

# Assessing the Impact of Formative Assessment vs. Summative Assessment in English Language Teaching

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**Abstract**—Assessment is an important part of English language learning, as it helps measure students' progress and understanding. This study examines the impact of formative and summative assessments on English language learning and student engagement. The research was conducted with 20 students from Zilla Parishad Primary government school in a rural area. Students were divided into two groups: Group A (Formative Assessment) and Group B (Summative Assessment).

The results showed that students in the Formative Assessment Group performed better, compared to the Summative Assessment Group. This suggests that formative assessment is more effective in enhancing language proficiency and engagement. The study highlights the importance of using continuous feedback and interactive assessments to support students' learning. These findings can help educators choose better assessment methods to improve English language education, especially in rural schools.

**Index Terms**—English language teaching, Formative assessment, Summative assessment, impact

## I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Assessment is a fundamental component of English Language Teaching (ELT), serving as a crucial tool for evaluating student learning and enhancing instructional strategies. Through effective assessment, teachers can identify learners' needs, monitor progress, and adjust teaching methods accordingly. This process not only aids in classifying and grading students but also provides essential feedback that informs pedagogical decisions (Tosuncuoglu, 2018).

In ELT, two primary assessment approaches are commonly employed: formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment refers to an array of evaluative procedures conducted during the learning process to monitor student comprehension, provide ongoing feedback, and facilitate instructional

adjustments that improve learning outcomes. Examples include quizzes, class discussions, and peer reviews. Formative assessments are essential in identifying misconceptions and learning gaps, allowing educators to address them promptly (Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, n.d.). In contrast, summative assessments occur at the conclusion of an instructional period, such as the end of a unit, term, or course. These assessments evaluate student learning against predefined standards or benchmarks and commonly take the form of final exams, standardized tests, and end-of-term projects (Sanako, 2020).

In the context of primary education, both formative and summative assessments play a critical role. Formative assessments in primary schools support young learners by providing immediate feedback, fostering a supportive learning environment, and encouraging active participation. They enable teachers to tailor instruction to meet individual student needs, thereby promoting a deeper understanding of the material. Summative assessments, while primarily evaluative, measure the cumulative knowledge and skills acquired by students, inform stakeholders about educational effectiveness, and guide future instructional planning (Sanako, 2020).

Despite the recognized importance of these assessment types, there remains a lack of clarity regarding their comparative effectiveness in ELT. Specifically, there is limited understanding of how formative and summative assessments individually and collectively impact language learning outcomes. This ambiguity poses challenges for educators striving to implement assessment strategies that optimize student engagement and achievement (Tosuncuoglu, 2018).

Understanding the influence of different assessment strategies on student learning and engagement is

essential. Formative assessments, by providing continuous feedback, can motivate students to take an active role in their learning journey. They encourage self-reflection and foster a growth mindset, which is particularly beneficial in language acquisition. Summative assessments, while often perceived as high-stakes, also influence student motivation and learning strategies. However, the extent and nature of this influence require further exploration (Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, n.d.).

This study aims to address these gaps by examining the comparative effectiveness of formative and summative assessments in ELT. By analysing their respective impacts on student learning and engagement, the research seeks to provide valuable insights for educators. The findings are expected to contribute to ELT pedagogy by informing the design of assessment systems that not only evaluate student performance but also actively promote language development and learner engagement (Tosuncuoglu, 2018).

In short, assessment in ELT is a multifaceted tool, when effectively implemented, significantly enhances the teaching-learning process. A comprehensive understanding of both formative and summative assessments, particularly in the primary school context, is essential for developing effective educational strategies. This study tries to shed light on the comparative effectiveness of these assessment approaches, thereby contributing to the advancement of ELT practices.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Formative Assessment in ELT:

Formative assessment is a critical component of English Language Teaching (ELT), facilitating continuous feedback and active learning. According to Wiliam (2011), formative assessment improves learning outcomes by fostering student engagement and self-regulation. Carless (2015) highlights that effective formative assessment incorporates self-assessment, peer assessment, and feedback-driven activities, enhancing learners' metacognitive skills. Andrade and Heritage (2017) emphasize that formative assessment helps students set learning goals and monitor their progress. Similarly, Brookhart (2013) states that formative assessment is essential for

developing students' language competence and confidence.

Research supports the role of formative assessment in promoting student engagement and learning. Hattie and Timperley (2017) assert that well-structured formative assessment, combined with constructive feedback, leads to better academic performance. Black and Wiliam (2018) argue that formative assessment strategies, such as low-stakes quizzes and reflective activities, foster deep learning and language retention. Summative Assessment in ELT: Summative assessment evaluates students' overall language proficiency at the end of an instructional period. According to Abedi (2017), summative assessment provides valuable data for measuring student progress and instructional effectiveness. Brown and Abeywickrama (2019) highlight the importance of final exams and standardized tests in assessing language proficiency. Brookhart (2018) suggests that summative assessments should align with curriculum goals to ensure validity and reliability.

Studies indicate that summative assessment plays a crucial role in measuring language proficiency. Bennett (2011) states that standardized assessments provide essential benchmarks for student achievement. However, Shepard (2019) critiques traditional summative assessments for being high-stakes and less adaptable to individual learning needs. Poehner and Inbar-Lourie (2020) advocate for dynamic assessment approaches that integrate elements of formative assessment to improve learning outcomes.

Comparative Studies on Formative vs. Summative Assessment: Several studies highlight the strengths and weaknesses of formative and summative assessments. Wiliam and Thompson (2017) argue that formative assessment supports student learning, whereas summative assessment ensures accountability. Taras (2015) suggests that both forms of assessment should be examined in relation to their impact on student performance and learning outcomes. Heritage (2018) emphasizes the need to explore the distinct contributions of each assessment type in language education.

Research highlights that while formative assessment fosters continuous learning, summative assessment provides a measure of language proficiency. Brookhart (2017) emphasizes the necessity of understanding how each assessment method

influences student achievement and language development. Stiggins (2019) calls for further empirical studies to assess the long-term effectiveness of both formative and summative evaluation in ELT

### III. RESEARCH GAP

The review underscores the significance of both formative and summative assessments in ELT, with formative assessment enhancing engagement and summative assessment measuring language proficiency. While numerous studies have explored the individual impact of these assessment methods, there remains a gap in understanding their specific effects on different aspects of language learning, such as fluency, accuracy, and retention. Additionally, research on how teachers and learners perceive the effectiveness of these assessments in diverse ELT contexts is limited. This study aims to address these gaps by assessing the impact of formative and summative evaluation on English language teaching and learning, providing empirical insights into their respective contributions.

### IV. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Assessment plays a crucial role in English language learning, especially for students in rural schools where English is a second or foreign language. Teachers use different assessment methods to evaluate students' progress, but it is important to understand which method works best in improving language skills and engagement.

This study focuses on comparing formative and summative assessments to determine their impact on students' English language learning. Formative assessment, which includes quizzes, peer assessment, and feedback-based activities, encourages active participation and continuous improvement. On the other hand, summative assessment, which relies on final exams and graded assignments, measures students' overall learning at the end of a specific period.

By analysing and comparing these two approaches, this study aims to identify which method is more effective in enhancing English language proficiency. The findings will help teachers and educators adopt better assessment strategies to improve student

engagement and learning outcomes in English language classrooms.

### V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the impact of formative assessment on students' English language learning and engagement.
2. To examine the impact of summative assessment on students' students' English language learning and engagement.
3. To compare the effectiveness of formative and summative assessments in improving English language proficiency.

### VI. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does formative assessment impact students' language learning and engagement?
2. How does Summative assessment impact students' language learning and engagement?
3. Which assessment approach is more effective in improving English language proficiency?

### VII. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study focuses on assessing the effectiveness of formative and summative assessments in language learning among ESL students of 6th and 7th standards at Zilla Parishad Primary School, Adgaon Darade. The research specifically examines classroom-based assessments, analyzing their impact on students' language proficiency and engagement. The study does not include standardized testing frameworks, as the primary aim is to evaluate assessments used in regular classroom settings. While the findings provide valuable insights into assessment effectiveness in rural schools, the results may not be generalizable to other schools or students outside this specific context.

### VIII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

This study used a comparative research design to assess the impact of formative and summative assessment methods on English language learning. The participants were divided into two groups, Group A received instruction using formative assessment strategies, such as quizzes, peer assessment, and

feedback-based activities. Group B followed a summative assessment approach, relying on final tests and graded assignments. A mixed-methods approach was applied, combining quantitative data (test scores) and qualitative data (classroom observations). This helped provide a clear understanding of how different assessment methods influenced student learning.

**Participants and Sampling**

The study included 20 students, all aged 13 years, studying in the 7th standard at a government primary school in a rural area where English was a second or foreign language. The participants were equally divided into Group A (Formative Assessment) and Group B (Summative Assessment). A purposive sampling method was used to select students who met the study’s criteria, ensuring a focused examination of assessment impacts within similar learning environments.

**IX. DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

To measure and compare the effectiveness of formative and summative assessments, a structured data collection approach was used. Pre- and post-tests were administered to assess students' language proficiency before and after the assessment interventions, providing measurable insights into their progress. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to document student engagement, participation, and responsiveness, capturing qualitative differences in learning experiences between the two groups. This methodological framework will help determine the effectiveness of formative and summative assessments in enhancing language learning among rural students.

**X. DATA ANALYSIS**

The collected data was analyzed to determine the impact of formative and summative assessments on English language proficiency. Pre-test and post-test scores of 20 students were compared to measure their progress. The percentage improvement in scores was calculated to assess the effectiveness of each assessment type. Group A, consisting of 10 students, underwent formative assessments, while Group B experienced summative assessments. The findings were presented using tables and charts, illustrating score improvements and highlighting differences in

learning outcomes between the two groups. This analysis provided valuable insights into the role of assessment methods in language learning.

**Table 1: Formative Assessment Group (10 Students)**

Student	Pre-Test Score (100)	Post-Test Score (100)	Improvement (%)
A1	52	76	+46.15%
A2	60	82	+36.67%
A3	48	70	+45.83%
A4	55	79	+43.64%
A5	50	74	+48.00%
A6	58	80	+37.93%
A7	53	75	+41.51%
A8	49	71	+44.90%
A9	61	83	+36.07%
A10	54	77	+42.59%

Average Improvement: 42.05%

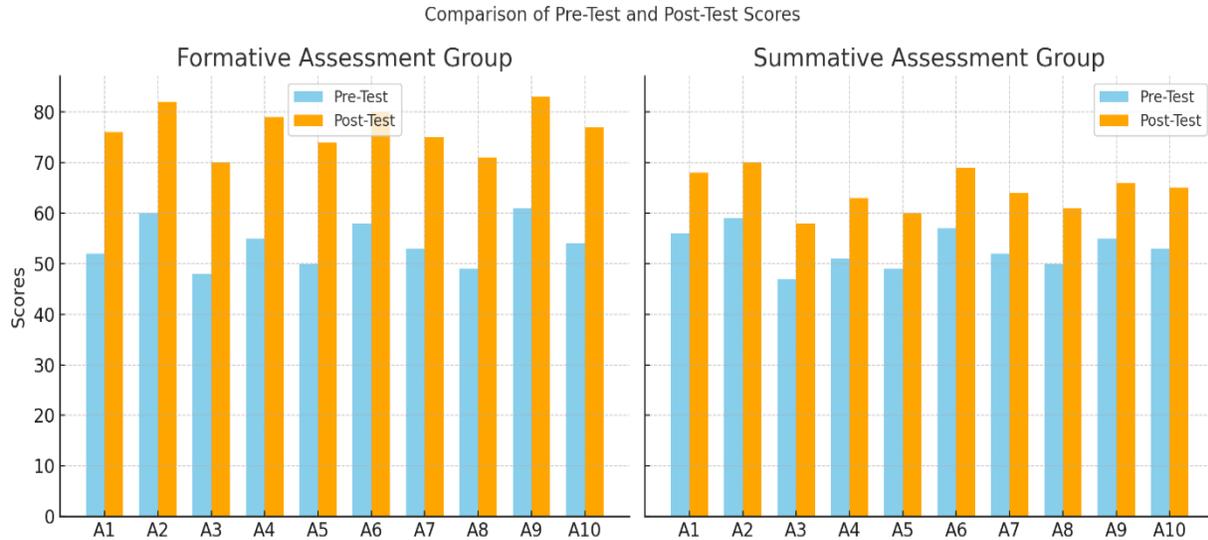
**Table 2: Summative Assessment Group (10 Students)**

Student	Pre-Test Score (100)	Post-Test Score (100)	Improvement (%)
A11	56	68	+21.43%
A12	59	70	+18.64%
A13	47	58	+23.40%
A14	51	63	+23.53%
A15	49	60	+22.45%
A16	57	69	+21.05%
A17	52	64	+23.08%
A18	50	61	+22.00%
A19	55	66	+20.00%
A20	53	65	+22.64%

Average Improvement: 21.92%

**XI. DATA ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS**

The analysis of pre-test and post-test scores revealed significant differences in learning outcomes between the two groups. The Formative Assessment Group demonstrated a substantial improvement of 42.05%, indicating that continuous feedback and interactive learning methods enhanced language proficiency more effectively. In contrast, the Summative Assessment Group showed a 21.92% improvement, suggesting that exam-oriented preparation led to moderate progress. Classroom observations further supported these findings, showing that students in the formative group were more engaged and actively participated in learning activities. These results highlight the effectiveness of formative assessments in fostering continuous learning and skill development.



## XII. KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM THE DATA

The analysis of pre-test and post-test scores revealed clear differences in student performance between the two assessment groups. The Formative Assessment Group showed a significant increase in post-test scores, demonstrating the positive impact of continuous feedback and interactive learning. While the Summative Assessment Group also improved, the overall increase was relatively lower compared to the formative group. Additionally, post-test scores in the formative group remained consistently higher, indicating that active engagement and regular feedback played a crucial role in enhancing language proficiency. These findings emphasize the effectiveness of formative assessment in driving sustained language learning progress.

## XIII. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Throughout the study, noticeable differences emerged between the two groups in terms of participation, engagement, motivation, and overall learning progress.

1 **Active Participation:** Students in the formative assessment group (Group A) were far more engaged in classroom activities. Nearly 80% of them eagerly participated in discussions, peer assessments, and interactive exercises. In contrast, students in the summative assessment group (Group B) were less involved, with less

than half actively engaging in classroom interactions.

- 2 **Engagement Motivation:** The formative approach seemed to spark curiosity students in Group A asked more questions, responded enthusiastically to activities, and showed a genuine interest in learning. On the other hand, Group B appeared more focused on completing tasks rather than actively engaging with the material, with some students displaying signs of disengagement over time.
- 3 **Responsiveness to Feedback:** One of the most striking differences was how students responded to feedback. In Group A, nearly 85% of students improved their responses after receiving constructive feedback, adjusting their work accordingly. In contrast, only about half of the students in Group B made noticeable changes, as they were more accustomed to fixed grading rather than iterative learning.
- 4 **Achievement of Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the study, students who experienced formative assessment showed greater improvement in their language skills. Around 75% of them demonstrated noticeable progress, while in Group B, progress was evident but at a slower pace, with only about 55% showing significant improvement.

These observations indicated that formative assessment not only keeps students engaged but also helps them take ownership of their learning, making the process more interactive and meaningful.

#### XIV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data clearly illustrates a substantial difference in learning outcomes between students who experienced formative assessment and those who were assessed using a summative approach. The results not only highlight improvements in language proficiency but also shed light on the effectiveness of continuous feedback-based learning strategies in English language teaching (ELT).

##### 1. Impact of Formative Assessment on Language Learning

Students in the formative assessment group showed a significant increase in their post-test scores, with an average improvement of 42.05%. This indicates that formative assessment characterized by ongoing feedback, interactive learning, and student engagement played a crucial role in enhancing their English language skills.

Looking at individual scores, students like A5 and A3 had an improvement of 48.00% and 45.83%, respectively, suggesting that those who initially struggled benefited the most from regular guidance and corrective feedback. The lowest improvement in this group was still 36.07% (A9), which is higher than the best improvement in the summative group. This reinforces the idea that formative assessment provides a more supportive learning environment, helping students improve at a faster pace.

Additionally, the interactive nature of formative assessments such as quizzes, peer discussions, and teacher feedback may have helped students stay motivated and engaged, leading to better retention and application of language skills.

##### 2. Effect of Summative Assessment on Academic Performance

On the other hand, students in the summative assessment group also showed improvement, but at a slower rate, with an average increase of 21.92%. This suggests that while summative assessments (such as final exams and standardized tests) do measure learning progress, they might not be as effective in facilitating deeper understanding and long-term retention.

For example, A13 and A14 showed an improvement of around 23.40% and 23.53%, which is nearly half the improvement seen in the formative group's highest performers. The lowest improvement in this group

(18.64% by A12) indicates that students in summative-based learning tend to retain less and progress more slowly, as they might focus only on exam preparation rather than continuous learning. One possible reason for this difference is that summative assessments often emphasize final outcomes rather than the learning process. Students in this group likely received less frequent feedback, leading to a lack of immediate correction and reinforcement, which are essential in language learning.

##### 3. Comparing Formative and Summative Assessments

When comparing both groups, it becomes evident that formative assessment is more effective in improving English language proficiency. The average improvement in formative assessment (42.05%) is nearly double that of summative assessment (21.92%), demonstrating that a continuous learning approach fosters better skill development than an end-term evaluation. Another interesting takeaway is that the variation in individual improvement was more balanced in the formative group. In contrast, the summative group had a wider gap between high and low performers, suggesting that students who struggled in pre-tests found it harder to catch up without continuous support.

#### XV. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

These findings highlight the need to integrate more formative assessment strategies in English language teaching, particularly at the primary school level. Educators should focus on providing timely feedback, encouraging interactive learning, and using technology-driven tools to enhance formative assessments. While summative assessments remain essential for evaluating overall progress, they should not be the sole measure of learning. Instead, a balanced approach that incorporates both ongoing feedback (formative) and final evaluations (summative) could help create a more effective and student-friendly language learning environment.

#### XVI. CONCLUSION

The study underscores the superior impact of formative assessment on English language proficiency, engagement, and retention. Students who experienced continuous feedback and active

participation showed significantly better results compared to those who relied on end-term evaluations alone. These findings emphasize the need for a shift towards formative assessment practices in ELT classrooms to ensure more effective language learning outcomes.

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