



STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK PRACTICES: MAKING LEARNING VISIBLE

Author

Ida Ayu made Sri Widiastuti

idaayuwidia@unmas.ac.id
Universitas Negeri Malang

Nur Mukminatien

nur.mukminatien.fs@um.ac.id
Universitas Negeri Malang

Johannes Ananto Prayogo

Johannes.annanto.fs@um.ac.id
Universitas Negeri Malang

Enny Irawati

enny.irawati.fs@um.ac.id
Universitas Negeri Malang

ABSTRACT

This study explores students' perception of assessment and feedback practices in EFL classroom. Assessment and feedback are considered as strong motivators for learning by the students, meanwhile, some students still find that assessment is not beneficial for them as the feedback given by the teachers are really appropriate with their assignment. Feedback must be given in a constructive and specific manner and delivered immediately to the students. This study revealed that positive feedback certainly motivates students to improve their learning. Negative feedback given publicly may ashamed students and weakens their motivation. The study also shows that feedback was still not properly provided by the teachers, therefore this study suggest that further training should be conducted to develop teachers' competence in giving feedback.

Keywords: Students' Perception, Assessment, Feedback Practices, Learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a systematic process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting information to determine the extent to which students reach the goal. Based on the description above, assessment is a process of collecting various data that can provide a general description of students' learning progress (Newton, 2007). Assessment for learning includes strategies that involve the teacher during teaching and learning (Newton, 2007). It serves the purpose of supporting and developing student learning and allows students to become independent and independent learners (Wiliam, 2011). These strategies include promoting student understanding of their own learning goals and expected performance, and generation of feedback by teachers and students on their current versus desired performance. In this view, the

involvement of students in peer assessment and self-assessment, and taking control of their learning through self-assessment is important for the development of their learning (Popham, 2008; Lysaght, 2015).

There are two types of classroom assessment, namely; formative and summative assessment. It is however important for the teacher to understand that formative and summative assessment has different aim although both can be administered in a classroom (Saefurrohman and Balinas, 2016). Formative assessment is aimed to see how well students learning meanwhile summative is intended to measure students' achievement after a period of learning. Both types of assessment are considered as a classroom assessment which should be conducted by the teachers as an effort to measure students' learning competence and finally to improve learning based on the result of the assessment



(Popham, 2008; Lysaght, 2015). The result of the assessment consequently becomes a source for learning modification which should be done by the teachers to establish effective learning (Asghar, 2013).

In recent years however formative assessment has attracted most of the attention of educationalists and researchers. Formative assessment becomes an attractive form of assessment because it has the capacity to see students' progress as well as the capacity to help students recognize areas for further improvement (Bennet, 2011; Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, and Chappuis, 2006). In order to enable teachers, gather the real information concerning student progress, and then formative assessment should be planned and conducted properly. Moreover, formative assessment allows teachers to provide feedback on the students' progress (Decristan, et al., 2015; Leung, & Scott, 2009).

Formative assessment is a process which in order to improve learning, the teacher recognizes and responds to students' individual learning (Decristan, et al., 2015), while summative assessment provides information to the teacher about the level of student proficiency. Summative assessment is usually conducted at the end of the learning process, identifies the student's ability at this time, and requires teachers to assess students' proficiency or competence (Tsayari, and Vogt, 2017). This provides an opportunity for policymakers, teachers, parents, and students themselves to monitor the progress of education made by students, compared to external standards or the performance of their peers. Summative assessment has disadvantages, such as being individualistic and isolated from the learning process, but still relevant to the assessment process. On the other hand, normative judgments are conceptualized as part of contextual and integral learning and have multi-methods. Thus, formative assessment offers a holistic alternative to summative assessment, something that has been recognized in constructivist learning (Decristan, et al., 2015; Elliott, & Yu, 2013).

The roles of teachers, students, and interactions are designed to support learning, which is realized through gathering evidence and using feedback to inform learning. However, as suggested by the complications above, the theory and practice of formative assessment (Heritage, 2007) and feedback seem to be at a crossroads. Justification of their use and effectiveness, and their specific development is increasingly present in the education literature, but the limited scope of their use in actual teaching practices has been repeatedly (Widiastuti, and Saukah, 2017). As a result, various research and development projects have been designed and conducted out investigating teacher understanding and formative feedback strategies in elementary schools (Black, and William, 2009) conducted research significant who have made important contributions in providing insight and understanding in assessment practices that support teaching and learning.

Both assessment and feedback assessment plays an important role in directing students to learn,

they must be incorporated into teaching and learning strategies (Black, and William, 2009). feedback consists of information "provided by agents (eg teachers, peers, books, parents, independent, experience) regarding aspects of a students' performance or understanding. Feedback needs to provide information that bridges the gap between what is understood and what is intended to be understood. To be effective, feedback needs to discuss certain tasks or learning processes (Budianto, Mukminatien, and Latief, 2016). Consequently, feedback should clearly be understood by the students in order that they can improve their learning achievement.

Feedback is an important aspect of assessment to support learning. Feedback can exist in various forms, from comments written in the form of editorial signs to oral or cue responses to students. Feedback is often embedded in the teaching/learning process. The teacher can plan feedback to students or it can be a spontaneous process. This is an important component in the assessment of the learning process both for teachers and for students. Feedback informative functions can reduce the gap between students' current understanding of their performance and the goals they are trying to achieve. Ideally, effective feedback allows students to self-assess, reflect on themselves, and self-regulate their learning (Black, and William, 2009). Independent learning is organized as a process for students to set their own goals for their learning, and then monitor and regulate their motivation, behavior, and cognition to achieve their goals. During this process, teacher facilitator feedback was significant for successful achievement.

Formative assessment and feedback aim to enable students to self-assess, reflect and monitor their learning to grow as lifelong learners (Filsecker, M., & Kerres, 2012). Feedback on assignments is the most effective when interpretations are wrongly handled because learners benefit from additional instruction in completing their assignments. When feedback is focused on the processing level (Black, and William, 1998), it can help students develop methods for finding errors that can lead to the development of an understanding of the relationships between different tasks, and transferring that learning to new tasks (Black, and William, 2009). As a result, effective feedback is more than general praise to students: it must be accompanied by information that can be followed up for students to do. Feedback focused on self-regulation helps students engage in their assignments.

In order for feedback to be formative, it must be communicated to students and by the way, they can be involved with feedback. Understanding and involvement of students with feedback are considered significant and important conditions in bridging the gap between current and desired achievements. Understanding the phenomenon of assessment practices as described above, therefore this study is considered to be highly important to be intensively carried out a real classroom setting. This study specifically investigates students' perception of assessment and feedback practices in



junior high school. Therefore the findings of this study provide a horizon for the teachers related to their classroom duties and necessary improvement can be designed by the teachers for the sake of a better learning condition.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Assessment becomes formative when the evidence produced is used to adapt teaching to improve learning (McMillan, Venable, & Varier, 2013). Other definitions have emphasized that formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students to improve learning, or carried out during instruction to improve teaching/learning. Formative assessment as all activities carried out by teachers and students in assessing themselves, provided that the information is used to modify teaching and learning activities by both teachers and students (Forbes, Sabel, & Biggers, 2015; Popham, 2008; Lysaght, 2015).

Therefore, in order to ensure effective formative assessment, they advise teachers to carry out formative assessments during learning and employ carefully selected activities designed to enhance learning by involving students in the process, using information gathered for feedback to teaching. These different definitions reveal the second complication for teachers who apply a new paradigm: the term formative assessment is open to many things (Decristan, et al., 2015).

Formative assessment has been defined as a frequent and interactive assessment of student progress, where teachers identify learning needs is important to modify their teaching style (Popham, 2008; Lysaght, 2015). In practice, generally, teachers provide information about their teaching, but do not involve the teacher or inform students about their learning. Furthermore, the objectives for using formative assessment in classrooms are very diverse: as information and feedback to students about their performance to enhance their learning; as part of classroom activities and instructions; as something that involves students in an independent learning environment and as an effective teaching element in learning (Frunza, 2014; Good, 2011).

Overall, the changing understanding of understanding has resulted in changes in the language used by and the roles and responsibilities given to teachers and students in the assessment process (Gourja, & Radid, 2015). However, for many teachers, the change is not uniform. As noted, formative assessment is focused on improving student development during learning, through teacher/student interactions (Viktorovna, & Arkadyevna, 2015), but as researchers have found, the differences between these two strategies are often blurred in teacher understanding, especially regarding strategies for second implementation the type of assessment in the classroom (McMillan, Venable, & Varier, 2013). Especially, this is because teachers are still not sure how formative aspects of assessment work in practice. In their classrooms, they may see themselves giving

formative assessments, when in fact they are carrying out ongoing summative assessments (Kuzel, & Shumba, 2011)

Widiastuti and Saukah (2016) argue that one of the main influences on teacher difficulties is the lack of understanding they have to distinguish between assessment for summative goals and formative assessment. According to these researchers, teachers often struggle to distinguish judgments for two different goals, which means that the task itself is a challenge for them. In response to these findings, researchers recommend professional development to help clarify formative and summative assessments and to develop teacher understanding of the practice of providing assessment and feedback.

Formative key features in the assessment process must improve student learning, increasing agreement among educators is that assessment can be used to build student achievement and measure their performance and achievements in learning (Heritage, 2007) and that this information must be used to improve student learning and performance during the learning process. Using formative assessment effectively, the teacher is actually involved in the process of gathering and interpreting evidence to compile learning through information scaffolding with students. As a prerequisite for leading learning, rather than reacting retrospectively to it, the teacher needs to be aware of the students' observations that are meticulously through the moments that emerge from learning, using formal assessment and determining what is in the student's reach. Formative assessment in this context allows the teacher to provide students with experience and support that ideally enables students to incorporate new learning into generally developed learning skills (Heritage, 2007).

Feedback

The positive impact of feedback can be realized in the form of increasing student motivation or involvement in their learning, while explicit support provided by the teacher through the feedback process can help students (Black, and Wiliam, 2009). restructure their understanding, inform them whether they are right or wrong, show them what additional information can include, and indicate the possibility of another path for them to explore. If feedback is targeted carefully, it can be activated by students to obtain and utilize appropriate strategies to process learning objects (Black, and Wiliam, 2009).

Negative feedback has the potential to be stronger than positive feedback. However, to be effective, negative feedback needs to be supplemented with supporting information that shows how students should respond. In addition, poorly presented feedback was responsible for its low efficacy as a learning tool, rather than knowledge disability on the part of students. Students can learn from feedback related to their capacity to understand and apply feedback to advance their learning (Black, and Wiliam, 2009). Understanding useful judgments for improving students own learning is



more likely to show high achievement. Therefore assessment becomes assessment for learning.

III. RESEACH METHOD

This study made use of a qualitative research design investigating students' perception of formative assessment feedback. The data were collected by using interviews with Junior High school students in Bali. The total numbers of the participants in the study were six Junior High Schools students. Participants of the study were selected purposively from different grades. This was done to ensure the data were collected from appropriate sources.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in a relaxing and conducive atmosphere. The interview is a non-testing method of gathering information through direct communication with a source of the data. The interviews were conducted to get more compressive data concerning the students' perceptions of formative assessment feedback and how feedback improves their leaning.

This study made use of qualitative procedure with descriptive analysis. Qualitative research with a descriptive analysis is merely intended to analyze the existing phenomena or the data by describing carefully and deeply in detail. Qualitative data analysis is usually based on interpretative philosophy to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data by analyzing the interview data in-depth analysis by means of description.

IV. RESEARCH RESULT

The results of this study are briefly presented in this section and this discussion of the findings is then argumentative discussed based on interpretive analysis of the findings.

Result

The findings of this study deal with students' perception of assessment and feedback practices employed by the teachers. The assessment practices discussed here mainly formative assessment and students' perception feedback mainly deals with the following subheadings, namely; Feedback is often short and fine. Feedback is sometimes not specifically related to assignments Feedback that stimulates deep level thinking, learning, and critical thinking is highly valued. Those heading are presented with a short excerpt of the interviewed and then argumentative and factual description was presented to strengthen the discussions.

Students' perception of assessments practiced by the teachers

The following are some excerpts of students' perception of formative assessment implemented by the teachers in English as a foreign language classroom.

"My teacher gives a written test in the form of multiple choice test at the end of the learning unit but my teacher never give me any feedback"

The excerpt above showed that the English teacher provided their students with a test for formative assessment at the end of the learning unit. They however merely used multiple choice tests. It is debatable that multiple choice tests are not really sufficient to measure all language skills and language components. Some variation of tests should be certainly conducted to ensure the data regarding students' ability can be collected. Therefore, some improvement can be carried out by the teacher.

"My teacher always gives me an extra assignment to do at the end of learning unit. He however never returns my work, my teacher simply told my score in front of my class".

The excerpt clearly indicated that the teacher conducted a formative assessment at the end of the learning unit but by giving more assignment from the students' workbook. Using an assignment from the course book as a tool to assess the students' learning achievement needs to be carefully considered by the teachers to ensure the quality of the assignment fits the principles of formative assessment. Teachers, in this case, have to really ascertain about the characteristics of the assignment to suit the requirement of formative assessment. It is sometimes hard to decide which assignment should be used.

"When the learning unit is completed, my teacher gives me some assignment to do. My teacher didn't really correct my assignment, he just writes phrases 'good', 'very good'. There is no other description"

The excerpt above also indicated that formative assessment was conducted by the teacher and also some feedback was provided although still very minimum in which teachers merely write on the students' assignment very short phrases after correcting the students' assignment. In a way by giving a short remark might sufficient, however, it is much more influential feedback if a very strong and clear description was provided to ensure that students' really understand and they can use the feedback as a tool for improvement.

"my teachers always give me test at the end of the learning unit. He prepared the test but mainly only a short instruction telling us to write a paragraph or sentences. There are no



comprehension questions given except the students' workbook"

This quote also showed that formative assessment was conducted at the end of the learning unit and a short instruction on how to do the test was provided. The students, however, wish to have a better type of test which allows them to browse their comprehension. I think doing comprehension question for the reading comprehension was not sufficient. Students also complain that the instruction is merely dealing with instruction on how to write a paragraph.

Students' Perception of Teachers' feedback

The discussion about teachers' feedback recently becomes very popular among educators and education practitioners. This is due to the importance of feedback for the improvement of students' learning.

Feedback is often short and fine.

The interviewed conducted to the students participated in this study clearly criticized that teachers feedback was given too short and fine. This may bring students unsatisfactorily acceptance towards the feedback given as it is hard for them to comprehend, as a result, the students might not be doing it properly.

"When I received my assignment, my teacher gave me very short comments on different areas at various times. The comments were mainly dealing with my pronunciation, sometimes, the use of words. I don't really know how they are connected to improve my oral performance in speaking"

The excerpt above indicated that the teacher only provides very short comments on the students' presentation which focused on words use and pronunciation. These specific areas of the presentation which deal with microlinguistics are probably should be given after giving feedback on the overall presentation. Using the deductive and inductive approach in giving feedback might be more acceptable for the students. Once general feedback is given, then teachers may go to more specific. By doing this, students are more aware of their errors.

Feedback is sometimes not specifically related to assignments.

Teachers are also found to provide feedback is not related to the assignment which really confused the students as they did not make sense what the teachers' comment as the comment was about different things which unfit with the students' existing assignment.

"My teacher sometimes gave us some discourse markers and expressions to learn, but my teacher didn't explain how to use them. Most of those expressions are not linked to a particular topic of learning unit on my workbook. I don't know whether using those phrases or not for my assignment"

This excerpt showed that the teacher provides comments which are not relevant. This certainly meaningless and even made the students really confused about what to do. Teachers are encouraged to provide strongly relevant feedback in order to be beneficial for the students. These types of feedback also give an impression that the teacher was not focused on giving feedback which in the long term deteriorates teachers' professionalism.

Specific feedback is sometimes too general and related to other topics.

Students also found the feedback given by the teacher was also too general and it related to other topics.

"my teacher sometimes gave us feedback for my assignment. They are written for a certain topic but the comments are rather general. For example, in assignments about my recount text about my memorable trip, the comments given were more about how to write other types of text. The comments are not specific for the recount text which explained about my memorable trip"

This excerpt indicated that the teacher did not provide feedback in line with the assignment. Feedback should be critical fits with the assignment otherwise it will not use for the students learning improvement. Prior to giving feedback, it is crucial for the teacher to read thoroughly the students' assignment and make an appropriate judgment on what feedback should be given to fit the students' condition of learning.

The feedback that stimulates deep level thinking, learning and critical thinking is highly valued

Some positive and motivating finding was the students found that feedback helps them develop level thinking, learning, and critical thinking.

"Sometimes my teacher gave positive feedback about my paragraph writing, which really guides me how to write a better paragraph"

The excerpt above shows that students found some benefit of feedback as it brings them to a better understanding of how to do a presentation. Teacher's feedback on their overall presentation, content, and language used certainly help students to do a more appropriate presentation. Teachers, in this case, are urged to be professional in giving feedback related to all aspects of the students' competence.

Discussion

The excerpts from the interview clearly indicated that students have various perception of teachers' assessment practices both positive and negative assessment. Students perceived that teachers only make use of multiple choice tests. Students believed that multiple-choice test insufficient since they could measure all their competence. Moreover, the continuous use of multiple choice tests made them bored and reluctant to do the test. Therefore variations on test types should more be intensified to be used to measure the students. Students also perceived that feedback given by the



teachers are still not enough because their teachers only provide them with very short phrases.

Providing brief comments may be considered enough from the teachers' views, feedback however for the students should very detail and should be easy to understand. This is important because confusing feedback may influence students' motivation in learning. In a certain occasion of learning teachers also provide students with other types of test in the form of instruction. This is a classic example of a teachers' test to measure students' writing. Ideally, teachers provide clear and detail instruction in order to be understood by the students easily and the writing can be written pursuant to the standard being prescribed by the teachers in the instruction of the test.

Understanding the essence of the above quote related to the students' perception of teachers' feedback for the students' assignments, it can be seen that only a few students commented that teachers only occasionally noted all the weaknesses of the students and their teachers tend to write very short phrases and never provided the students with clear and detail feedback. Teachers often focused on giving a very small part of linguistic features which most of them are unrelated to the students' presentation. Consequently, those comments made students confused about what to do their teachers' feedback. Students, on the other hand, expects that teachers go to specific linguistic components which support their presentation to perfect.

Teachers also often gave students negative feedback to the whole class but there are no special learning activities designed to improve students' competence based on formative assessment feedback. In addition, negative feedback is given by the teachers to the whole class, with reference to mistakes made by some students, making individual students feel ashamed and diminishing their confidence in front of the class. This negative impact of the teachers' feedback in term of students' motivation in learning should be avoided because it may have a strong negative impact on the students' learning motivation.

Students also mentioned that teachers noted some common mistakes made by the students and directly corrected them in front of the class. This way of giving feedback which is too opened for the other students made the student who made mistakes becomes uneasy in front of others. In addition, teachers openly told that the students 'that is not true' or 'that is wrong'. This kind of phrases should be really avoided since they made the students feel being mentally judged by the teachers in front of others. Teachers should then try to use more positive wording.

Negative feedback is often considered as rude and as a put-down activity by some students and, therefore, can be seen to undermine teacher-student relations. Students interviewed during a focus group meeting suggested that teachers should be democratic in giving feedback and should be really careful in order not to hurt the students' feeling. The students further urged that teachers should not openly criticize the

student in front of other students as they suggested comments given individually are more useful for them.

Some students also described that feedback given by the teachers help them improve their presentation. Students, however, expect that feedback should be given for specific areas and described clearly by the teachers in order easy for the students to make a correction. Students also wish that feedback should be given immediately. By having an immediate comment on the students' weaknesses, then immediate improvement can be carried out. This is understandable that nowadays students have an abundant assignment to do which often make then fully occupied with another assignment. Therefore hardworking and dedicated teachers are really needed.

The discussion above clearly shows that students feel that feedback works best when they are given early on with short criteria and detailed assessments for teacher expectations. They prefer receiving feedback through a one-to-one tutorial. They want focused and systematic feedback and appreciate it when embedded learning support. Some students identify suggestions as useful, which resonate with the idea that effective feedback delivered through one to one dialogue. Therefore, most students observe that to be effective, feedback should be appropriately given in immediate time framework. Moreover, feedback must be in a constructive manner in order to positively develop the students' motivation and their willingness to make a correction. The findings echo similar findings by some previous studies conducted by education experts who advocate that teachers must pay more attention to the quality and quantity of feedback and specificity and clarity of feedback in order to be useful for the students.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study shows that students have a diverse concept of assessment and approach to assessment situations with their own goals and intentions. Assessment and feedback can be seen by some students as strong motivators for learning, students perceived that positive feedback enhances their motivation and their willingness to improve their competence. This study argues that it is very important for teachers to appreciate students' achievement and feedback should be given in a positive manner. Moreover, teachers should be more specific in the areas of students' weakness. It is more important that feedback must be given publicly as it may deteriorate students' motivation in learning.

Recommendations

Some recommendations that can be submitted from the results of this study are as follows:

1. Teachers should be more careful and thoughtful in conducting classroom assessment in order to attain appropriate information about the students learning information



2. Teachers should provide appropriate feedback for the students to enable them to make correction
3. Both assessment and feedback should be considered as a part of learning process by all education stakeholder, therefore the intensity of assessment and feedback practices are conducted according to the recommended standard

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