



Students' Perceptions of Formative Assessment in English Classes

Lelyta Maeyasningrum^{1*}, Sarlita Dewi Matra²

^{1,2}Universitas Pekalongan, Indonesia

Jl. Sriwijaya No.3, Bendan, Kec. Pekalongan Bar, Kota Pekalongan, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

Author correspondence: lelytamaeyasn1827@gmail.com*

Abstract. *This study explores eleventh-grade students' perceptions of formative assessment in English language learning. Formative assessment is widely recognized as a strategy that enhances student engagement, reflection, and understanding. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire based on a Likert scale. Fourteen students from Senior High School 1 Wiradesa participated in the study during the 2024/2025 academic year. The results indicate that students generally held positive to very positive views of formative assessment. Key aspects contributing to this perception included timely teacher feedback, active classroom discussions, and the integration of digital tools. Students also reported that formative assessment boosted their confidence, deepened their understanding of the material, and helped them feel more prepared for exams. Overall, the study highlights the crucial role of formative assessment in creating a learning environment that is interactive, reflective, and responsive to students' needs.*

Keywords: *English Learning, Formative Assessment, High School, Students' Perceptions.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Formative assessment has gained increasing importance in the field of education due to its potential to provide ongoing feedback that supports and enhances students' learning processes. Unlike summative assessment, which focuses solely on final learning outcomes, formative assessment emphasizes continuous monitoring and aims to help students identify their strengths and areas for improvement (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; Sadler, 1989). In English language learning, formative assessment enables teachers to adjust instructional strategies and provide timely interventions, while helping students become more aware of their progress and learning needs (Pan et al., 2024).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that formative assessment contributes to improved student engagement, self-confidence, and learning outcomes (Yan et al., 2021; Snekalatha et al., 2021). According to Olena and Anna (2024), consistent feedback through formative assessment increases students' self-efficacy and motivates them to study more independently. The integration of technology—such as online quizzes and interactive media—has also been shown to enhance students' reflection and promote classroom collaboration (Zhang et al., 2024; Mäkipää, 2024).

Despite the growing attention to formative assessment, much of the existing literature primarily focuses on teachers' perspectives or the technical design of assessments. Students' perceptions, as the central recipients of formative assessment, remain underexplored,

particularly in the context of English language learning at the Indonesian high school level (Saeed, 2024; Syauqi et al., 2020). As Jumiaty and Kuswoyo (2023) argue, students' perceptions of assessment play a crucial role in shaping their motivation, learning strategies, and academic achievement.

This study is grounded in the theoretical framework of formative assessment as proposed by Black and Wiliam (1998a), which emphasizes feedback, learner involvement, and adjustment of teaching in response to student needs. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on students' perspectives in a local high school context, which has not been widely examined. Therefore, this study aims to explore and analyze students' perceptions of the implementation and impact of formative assessment in English language learning. The research is guided by the question: How do students perceive the implementation and impact of formative assessment in English language learning at the senior high school level?.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Formative Assessment in English Learning

Formative assessment refers to instructional practices designed to monitor student learning and provide ongoing feedback that can be used to improve teaching and learning. Black and Wiliam (1998a) define formative assessment as a process of gathering evidence about student performance and using that evidence to adapt instruction to better meet student needs. This type of assessment is typically integrated into daily teaching practices and is not used for grading purposes but to support student development.

In English language learning, formative assessment may include techniques such as peer-assessment, teacher feedback, reflective journals, online quizzes, and classroom discussions. Heritage (2013) emphasizes that effective formative assessment enables teachers to adjust their strategies in response to students' performance and progress. Informal practices, such as questioning and observing students' participation, also play a vital role in assessing English proficiency (Asamoah, 2022).

According to Zhorova et al. (2022), formative assessment encourages student engagement, enhances motivation, and supports language acquisition by providing learners with a clearer understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. This process helps to promote autonomy, as students take a more active role in setting their learning goals.

However, implementing formative assessment can be challenging, particularly in EFL classrooms. Yan et al. (2021) note that teachers often encounter obstacles such as limited training, time constraints, and difficulty integrating technology in assessment. These issues can reduce the effectiveness and consistency of formative practices in English classrooms.

Students' Perceptions of Formative Assessment

Students' perceptions significantly affect how they engage with formative assessment and use the feedback they receive. Jumiatty and Kuswoyo (2023) explain that perception includes students' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs regarding assessment, which in turn influence their motivation and effort. If students perceive formative assessment as helpful, they are more likely to participate actively and benefit from the feedback provided.

Pan et al. (2024) investigated the effects of formative assessment in EFL classrooms and found that students reported increased motivation, confidence, and classroom interaction when formative strategies such as questioning and peer feedback were employed. These perceptions contribute positively to their performance. In digital settings, students' perceptions may vary. Syauqi et al. (2020) found that while many students appreciated the flexibility and immediate feedback offered by digital formative assessments, others felt overwhelmed due to unclear instructions and limited teacher support. This highlights the need for teacher clarity and feedback quality in shaping positive perceptions.

Despite increasing research on formative assessment, few studies focus on Indonesian high school students' perceptions in the context of English language learning. This study seeks to address this gap by examining how senior high school students perceive the formative assessment practices applied in their English classes.

The Impact of Formative Assessment on Learning Outcomes

Research shows that formative assessment positively impacts student learning outcomes, particularly when students understand its purpose and apply the feedback to improve their performance. Sadler (1989) argues that formative assessment is effective only when students are aware of the intended learning outcomes, can assess their current progress, and understand how to bridge the gap between the two.

Gu and Luo (2023) emphasize that consistent and meaningful feedback helps students monitor their understanding and adjust their learning strategies. Formative assessment fosters critical thinking and metacognition, which are essential for language development.

Kurdi et al. (2021) found a positive correlation between students' preference for feedback and their grammar achievement. This suggests that the more students value the assessment process, particularly evaluation and feedback, the more likely they are to achieve better learning outcomes. Thus, students' perceptions are not only influenced by formative assessment but also influence how effective it becomes.

3. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore students' perceptions of formative assessment in English classes. A qualitative method was chosen because it allows the researcher to understand participants' subjective experiences and interpret the meaning they assign to formative assessment practices in a natural classroom context (Creswell, 2014). This approach is particularly useful for investigating perceptions, as it enables the researcher to explore the complex and nuanced responses of students beyond mere numerical data.

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Wiradesa, located at Jl. Pattimura No. 467, Mayangkumpul, Pekuncen, Kecamatan Wiradesa, Kabupaten Pekalongan, Jawa Tengah, during March 2025. The participants consisted of 14 students from two different classes: XI.4 and XI.5. Each class contributed seven students, selected using a stratified random sampling technique. This method was used to ensure balanced representation from both classes and to capture a wider range of perspectives (Ding, 1996). Stratified random sampling is especially effective in educational settings where differences in instructional strategies and student engagement may exist across classes.

Data were gathered using a closed-ended questionnaire designed with a four-point Likert scale: "Strongly Agree" (100%), "Agree" (75%), "Disagree" (50%), and "Strongly Disagree" (25%). The questionnaire was validated prior to its distribution by experts in language education and assessment to ensure both content validity and clarity. The instrument focused on two key areas: (1) students' perceptions of the implementation of formative assessment in their English classes, and (2) students' perceptions of the impact of formative assessment on their learning outcomes.

The data analysis process employed a descriptive statistical method based on percentage scores. For each item, student responses were converted into percentages according to the Likert scale. These percentages were then summed and divided by the number of items to calculate the average perception score for each student and aspect. The interpretation of the scores followed the criteria set by Al-Shammari (2015), as shown below:

Table 1. Interpretation Scores

85%-100%	Very Positive/Very Effective
70%-84%	Positive/Effective
50%-69%	Neutral/Less Effective
Below 50%	Negative/Not Effective

For example, if a student responded to five items with the following values: Agree (75%), Strongly Agree (100%), Agree (75%), Strongly Agree (100%), and Agree (75%), the total score would be 425. Divided by five items, the average would be 85%, which falls into the

“Very Positive” category. All data were analyzed manually without the aid of statistical software. This decision was made due to the small sample size and the straightforward nature of the data. Manual analysis also allowed for more attentive handling of patterns and variations in students’ perceptions.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Table 2. Students’ Perceptions on the Implementation English Formative Assessment XI 4 Class

No	Code	Percentage	Descriptions
1	S1	85%	Very Positive
2	S2	85%	Very Positive
3	S3	85%	Very Positive
4	S4	85%	Very Positive
5	S5	95%	Very Positive
6	S6	70%	Positive
7	S7	80%	Positive

The perceptions of students in class 11.4 regarding the implementation of English formative assessment were generally positive. Out of seven students, five (S1, S2, S3, S4, and S5) demonstrated a very positive perception, each scoring 85% or higher, with S5 giving the highest score of 95%. Meanwhile, S6 and S7 indicated positive perceptions with scores of 70% and 80% respectively. These results suggest that most students in class 11.4 appreciate the current formative assessment practices and recognize their value in supporting learning.

Table 3. Students’ Perceptions on the Implementation English Formative Assessment XI 5 Class

No	Code	Percentage	Descriptions
8	S8	85%	Very Positive
9	S9	85%	Very Positive
10	S10	85%	Very Positive
11	S11	95%	Very Positive
12	S12	95%	Very Positive
13	S13	100%	Very Positive
14	S14	75%	Positive

In class 11.5, perceptions on the implementation of English formative assessment were even more favorable. Six out of seven students (S8 to S13) gave very positive responses, ranging from 85% to 100%, with S13 giving a perfect score. Only S14 gave a slightly lower score of 75%, still categorized as positive. This indicates a strong level of satisfaction among students in class 11.5, reflecting their high level of acceptance and support for formative assessment strategies used in their English classes.

Table 4. Students' Perceptions on the Impact of English Formative Assessment Class XI 4

No	Code	Percentage	Descriptions
1	S1	85%	Very Positive
2	S2	85%	Very Positive
3	S3	90%	Very Positive
4	S4	90%	Very Positive
5	S5	75%	Positive
6	S6	75%	Positive
7	S7	80%	Positive

As for the perceived impact of formative assessment in class 11.4, responses were also largely positive. Students S1 to S4 rated the impact as very positive (85%–90%), showing that they feel formative assessment contributes meaningfully to their English learning. Students S5, S6, and S7 rated the impact as positive (75%–80%), suggesting that while they benefit from the assessments, they may not perceive the impact as strongly as their peers.

Table 5. Students' Perceptions on the Impact of English Formative Assessment Class XI 5

No	Code	Percentage	Descriptions
8	S8	85%	Very Positive
9	S9	95%	Very Positive
10	S10	100%	Very Positive
11	S11	70%	Positive
12	S12	80%	Positive
13	S13	80%	Positive
14	S14	80%	Positive

In class 11.5, the perceptions of the impact showed a mix of very positive and positive responses. Students S8, S9, and S10 gave very positive ratings (85%–100%), indicating strong confidence in the effectiveness of formative assessments. The rest of the students (S11 to S14) provided positive ratings ranging from 70% to 80%, reflecting a favorable yet slightly more moderate view of the impact.

Discussion

This study aimed to answer the following research questions ‘How are students' perceptions on the implementation of English formative assessment?’ and ‘How are the students' perceptions on the impact of English formative assessment?’. The interpretation of the findings reveals that students generally responded positively to the implementation and effects of formative assessment in their English language learning. These perceptions offer valuable insights into how formative assessment contributes to learning engagement, confidence, and overall academic development. The discussion below elaborates on the themes that emerged in relation to these research questions, while drawing comparisons with relevant theories and prior studies.

1. Students' Perceptions on the Implementation of English Formative Assessment

The findings of this study reinforce the growing body of literature that highlights the benefits of formative assessment in enhancing student engagement and motivation. Most students perceived the implementation of formative assessment in a highly favorable light, indicating that these strategies are not only well-received but also effective in fostering a student-centered learning environment. This aligns with the findings of Olena and Anna (2024), who argue that consistent formative feedback cultivates a sense of self-efficacy and leads to improved academic performance.

A noteworthy insight from this study is that students felt more supported and engaged when formative assessment was used consistently alongside interactive tools such as digital platforms and peer reviews. These methods appear to reduce student anxiety around assessment and promote active participation. Unlike traditional summative assessments that focus heavily on outcomes, formative assessments in this context seemed to shift students' attention to the learning process itself. This shift reflects a broader pedagogical movement toward process-oriented instruction, which supports the development of critical thinking and metacognitive skills.

An interesting nuance observed in this study is the subtle variation in students' perceptions across different classes, which might suggest that the impact of formative assessment is partly shaped by the specific instructional practices and teacher-student dynamics in each setting. While prior research (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 2009) supports the general effectiveness of formative assessment, the present study suggests that how these strategies are implemented can influence their reception. This points to the need for context-sensitive application of formative techniques, tailored to students' learning preferences and classroom culture.

Moreover, the appreciation of feedback as a key part of the formative process underlines its perceived importance. Students reported that timely and constructive teacher feedback helped clarify their understanding and guide their progress. This affirms the theoretical foundation of formative assessment, which places feedback at its core. The present research extends this understanding by suggesting that the integration of digital feedback tools may enhance this effect, particularly for tech-savvy learners.

2. Students' Perceptions on the Impact of English Formative Assessment

Students also acknowledged the broader impact of formative assessment on their academic confidence and exam preparedness. These findings echo the conclusions of Pan et al. (2024), who emphasize the role of formative questioning in deepening student engagement

and comprehension. In this study, formative activities appeared to foster a more reflective and autonomous learning mindset, with students indicating increased clarity and understanding of lesson content.

The variation in students' self-reported confidence levels suggests that formative assessment may influence learners differently depending on their prior experiences, learning styles, or classroom environment. This observation aligns with Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, which posits that learners' confidence is shaped by mastery experiences and feedback. For some students, repeated exposure to supportive assessment may have contributed to a greater willingness to engage with challenging tasks.

Another layer of insight comes from the perceived value of digital tools in the formative assessment process. Students considered these tools beneficial for tracking progress and preparing for exams—this perception fits within Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which highlights perceived usefulness and ease of use as key factors influencing technology adoption. The positive response toward digital integration in assessment contexts suggests a readiness among students to engage with blended learning models that combine traditional and technological elements.

Taken together, the current study offers a fresh perspective by showing how formative assessment not only supports academic achievement but also empowers learners psychologically. It reveals that beyond test scores, formative strategies can foster deeper learner engagement, adaptability, and self-awareness. These emerging understandings add depth to the existing literature and suggest practical implications for teachers seeking to create more responsive and reflective classroom practices.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This research explored students' perceptions of the implementation and impact of English Formative Assessment among Grade 11 students. The findings reveal that students generally hold positive to very positive views regarding both how formative assessment is implemented and how it influences their learning. Students acknowledged that formative assessment techniques, such as peer feedback, digital tools, and constructive teacher guidance enhanced their engagement and deepened their understanding of the lesson content. Additionally, students reported that these strategies positively affected their confidence, academic outcomes, and exam preparedness. These insights suggest that the integration of formative assessment within English language instruction not only supports academic achievement but also fosters greater learner autonomy, reflection, and motivation. The results underscore the value of

maintaining and improving formative assessment practices to meet diverse student needs and to cultivate a more interactive and responsive classroom environment..

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