukraine
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11390639>*

Abstract

This article examines the role and impact of formative assessment in English language lessons within primary educational institutions. Formative assessment, characterized by its continuous and developmental nature, holds significant promise in fostering effective learning environments, particularly in the domain of language acquisition. Through a comprehensive review of literature and empirical evidence, this study elucidates the various strategies and methodologies employed in formative assessment practices tailored to English language instruction at the primary level. Furthermore, it explores the benefits of integrating formative assessment techniques, such as peer assessment, self-assessment, and constructive feedback, into pedagogical approaches. The article also addresses the challenges and considerations in implementing formative assessment in primary English language classrooms, including teacher readiness, assessment design, and cultural factors. By synthesizing theoretical frameworks with practical insights, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of how formative assessment can optimize learning outcomes and language proficiency among primary school learners.

Keywords: formative assessment, primary education, learning outcomes, pedagogical approaches, peer assessment, self-assessment, feedback, primary school learners, language proficiency

Teaching students is the main goal of the educational system and requires methods of assessing students' knowledge and competencies. In this context, the importance of formative assessment cannot be overestimated. The concept of "formative assessment" arose in American pedagogy back in the 60s of the 20th century, so the methods of conducting formative assessment are very diverse. Formative assessment is assessment during learning and "for learning". It is "formative" because, unlike the final one, it aims to shape (or format) the educational process taking into account the educational needs of each student for the more effective formation of the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes. Formative assessment is sometimes called assessment for learning, and it usually involves some form of diagnostic testing that allows a teacher to identify gaps in student learning and then target a student with those gaps by adjusting the instructional planning sequence to address those gaps.

The following scientists contributed to the development of formative assessment ideas: O. Kmit, A. Panayiotis, M. James, D. Chróinín, C. Cosgrave, etc. O. Kmyt in the method of formative assessment in primary school singles out the following components - the first component involves the definition of objective and understandable for students learning goals for learning a foreign language in each lesson, where the set goals are the desired learning outcomes and provide a clear idea of the need for mastery language, speech, linguistic and educational-strategic competences; the second component of the method of formative assessment is effective feedback, which acts in two directions: on a teacher and on a student, and provides a teacher with

information about the level of success of the students. The third component of the method of formative assessment in foreign language primary education is ensuring the active participation of students in the process of mastering a foreign language. The fourth component involves the development and discussion of criteria with the involvement of students [3].

A. Panayiotis and M. James, considering the effectiveness of formative assessment, argue that most teachers see advantages in formative assessment that can benefit both students and teachers, but the latter cannot accurately describe the practical experience of formative assessment. In general, formative assessment is considered by teachers as reporting to parents, external motivation of students, organization of group learning, posing many other questions during learning, etc. [7].

It should be noted that in educational activities, teachers pay attention to the coverage of the planned curriculum, and not to the students' learning itself, but the main goal of education is to promote understanding, not short-term memorization. That is why a modern teacher should use in his classes methods that involve students using their knowledge, connecting them with the real context, and pay attention to formative assessment in the context of reforming the Ukrainian primary school.

According to the State Standard of Primary Education of Ukraine, obtaining data, analyzing them, and formulating judgments about the results of students' learning are carried out in the process of formative assessment, the purpose of which is to track the personal

development of students and the acquisition of educational experience; final evaluation, the purpose of which is to correlate the educational achievements of students with the mandatory/expected learning outcomes determined by the State Standard or the curriculum. It must be taken into account that formative assessment begins from the first days of schooling and continues continuously. For the effectiveness of formative assessment, it is recommended to follow the teacher's activity algorithm during its organization:

1. formulation of objective and understandable educational goals for students;
2. definition of assessment criteria together with students;
3. forming the subject position of students in the assessment process;
4. creation of conditions for the formation of students' ability to analyze their own educational activity (reflection);
5. adjustment of approaches to learning together with the students, taking into account the results of the assessment [6].

Speaking about formative assessment in primary school according to the requirements of the New Ukrainian School, it should be noted that the use of the latter in the classroom means that the teacher monitors the students' learning, providing regular and timely feedback about what the students did well and what they need to improve. Formative assessment can take many forms, from informal tests to verbal feedback on work. In order to be effective in the classroom, formative assessment must occur every day during teaching and learning. It is also conducted to help teachers decide how to further develop students' understanding of the material taught.

Formative assessment can serve a variety of aim, including highlighting gaps in student learning that require further clarification; identification of strengths and weaknesses of an individual student in comparison with others; measurement of the amount of knowledge that students have received; providing a system for comparing the educational achievements of students in a class, district and country as a whole. Within the stated goals, four types of formative assessment practices are distinguished:

1. Clarifying learning (what teachers want students know and be able to do) is to explain to students the motivation for their learning, help them evaluate themselves in comparison with others and determine where they are on the learning ladder.
2. Gathering evidence involves the creation of effective discussions and questions, the organization of action locations in the lesson, etc., in order to meet the educational needs of students at the moment and promote students' thinking.
3. Providing feedback (how students know what to work on next) involves working with students to obtain information needed to better understand learning problems and their solutions.
4. Activation of students' motivation to study (in what way can we encourage students to study and help their peers). In the process of observation, it was found that when students were involved in monitoring their

own progress, they were "more autonomous and could accurately predict their success." To help students develop an academic growth mindset, teachers can actively support them in finding learning strategies that work best for them by providing opportunities for self-evaluation, setting learning goals, and monitoring their own progress [5].

Formative assessment explores the benefits of integrating formative assessment techniques, such as peer assessment, self-assessment, and constructive feedback, into pedagogical approaches. By incorporating peer assessment, students actively engage in evaluating their peers' work, fostering a collaborative learning environment where they not only receive feedback but also develop critical thinking and analytical skills. Similarly, self-assessment encourages students to reflect on their own learning progress, strengths, and areas for improvement, empowering them to take ownership of their learning journey. Additionally, providing constructive feedback, both from teachers and peers, facilitates targeted interventions and helps students identify specific areas where they can enhance their language proficiency. This integration of formative assessment techniques not only enhances the quality of instruction but also promotes student-centered learning experiences that cater to individual needs and promote holistic development.

When considering methods of formative assessment, such methods 'What Well Well' (WWW) and 'Even better if' (EBI). This feedback involves students understanding what they have achieved to date and what they need to do next to make further progress in their learning. When using formative assessment methods, it is necessary to follow the following structure: setting the task, checking students' work, informing about instructions and teaching methods.

Examples of formative assessment in the classroom include:

- Analysis of a student's work - self-assessment, assessment of others or peer assessment;
- Strategic questioning (students are asked questions to assess their understanding of the material based on their answers);
- Three-part summary – students write three summaries in response to a topic to test their understanding of its content;
- Exchange in groups - students discuss the topic in pairs, and teachers record their discussions;
- Survey in the classroom - did everyone understand?
- One-minute reports - students briefly write down their answers, summarizing their key knowledge of the topic;
- Spontaneous quizzes and voting exercises;
- Mind maps – encourage students to summarize what they already know about the topic in a creative and visual way;
- Concluding paragraphs – short written exercises to understand how well the students understood the topic;
- Visual exercises – a teacher offers students to draw something or create a collage on the studied topic;

- "Questions and answers" exercises — encourage students to ask questions and observe their classmates' answers;

- Short presentations – a teacher asks students to make short presentations on the topic to show what they have learned during the study of the topic.

- Exit ticket – a teacher offers to answer questions at the end of the lesson, which are related to the topic or previously studied material.

Considering formative assessment in Ukrainian primary educational institutions, we note that the latter should take place in every foreign language lesson. The experience of the world's leading educational institutions, in particular, Great Britain, will be useful in the implementation of formative assessment. Thus, in Ireland the Education Act (1998) and the Irish Primary School Curriculum (1999) define assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, which can help determine what and how a child learns. In the Irish context, a combination of formative and summative assessment using a wide range of assessment strategies is recommended at primary level with specific guidance on the use of teacher observations, teacher-designed tasks and physical education curriculum profiles [2, p.220].

Cockenzie Primary School (UK) has implemented the following formative assessment strategies to improve student learning. Increased waiting time encourages all children to respond. Talking Partners is an opportunity to have a short discussion with others and learn new ideas. Asking open-ended questions encourage children to think, and not just answer "yes" or "no"; Feedback - focusing on a specific learning intention at the appropriate time, self/peer assessment in which children take responsibility for reporting their work to a teacher/group. Colored marks for growth indicate success and a problem that needs to be worked on. 'Traffic light' strategy when children show how well they have understood the task (can be used to find out how well a child thinks they have completed the task).

At Blue Drive Primary School (England), formative assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning cycle and is an important part of effective educational practice in the classroom. Formative, summative and diagnostic assessment policies for speaking, reading and writing are interrelated as reading comprehension can be improved in both speaking and writing. Every year, the school conducts a planned three-year cycle of professional development of teachers for their progress in accordance with the requirements of the national curriculum and modernity [1].

We can conclude that formative assessment has many advantages in teaching primary students in English classes and helps them accurately understand the level at which they are working. In addition, formative assessment allows putting their level of understanding in the context of what they have learned, reduces learning gaps, gives children a clear idea of how they are

progressing and what they need to do to improve their learning outcomes. Formative assessment sets students clear educational goals and increases their involvement in learning; helps provide more targeted and personalized feedback to students, etc. As a perspective, we see the appropriate use of the above-mentioned methods of formative assessment in English language classes, which will help teachers to track children's progress in an interesting and less formal way, to test them both in the classroom and in individual assessment of students. At the same time, a teacher has the opportunity to create his own approach that will allow children make a certain contribution to learning, providing them with useful and consistent feedback. Among the advantages of formative assessment, we can highlight teachers' understanding of students' material acquisition and the ability to adjust teaching, when they can use the results of formative assessment to improve their own educational achievements and progress, adjust learning under the guidance of teachers, increase motivation, etc.

References:

1. Assessing-English (2019) URL: <https://ukla.org/wp-content/uploads/View-Assessing-English.pdf> (accessed May 10, 2024).
2. Déirdre Ní Chróinín & Caitríona Cosgrave (2013) Implementing formative assessment in primary physical education: teacher perspectives and experiences, *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 18:2, 219-233, DOI: 10.1080/17408989.2012.666787
3. Kmit O.V. (2021). The method of formative assessment in foreign language education of junior high school students. *Moderní aspekty vědy. Svazek XI mezinárodní kolektivní monografie*. Pp. 306-316.
4. Formative-Assessment. (2022) URL: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/teaching-wiki/formative-assessment> (accessed May 2, 2024).
5. Four Formative Assessment Practices that Make a Difference in Classrooms (2016). URL: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED567811.pdf> (accessed April 20, 2024).
6. Methodological recommendations of Ministry of education and science for 1-4 classes (2023). URL: <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/zatverdzheno-metodichni-rekomendaciyi-shodo-ocinyuvannya-rezultativ-navchannya-uchniv-1-4-klasiv>
7. Panayiotis, A., J. Mary. (2014). Exploring formative assessment in Primary School Classrooms: Developing a Framework of Actions and Strategies.. *Educational Assessment Evaluation and Accountability*. 10.1007/s11092-013-918.
8. What is formative assessment? Why do students need it and what are the main challenges. (2021). URL: <https://nus.org.ua/view/shho-take-formuvalne-otsinyuvannya-chomu-vono-potribne-uchnyam-i-yaki-osnovni-vyklyky/> (accessed May 1, 2024).