

The Efficacy of Classroom Assessment Techniques in Motivating Lebanese Students to Learn

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Abstract: *The globalization process has resulted in the widespread of English as lingua franca, thereby compelling countries like Lebanon to embrace English as a second language for teaching and communication. Various techniques have been employed to encourage English learning and use among students in Lebanon, including classroom assessment techniques. The objective of the present study was to evaluate the efficacy of formative and summative assessments in motivating English Second Language (ESL) students to learn English in Lebanon. The integrative review research design was adopted to identify relevant studies focusing on the application of formative and summative judgments in ESL classes. The integrative appraisal resulted in the selection of thirteen papers that met the study's inclusion criteria, including three studies that employed mixed-methods, two quasi-experimental studies, two qualitative papers, two quantitative, two literature reviews, and two systematic reviews. A qualitative synthesis of the findings led to the identification of three dominant themes, namely, classroom assessment practices, corrective feedback, and self-monitoring, and three sub-themes: self-confidence, active participation, and safe classroom environment, representing ways through which classroom evaluations, particularly formative assessments, motivate ESL students to learn English.*

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I. Introduction

Background Information

Lebanon has experienced pressures of globalization and shares challenges, such as inequities grounded on geographical location, class, and gender, similar to other countries in the Middle East (Orr, 2011). Competing demands on state resources, the necessity to yield graduates literate in English, and the push to promote economic development wherever possible synergistically serve to create a scenario where education is majorly offered by private institutions. The latter is evidenced by the significant increase in the number of private institutions of higher learning in Lebanon from nineteen to more than forty between 1990-2010 (Mastri & Wilkens, 2011). A similar trend was also observed elsewhere in the Middle East, including Egypt and Syria. (Orr, 2011). Private universities and schools in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region respond not only to the necessity to instruct English as a second language but also to a conceived requirement to teach in English. Besides, English has become a lingua franca, or simply a language that has been embraced as a communication medium globally (Seidlhofer, 2005; Wilkins & Urbanovič, 2014). Thus, the necessity for Lebanese students to achieve English proficiencies and attain excellent performance in English-taught subjects has resulted in an increased focus on the development and use of various assessment techniques.

Classroom evaluation methods help gauge the alignment of instruction and course objectives, measure the acquisition of new knowledge, and identify learning outcomes (Dicarlo & Cooper, 2014). Nonetheless, there has been significant disagreement among policymakers, education management, and educationalists over the most effective form of assessment in academics (Payne, 2014). Traditionally, two types of classroom evaluations fulfill diverse roles, namely, summative and formative assessments. The principal goal of the latter is to facilitate the determination of the students' level of learning and comprehension of a subject or topic at a certain point in time (Wilson, 2017). The formative evaluation provides a hint of the learners' academic progress and the strategy to apply to accomplish a heightened degree of academic attainment. Thus, the employment of formative assessments can be considered as a tool for educators to motivate students to improve in their English proficiencies (Alvarez, Ananda, Walqui, Sato, & Rabinowitz, 2014). Contrastingly, school management highlights the significance of summative evaluations, arguing that the outcomes of summative examinations and tests provide proof to measure student performance (Alsalthanie, Das, & Abdus-Samad, 2017; Broadbent, Panadero, & Bouda, 2018). In summary, summative appraisals are employed to assess the efficacy of pedagogical initiatives and instructional services and are normally administered at the end of an academic term, semester, or year.

Existing pieces of literature show that, what instructors appraise, why, and how they evaluate conveys to students what is worth mastering, how it has to be learned, as well as how well they are anticipated to understand it (Moss, 2004; Wilson, 2017). How educators conduct summative assessments relies on the role of the review. Moss (2004) explains that unlike diagnostic or formative appraisals, summative judgments determine the learners' overall accomplishment in a particular learning area at a specific point in time. The precision of summative evaluations relies on the assessors' competence and the quality of the appraisals (McMilian, 2013). For instance, whenever educators select classroom assessment approaches that match fundamental attainment targets, such as oral questioning, essays, observations, or selected-response (SR), their evaluations provide comprehensive and influential data about the learners' academic progress (Moss, 2004). As outlined by Parkes and Giron (2006), exam items that are in line with the learning objectives of a specific course, alongside classroom teaching, elevate both content consistency and validity such that the evaluators can arrive at informed decisions regarding the reliability that is essential for the summative assessment. Besides, the validity and reliability are improved in judgments that focus on student outcomes when instructors particularly describe the performance, record scores performance the occurrence of the assessed task, and design comprehensive scoring scales, rubrics, and protocols that illustrate the benchmarks of attainment.

Formative and summative assessment approaches have been identified as essential strategies to improve English proficiency and literacy among students in non-English speaking countries. For instance, Alvarez et al. (2014) investigated how formative judgments can improve learning and teaching English language learners (ELL) and reported that formative evaluations could only be successful in fostering the comprehension of English among ELL when educators pay dual attention to content and language learning. As per Heritage, Walqui, and Linquanti (2013), formative evaluations have evolved as a promising learning and instructional intervention as it is a continuous cycle that involves collecting evidence of and evaluating knowledge acquisition, offering feedback, and utilizing evaluation outcomes to modify the successive lessons as required. Abedi and Herman (2010) conducted ex-post factor research to explore the association between apprentices' ELL status and their extent of opportunity to master English as a determinant of the English proficiency between ELL and non-ELL students in California. The authors focused on the role of summative assessments in promoting students' reading comprehension and motivation to learn English.

Other investigations focusing on summative reviews have highlighted the diversity of mechanisms through which assessments influence learning. For instance, Cassady and Gridley (2005) evaluated the impacts of digital summative and formative judgments on university students' experiences with a specific focus on the undergraduates' testing beliefs, such as perceived test threat and test anxiety, and behaviors, like performance and study habits. The outcomes of the research suggested no negative effect of paper-pencil summative evaluation on learning. Formative assessments had significant positive impacts on the learners' performances, partly owing to the decrease of the detrimental influences of adverse exam perceptions that arise in conditions whereby practice tests were in existence. Moss (2004) appraised existing pieces of literature on educators' summative evaluation practices that shape the pupils' motivations to learn. The outcomes of the appraisal demonstrated that the summative assessment setting determines the students' motivational aspects, mainly self-regulation and self-efficacy.

Black and Wiliam (1998) reported the synergistic roles of summative and formative evaluations in instruction and raising educational benchmarks. The investigator employed a well-documented methodology to search for scientific proof to back the influence of classroom evaluation by educators on learning. The review of 250 articles concluded that formative judgments had positive effects on knowledge acquisition, particularly through the key mechanisms of feedback provision, the espousal of the assessment upshots to change pedagogical strategies, and involving students in self-appraisals. Nonetheless, the effective application of the practices mentioned above needs a paradigm shift in the tutors' views of their responsibilities in the students' knowledge acquisition to attain significant outcomes. Therefore, formative assessments can heighten the performance of students' at the end of a semester or year examinations, and thus, the formative and summative judgments can co-exist in educational practice to enhance the standards for all learners.

On the contrary, other studies have found mixed associations between classroom evaluations, particularly in summative judgments, and mastering new knowledge (Harlen et al., 2002). A broadly held perception of tutors towards summative assessments is that an escalation in test scores with time is principally ascribed to an increased familiarity of both students and educators with exams instead of improvement in learning (Harlen et al., 2002). Zitlow and Kohn (2001) argue against standardized tests citing that they do not support long-term learning but encourage students to cram lessons. Furthermore, the utilization of high-stakes exams compels instructors to focus solely on training learners on examination content and ways of passing tests, as well as embrace pedagogical strategies that are not in line with the students' preferred learning style (Fuglei, 2017). In the above scenarios, educators make little use of formative and summative evaluations to influence the learning process.

Statement of Problem

As outlined earlier, similar to other countries in the MENA region, Lebanon has encountered significant globalization pressures. The latter has compelled the nation to adopt English as a medium of communication and instructions, particularly in private schools and universities (Bacha & Bahous, 2011). Instructors employ a myriad of pedagogical techniques to enhance students' motivation to learn English, including formative and summative evaluations. Nonetheless, there are mixed findings in the existing pieces of literature regarding the effectiveness of classroom assessments in promoting English language learning among ESL students. Notably, formative judgments are successful in heightening English proficiencies through the provision of feedback mechanisms (Abedi & Herman, 2010; Alvarez et al., 2014; Black & William, 1998; Cassady & Gridley, 2005). On the other hand, other scholars openly argue against classroom judgments, mainly summative and standardized tests, maintaining that the latter has an insignificant effect on learning (Fuglei, 2017; Zitlow & Kohn, 2001). Furthermore, a large share of the appraised studies focused on measurement of the effect of assessments and tests on the acquisition of knowledge in other subjects and not English literacy among ESL students, thus, underpropping the necessity for additional research on the effectiveness of formative and summative assessments in teaching and learning English.

Study Objective

The study aimed to explore the efficacy of formative and summative assessments in motivating ESL students to learn English in Lebanon.

Definition of Terms

English first language speakers: People born and raised in English-speaking countries

English second language speakers: Individuals whose first language is not English

Lingua franca: The use of English as the medium of interaction among English non-native speakers

II. Methodology

Study Design

The study adopted an integrative review (IR) methodology to qualitatively synthesize the existing evidence on the efficacy of classroom evaluations in fostering English language learning among ESL speakers. IR is a study approach that has the potential of informing research, practice, and policy initiatives in diverse service sectors. According to Soares et al. (2014), the objective of IR is to identify, analyze, and synthesize outcomes about a particular subject under investigation in both primary and secondary studies. The performance of IR entails going beyond the conventional limits of systematic reviewing and by incorporating experts as credible sources of empirical evidence and as providers of constant data gathering and summaries (Jones-Devitt, Austen, & Parkin, 2017). Whittemore and Knafelz (2005) add that completed IRs should present the state of empiricism, contribute to theory development, and have straightforward applicability to policy and practice. IRs are marked by an underpropping positivist ontology, recognizing that certain evidence sources can be handled as real; hitherto, IR allows reviewers to broaden that position by accepting that the aforementioned reality is socially developed, thereby enabling a fluid epistemology to evolve (Jones-Devitt et al., 2017). The selection of IR facilitated the synthesis of studies with both positivist and interpretivist paradigms and generate comprehensive conclusions on the effectiveness of classroom assessments in instructing and learning the English language.

Search Strategy

An electronic search of four electronic databases, namely, MEDLINE, Google Scholar, JSTOR, EBSCOHost, and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), was performed to identify relevant papers that focus on the use of classroom assessments in fostering English literacy and proficiencies among ESL learners. The exploration involved the use of a mix of various search terms, including [“classroom assessment methods” or “formative and summative assessments” AND “student motivation” AND “learning English”]. Only English studies published between 1990-2019 involving ESL learners and entailing evaluation of the effectiveness of formative and summative assessments to appraise English proficiencies of the participants were selected for review. In addition to the electronic search, a manual comb of the reference lists of the included articles was conducted to map out more relevant papers. Summaries of all the sampled studies were presented in tabular format to allow the identification of emerging themes.

III. Results

Summary of the Reviewed Articles

As illustrated in table 1 below, thirteen articles that met the inclusion benchmarks were selected for review, including three studies that employed mixed-methods (Kiliçkaya, 2017; Tang, 2016; Zia & Sarfraz,

2019), two quasi-experimental studies (Roderick & Engel, 2001; Torosyan, Buon, Gasparyan, & Simonyan, 2011), two qualitative papers (Black, Harrison, Hodgen, Marshall, & Serret, 2010; Rahman, Babu, & Ashrafuzzaman, 2011), two quantitative (Alkharusi, 2008; Özdemir-Yılmaz & Özkan, 2017), two literature reviews (Ketabi & Ketabi, 2014; Torres, 2019), and two systematic reviews (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Harlen et al., 2002). Except for two primary studies conducted in the U.S. and the U.K., nine were carried out in English, non-speaking countries, including Armenia, Turkey, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Oman, El Salvador, and China. A qualitative synthesis of the outcomes resulted in the identification of four major themes that represent the mechanisms through which formative and summative evaluations foster English proficiencies. These encompassed: classroom assessments practices, formative feedback, promotion of self-confidence, and self-monitoring

Summary of findings

Author	Objective	Methods	Findings	Strengths/ limitations	Emerging themes
Torres, 2019	To develop an overview of language evaluation and its influence on the ESL/EFL classroom	Literature review	Learners benefit more from formative appraisals since they offer timely and relevant feedback that aids them in the way they approach learning English	The article did not provide the methodological steps used in the selection of articles reviewed	Formative feedback
Özdemir-Yılmaz & Özkan, 2017	To explore the assessment procedures used by English language tutors in preparatory classes at a Turkey University	Survey	Evaluation practices were dominated by aptitude tests that served as a getaway for apprentices to proceed with their academic programs	Classroom assessments should be considered as an entire process of instructing, observing, examining, evaluating, making choices, and back to teaching. In this case, tests should be a small fraction of the whole process.	Classroom assessment practices
Ketabi & Ketabi, 2014	To review the efficacy of formative and summative evaluations in promoting learning in ESL and EFL classes	Literature review	The commonly utilized formative assessment tools include presentations, oral interviews, surveys, portfolios, and journals. On the other hand, classroom evaluations have the prospective to be both for-learning and formative.		Assessment practices
Zia & Sarfraz, 2019	To evaluate students' views towards the effects of formative evaluations and feedback on the development of English writing skills among ESL high-school learners in Pakistan	Mixed-methods	English language formative judgments enabled students to expand their English composition writing proficiencies by creating effective learning occasions. The formative evaluations motivated learners to be autonomous in self-monitoring their progress	The authors focused on private schools only	Formative feedback Self-monitoring
Torosyan, Buon, Gasparyan, & Simonyan, 2011	To explore the influence of formative evaluations on EFL student's vocabulary improvement in Armenia	Quasi-experimental	Formative assessments positively shaped the apprentices' English lexical enhancement. The learners indicated that formative assessments facilitated their active engagement in the learning process and made them more conscious of weak and strong areas in mastering English terminologies.	Small sample size	Self-monitoring
Kiliçkaya, 2017	To determine EFL instructors' standpoints and encounters when using formative evaluations through <i>GradeCam Go</i> during scoring multiple-choice	Mixed-methods approach	The outcomes of the research showed that <i>GradeCam Go</i> was beneficial for tutors teaching large classes. <i>GradeCam Go</i> served as a simple and efficient instrument for educators to carry out regular evaluations via frequent questions, provide prompt feedback, and track	The study focused on general learning of ESL and EFL students and not specifically on acquisition of English literacy	Feedback loop to modify ongoing teaching

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	exams (Turkey)		students' progress.		
Harlen et al., 2002	To explore the influence of summative judgments and exams on students' motivation to learn	Systematic review (England)	The authors synthesized the results of 19 articles and reported that higher-achieving students had higher self-confidence levels than their low-achieving counterparts, following the introduction of National Curriculum Tests in England, yet, previously, there was no relationship between self-worth and academic performance	The authors lacked a consistent theoretical framework of motivation in education to base their study	Self-confidence
Roderick & Engel, 2001	To explore the influence of high-stakes testing and accountability on motivation to learn among 102 low-achieving 6 th - and 8 th -grade pupils in five schools in Chicago Public School's (CPS) tests.	Quasi-experimental	53% of learners who worked hard in school after the introduction of CPS perceived the intervention changed their attitudes towards the process of knowledge acquisition. Thus, CPS made them put additional effort to classwork through paying close attention to assignments and setting higher academic goals than those of their less hardworking counterparts	The study did not focus on English proficiencies	Self-confidence
Black et al., 2004	To examine the reliability and the impacts of assessment by educators employed for summative purposes	Systematic review	20 studies focused on embedding summative evaluations in regular classroom practices while 8 papers encompassed either assessment set either internally or externally. The outcomes showed that the students benefit from summative evaluations when they are administered for external purposes, such as certification, monitoring institution's accountability, enlisting for further education, or gauging the school's performance.	The study did not focus on English proficiencies	Classroom practices
Alkharusi, 2008	To explore the impacts of evaluation activities on learner's academic attainment goals in Oman	Quantitative methods	Educators' teaching experiences and appraisal practices, as well as class contextual elements, interacted substantially with learners' characteristics in shaping their attainment objectives		Classroom practices and student motivation
Tang, 2016	To investigate the efficacy of formative assessments in the alleviation of speaking anxiety in an Oral English class in China	Mixed-methods	Formative assessments enabled students to actively engage in oral activities since embedding formative evaluations in student-centered instruction allows learners to monitor and regulate their learning by embracing feedback and self-appraisal. The latter boosts their confidence and self-esteem.	Positive feedback and active involvement in oral English-speaking activities contribute to the strengthening of whose confidence and alleviate speaking anxiety.	Self-monitoring, feedback, Self-confidence
Black, Harrison, Hodgen, Marshall, & Serret, 2010	To examine educators' comprehension and practices in the summative judgments	Grounded theory	Instructors' summative activities were not in line with their validity beliefs. In addition, tutor critiques of their personal understanding of cogency promoted a critical perception of their existing practices.		Classroom practices
Rahman, Babu, & Ashrafuzzaman, 2011	To investigate the type of evaluation and feedback mechanisms used in English language lessons in junior high-schools in Bangladesh	Qualitative	Educators employed a repertoire of pedagogical strategies to teach English, including assignments, participatory techniques, student evaluations, asking questions, and conventional lecture methods. Both formative and summative judgments were applied to gauge the performance and progress of the learners. The key techniques that promoted		Formative feedback

IV. Discussion

Classroom Assessment Practices

Assessment is identified as an essential component for teaching and learning. From the reviewed studies, it is apparent that a large share of scholars has investigated the role of formative judgments, and less on summative evaluations, in promoting English proficiency in ESL settings. In the above light, scholars recommend the consideration of formative evaluation as the entire process of instructing, observing, examining, evaluating, making choices, and back to teaching. In this case, tests should be a small fraction of the whole process (Torres, 2019; Özdemir-Yilmazer & Özkan, 2017). This is in line with Laborda, Sampson, Hambleton, and Guzman's (2015) argument that classroom evaluations should be viewed as methodical mechanisms of making assessments, and subsequently providing results, either about the efficacy of pedagogical and learning processes or regarding individual apprentice's progress towards the accomplishment of predetermined academic goals.

In the present integrative review, three articles reported on variance on the use of formative and summative evaluations. Özdemir-Yilmazer and Özkan (2017) investigated the appraisal procedures utilized by English language educators in a preparatory university course in Turkey and observed that aptitude exams were the predominant form assessments that provided leeway for students to proceed with their educational careers. In Ketabi and Ketabi's (2014) literature review, the commonly employed formative judgment procedures encompassed class presentations, oral interviews, surveys, portfolios, and journals, while the outcomes of Black et al.'s (2004) systematic review showed that the students benefit from summative evaluations when the latter is administered for external purposes, such as certification, monitoring institution's accountability, enlisting for further education, or gauging the school's performance. Nonetheless, the positive impact of high-stakes testing seems to negatively affect the performance of low-achieving students since the latter often respond adversely to procedures that highlight achievement (Harlen et al., 2002). For instance, Roderick and Engel (2001) conducted quasi-experimental research to determine the effect of high-stakes testing on the motivation to learn among 102 low-achieving 6th and 8th graders. The results revealed that more than half of the respondents who were inspired by the high-stakes tests were high-achieving students. Unlike the low-achieving students who held negative attitudes and demotivated by the summative evaluations, the examinations motivated high-achieving students to put additional effort into learning by paying more attention to assignments and setting higher academic goals than before the introduction of the evaluation protocols.

In addition, serving as a source of discouragement for low-achieving learners, the effect of summative evaluations on student motivation to learn is influenced by the educators' skills, views, experiences, and practices. In one study, the instructors' summative practices were not in tandem with their beliefs regarding the validity, and the critiques of their comprehension of cogency promoted a critical perception of their pedagogical and assessment practice (Black et al., 2010). In a previous systematic review, Harlen et al. (2002) found that educators can stimulate both performance goals and knowledge acquisition by developing and employing interesting and appropriate assessment mechanisms to enhance the motivation of students to learn. Thus, it is necessary to train educators on the role of evaluations in their assessment of apprentices' accomplishments, the impact of formative and summative judgments on students' learning encounters, and how to address the pressure associated with evaluations among low-achieving pupils. Nonetheless, Black et al. (2010) warn that improved assessment skills and competence necessitate sustained dedication among the instructors for a prolonged period. Thus, the training interventions should start with educators inspecting their existing practices, shift to involving others in reflection on their shared and personal evaluation literacy, and later proceeding to collaborate to improve their underlying assumptions and beliefs of summative assessments.

Formative Feedback

It is widely recognized that feedback is a core mechanism of learning and teaching a second language (Cornillie, Clarebout, & Desmet, 2012; de Vries, Cucchiaroni, Strik, & Hout, 2010; Ferreira, Moore, & Mellish, 2007; Petchprasert, 2012). As per these authors, corrective feedback in primarily communicative and meaning-oriented language teaching advances is to provisionally focus on the formal variables of the second language to promote discerning. In the present review, five studies showed that formative assessments allowed teachers to provide a feedback loop to adjust ongoing teaching (Kiliçkaya, 2017; Rahman et al., 2011; Tang, 2016; Torosyan et al., 2011; Torres, 2019; Zia & Sarfraz, 2019). As per Hattie and Timperley (2007), corrective feedback is conceptualized as responses offered by the teacher on the aspects of one's understanding or performance, and for formative feedback to be effective, it must result in new knowledge. As such, in English teaching and learning among ESL students, feedback ought to be meaningful and purposeful, clear, provide

logical associations between English terminologies in sentences, and compatible with the learners' prior knowledge.

Self-Monitoring

In addition to serving as a mechanism for developing novel knowledge, feedback in second language learning fosters self-confidence and self-monitoring as shown in seven of the appraised studies (Kiliçkaya, 2017; Rahman et al., 2011; Roderick & Engel, 2001; Tang, 2016; Torosyan et al., 2011; Torres, 2019; Zia & Sarfraz, 2019). Tang (2016) observed that, through the promotion of corrective feedback, formative assessments encourage ESL students to actively engage in interactions using the English language, thereby, reducing the anxiety associated with underdeveloped English proficiency while enhancing self-confidence. Torosyan et al. (2011) revealed that students make modifications of their English pronunciations, terminologies, and expressions by partaking in self-monitoring or self-assessments, and subsequently, select relevant interventions to improve their learning. Besides, formative assessments' self-monitoring strategies foster a safe classroom environment for students to express their English language weaknesses without feeling anxious or apprehensive. This is supported by Hattie and Timperley's (2007) claim that formative assessments enable learners to indicate that they do not comprehend certain English terms confidently, receive corrective feedback, and be instructed to recognize and appreciate differences among individuals. In summary, formative feedback or corrective feedback plays an essential role in enabling ESL to master the English language by promoting self-assessment, self-confidence, active engagement in classroom activities, and the development of a safe classroom climate.

V. Conclusion

The objective of the present study was to examine the efficacy of formative and summative assessments in motivating ESL students to learn English. The researcher adopted an integrative review methodology that involves electronically searching, identifying, selecting, and reviewing studies that fulfill preset inclusion criteria. Thirteen studies that addressed the efficacy of summative and formative evaluations on motivating learning were identified and selected through the electronic search of MEDLINE, Google Scholar, JSTOR, EBSCOHost, and ERIC databases. A synthesis of findings of the reviewed studies resulted in the mapping out of three major themes and three sub-themes that represented the mechanisms through which classroom assessments, particularly formative judgments, influence the motivation of ESL students to master English. The major themes comprised of 1.) assessment practices, 2.) formative feedback, and 3.) self-monitoring. Under the latter were three subthemes, namely, self-confidence, active participation, and classroom environment. The researcher recommends that teachers need to be trained on the necessity and significance of summative and formative evaluations in promoting English proficiency among ESL students in Lebanon.

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