



Formative Assessment Practices in an Elementary EFL Classroom: Implementation and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the implementation of formative assessment practices in an elementary English classroom at MI Perguruan Mu'allimat. The study aimed to identify how formative assessment was implemented during the teaching and learning process and to examine the challenges faced by the teacher during its implementation. This study employed a qualitative descriptive design involving one English teacher and classroom interaction in Grade 5C as the focus of the study. The data were collected through classroom observation, interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that formative assessment was implemented through oral questioning, prompting and corrective feedback, and classroom monitoring during classroom activities. These practices were used not only to identify students' understanding but also to encourage participation and maintain classroom interaction during the lesson. The study also identified several challenges in implementing formative assessment, including students' passive participation, differences in students' understanding, and limited classroom continuity caused by school activities and schedule interruptions. The findings indicate that formative assessment practices in elementary English classrooms are strongly influenced by classroom context and students' participation patterns. Therefore, teachers need to apply flexible formative assessment strategies that support both students' learning and classroom engagement.

Introduction

In English language teaching, formative assessment has gained significant attention because it supports students' learning through continuous classroom interaction, feedback, and monitoring during the instruction. Unlike summative assessment, which mainly measures final achievement, formative assessment focuses on identifying students' understanding and improving learning while instruction is taking place. Black & Wiliam (1998) formative assessment as classroom activities conducted by teachers and students to gather information that can be used to modify teaching and learning activities. In addition, Heritage (2010) emphasizes that formative assessment enables teachers to collect evidence of students' learning and provide feedback to support learning improvement. Recent studies also show that formative assessment positively affects students' learning achievement and

teaching effectiveness in EFL classrooms (Zhang et al., 2024). Furthermore, Allali & El Ghouati (2025) reported that formative assessment practices were perceived positively by teachers and were considered important in supporting classroom learning interaction. Therefore, formative assessment has become an essential practice in language learning environments.

In the context of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL), formative assessment plays an important role because elementary students require interactive, supportive, and meaningful learning experiences. Young learners tend to learn effectively through classroom interaction, repetition, questioning activities, and immediate feedback from teachers (Cameron, 2001). Similarly, Pinter (2017) explains that young learners need learning activities that gradually support their language development and participation during classroom instruction. Recent studies also emphasize that classroom-based assessment for young EFL learners should support students' interaction and learning engagement during classroom activities (Yan et al., 2022). Therefore, English teachers need appropriate formative assessment practices to monitor students' understanding and identify learning difficulties during the learning process. Classroom practices such as oral questioning, corrective feedback, classroom observation, and monitoring students' work are commonly implemented as formative assessment strategies in elementary English classrooms. Since young learners require continuous guidance, interaction, and immediate support during learning, formative assessment practices become an essential component of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL). Through strategies such as oral questioning, feedback, and classroom monitoring, teachers can identify students' understanding while simultaneously encouraging their participation in classroom activities. These considerations are particularly relevant in elementary English classrooms, including Grade 5C at MI Perguruan Mu'allimat, where students demonstrate different levels of participation and learning engagement.

Previous studies have discussed formative assessment in English language learning from different perspectives. Zhang et al. (2024) found that formative assessment improves students' learning outcomes and teaching effectiveness in K-12 EFL education. In the Indonesian context, Fitriani et al. (2021) reported that formative assessment supports students' participation and motivation during English learning activities. Furthermore, (Allali & El Ghouati, 2025) revealed that teachers generally have positive perceptions toward formative assessment practices, although several challenges still occur during classroom implementation. Similarly, Yolanda & Rodliyah (2024) identified challenges faced by Indonesian EFL teachers, including time limitations, classroom management, and differences in students' participation. Yan et al. (2022) also emphasized that classroom-based assessment for young EFL learners requires teachers to balance assessment activities with students' learning needs and classroom interaction.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into formative assessment, several research gaps remain. Most previous studies have focused on the effectiveness of formative assessment, teachers' perceptions, or its implementation in secondary schools, higher education, and technology-enhanced learning environments. Limited attention has been given to how formative assessment practices are implemented in elementary English

classrooms, what specific classroom strategies teachers employ during instruction, and what context-specific challenges they encounter, particularly in Indonesian Islamic elementary schools. Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by exploring formative assessment practices and the challenges experienced by an English teacher in Grade 5C at MI Perguruan Mu'allimat.

Based on a preliminary observation conducted at MI Perguruan Mu'allimat, the English teacher implemented several formative assessment practices during classroom instruction, including oral questioning, monitoring students' understanding, checking students' work, and providing corrective feedback. These practices were intended to monitor students' learning progress and support classroom interaction. However, differences in students' participation and classroom conditions appeared to create challenges during the implementation process. Some students tended to be passive and hesitant to respond during classroom activities, requiring the teacher to provide continuous guidance and encouragement. These classroom conditions indicate the need for further investigation into how formative assessment practices are implemented and the challenges encountered by the teacher in this particular context.

Therefore, this study aims to explore formative assessment practices in elementary English classrooms, particularly in Grade 5C at MI Perguruan Mu'allimat. This study also investigates the challenges faced by the English teacher during the implementation of formative assessment practices. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of formative assessment practices in Teaching English to Young Learners and provide practical insights for English teachers in elementary classrooms.

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore formative assessment practices in elementary English classrooms. Qualitative descriptive research is appropriate for investigating and describing phenomena based on participants' experiences and real classroom situations (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). In addition, Creswell (2012) that qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena through detailed data collection in natural settings. Therefore, this approach was considered suitable for examining how formative assessment practices were implemented by the English teacher and identifying the challenges faced during the implementation process.

This study was conducted at MI Perguruan Mu'allimat and involved one English teacher of Grade 5C as the research participant. The participant was selected purposively because the teacher taught English in Grade 5 and conducted regular classroom assessment activities during the teaching and learning process. The focus of this study was the implementation of formative assessment practices in teaching English to young learners in the classroom setting.

The data were collected through classroom observation, interviews, and documentation. Classroom observation was conducted to identify formative assessment practices implemented during the teaching and learning process, such as questioning, monitoring students' understanding, providing feedback, and checking students' work. The researcher used observation sheets and field notes to record classroom activities during the

observation process. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the English teacher to obtain deeper information regarding the implementation of formative assessment and the challenges encountered in the classroom. Documentation, such as lesson materials, classroom photographs, video recordings, and voice recordings were used to support and verify the observation and interview data."

The data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and categorized relevant data related to formative assessment practices and implementation challenges. Then, the data were organized and presented descriptively in the data display stage to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the patterns and findings identified during the analysis process. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, triangulation of data sources and techniques was applied by comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of formative assessment in the English classroom was conducted through several classroom practices, including oral questioning, feedback practices, and classroom monitoring. In addition, the study identified several challenges faced by the teacher during the implementation process, particularly related to students' participation and limited classroom continuity. The findings are presented in the following subthemes.

Table 1. Formative Assessment Practices Identified in the Classroom

Formative Assessment Practices	Classroom Evidence
Oral questioning	Asking factual and conceptual questions during lessons
Prompting feedback	Giving clues and simplified questions before answers
Corrective feedback	Correcting students' pronunciation and responses
Monitoring	Checking students' worksheets and classroom activities
Participation support	Encouraging passive students to respond
Classroom adjustment	Adapting instruction due to limited classroom continuity

Oral Questioning to Elicit Students' Understanding and Participation

Classroom observation revealed that oral questioning was frequently used during the teaching and learning process. The teacher employed various types of questions, including factual, conceptual, and guided questions, to explore students' understanding of the material about dates and months. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher asked simple questions

such as “Apa itu dates anak-anak?” (“What is the meaning of dates?”) and “Kalau month?” (“What is a month?”) to activate students’ prior knowledge before introducing the topic. The teacher also asked conceptual questions, such as “Kenapa bunyinya first bukan one?” (“Why is it pronounced *first* instead of *one*?”) to help students understand the concept of ordinal numbers in date expressions.

The questioning activities functioned not only as a way to check students’ understanding but also as a strategy to encourage classroom participation. During the observation, students often hesitated to answer questions directly and tended to remain silent before receiving additional prompts from the teacher. Consequently, the teacher frequently simplified questions, provided clues, and directly called students to encourage responses. For example, when students had difficulty answering ordinal number expressions, the teacher first asked, “Kalau 9 bahasa Inggrisnya apa?” before guiding students to form the answer “nineteenth.” This interaction indicates that questioning activities were used to gradually support students’ confidence and participation during classroom interaction.

Interview data further supported these findings. The teacher explained that students in Grade 5C tended to be passive during classroom activities and often required encouragement before answering questions. According to the teacher, several students were actually able to understand the material but lacked confidence to respond spontaneously during English lessons. As a result, oral questioning became an important strategy to maintain interaction and stimulate students’ participation throughout the learning process.

These findings support Heritage (2010), who states that questioning activities in formative assessment help teachers collect evidence of students’ understanding during the learning process. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2024) emphasized that formative assessment practices contribute positively to classroom learning and teaching effectiveness. However, unlike several previous studies that mainly focused on the effectiveness of formative assessment, this study found that oral questioning was also used as a strategy to encourage participation in a relatively passive classroom environment. In addition to questioning activities, the teacher also provided various forms of feedback during classroom interaction to support students’ understanding and participation.

Prompting and Corrective Feedback During Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction showed that the teacher frequently provided prompting and corrective feedback throughout the lesson. Instead of directly giving answers when students experienced difficulties, the teacher often used clues and simplified questions to help students reach the expected responses independently. For example, when students could not answer a question related to leap year, the teacher provided a clue by saying “bulan kabi..?” before the students responded with “bulan kabisat” (“leap year”). Similarly, when students had difficulty forming ordinal numbers, the teacher first asked, “Kalau 9 bahasa Inggrisnya apa?” (“What is nine in English?”) before leading students to produce the answer “nineteenth.” These interactions indicate that prompting feedback was continuously used to scaffold students’ understanding and encourage participation during the learning process.

The observation also revealed that prompting feedback helped reduce students’ hesitation during classroom interaction. Since several students were reluctant to answer

questions directly, the teacher tended to provide gradual guidance before expecting complete responses. In this situation, feedback functioned not only to correct students' understanding but also to encourage students to participate more actively during the lesson. The teacher frequently combined clues, simpler questions, and direct guidance to maintain classroom interaction and help students respond with greater confidence.

In addition to prompting feedback, corrective feedback was also observed during oral classroom activities. During the lesson about months, the teacher directly corrected students' pronunciation when mistakes occurred. Positive reinforcement such as "good" and "bagus" was also frequently provided after students successfully answered questions or completed tasks correctly. These responses created immediate interaction between the teacher and students during the learning process.

Interview data further supported these findings. The teacher explained that students in Grade 5C often needed additional support before answering questions because they were sometimes hesitant and lacked confidence during English lessons. Therefore, the teacher preferred using clues and guided questions rather than immediately giving the correct answers. According to the teacher, this strategy helped students participate more comfortably during classroom activities.

These findings support Black & Wiliam (1998), who explain that formative assessment involves feedback processes that support learning improvement during instruction. Similarly, Patra et al. (2022) found that corrective feedback during formative assessment positively contributes to students' classroom learning and engagement. However, this study additionally revealed that prompting feedback functioned as a strategy to maintain participation and reduce students' hesitation in a relatively passive classroom environment. Besides questioning and feedback practices, classroom monitoring was also continuously conducted during learning activities to observe students' progress and provide immediate support.

Monitoring Students' Learning Progress During Classroom Activities

The findings showed that the teacher actively monitored students' learning progress during classroom activities. Monitoring practices were conducted while students were completing exercises, answering questions, and working on worksheets related to dates and months. During the observation, the teacher frequently walked around the classroom to check students' work and observe their understanding of the material. The teacher also provided direct guidance when students experienced difficulties during task completion.

Monitoring activities were often accompanied by immediate guidance and direct interaction with students. While checking students' worksheets, the teacher provided explanations, corrected mistakes, and guided students individually when necessary. For example, when students were asked to write dates in English, the teacher approached several students and gave additional explanations about ordinal number forms and date expressions. This indicates that monitoring activities were not limited to observing students' performance but also functioned as continuous formative support during classroom tasks.

The observation also showed that classroom monitoring helped the teacher maintain students' focus and participation during learning activities. Since some students tended to

lose attention during the lesson, the teacher continuously moved around the classroom and interacted with students to maintain classroom engagement. In this context, monitoring became closely connected with classroom management and participation support during instructional activities.

The interview findings supported these observations. The teacher explained that direct monitoring was important to identify students who still had difficulties understanding the material. The teacher also stated that some students required repeated explanations and closer attention during classroom activities because their levels of understanding were different. Therefore, monitoring activities helped the teacher adjust instructional support based on students' immediate learning needs.

These findings are consistent with Heritage (2010), who emphasizes that formative assessment involves continuous observation of students' learning progress during instruction. Similarly, Black & Wiliam (2009) explain that formative assessment enables teachers to gather evidence of students' understanding and adjust teaching strategies accordingly. In addition, Yan et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of classroom-based assessment practices for young EFL learners, while Zhang et al. (2024) emphasized the positive contribution of formative assessment to classroom learning and teaching effectiveness. However, this study further revealed that classroom monitoring was closely connected to maintaining students' participation and attention in a relatively passive classroom environment.

Challenges in Implementing Formative Assessment

The findings revealed several challenges faced by the teacher during the implementation of formative assessment in the English classroom. One of the main challenges identified during the observation and interview was students' passive participation during classroom interaction. Although the teacher frequently used questioning activities, several students hesitated to answer questions directly and often remained silent before receiving additional prompts from the teacher. The classroom interaction showed that students generally responded after being called directly or after the teacher provided clues and simplified questions.

The interview findings confirmed this condition. The teacher explained that Grade 5C students tended to be passive not only during English lessons but also in other subjects. According to the teacher, many students actually understood the material but lacked confidence to participate actively during classroom interaction. As a result, the teacher frequently needed to encourage students through guided questions, prompting feedback, and direct interaction to maintain classroom participation.

Another challenge identified in this study was limited classroom continuity due to school activities and schedule interruptions. The teacher explained that several learning sessions were affected by school agendas, examinations, and other activities, which reduced the effectiveness of classroom instruction. Limited instructional time made it difficult for the teacher to maintain students' focus and continue learning materials consistently. Consequently, the teacher needed to adjust the teaching process and repeat explanations more frequently during classroom activities.

The observation findings also showed that differences in students' understanding became another challenge during formative assessment implementation. Some students were able to answer questions quickly, while others required additional explanations and repeated guidance from the teacher. Therefore, the teacher needed to balance classroom interaction, provide individual support, and monitor students continuously during learning activities.

These findings are consistent with Yolanda & Rodliyah (2024), who found that Indonesian EFL teachers faced challenges related to classroom participation, time management, and classroom conditions during formative assessment practices. Similarly, Allali & El Ghouati (2025) reported that although teachers had positive perceptions toward formative assessment, several practical challenges still occurred during classroom implementation. However, this study specifically found that passive classroom participation and interrupted classroom continuity became important contextual factors influencing the implementation of formative assessment practices in an elementary English classroom.

Conclusion

This study explored the implementation of formative assessment practices in an elementary English classroom at MI Perguruan Mu'allimat. The findings revealed that formative assessment was implemented through oral questioning, prompting and corrective feedback, and classroom monitoring during the teaching and learning process. These practices were used not only to identify students' understanding but also to encourage participation and maintain classroom interaction during English lessons.

The study also identified several challenges during the implementation process, particularly related to students' passive participation, differences in students' understanding, and limited classroom continuity caused by school activities and schedule interruptions. As a result, the teacher continuously adjusted questioning techniques, provided guided support, and monitored students' progress throughout classroom activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that formative assessment practices in elementary English classrooms are closely influenced by classroom context and students' participation patterns. In relatively passive classroom situations, formative assessment practices function not only as assessment strategies but also as interactional support to maintain students' engagement during learning activities. Therefore, English teachers need to apply flexible and supportive formative assessment strategies that encourage students' participation and classroom interaction in Teaching English to Young Learners contexts.

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