

Understanding Summative and Formative Assessment Dynamics

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Abstract: This paper aims to review the literature on types of assessment. Specifically, the paper seeks to define what is meant by summative assessment and formative assessment, and to clarify the differences between these two types of assessment. The paper also discusses the relationship between summative and formative assessment, arguing that although these types of assessment might seem to be different at many levels, their general goals should be the same. The present paper argues that effective language learning is better enhanced when both summative and formative assessment are used congruently. In this way, data that are gathered by means of formative assessments should be used to complement and consolidate data that are collected using summative assessment tasks. The paper, thus, suggests some strategies for balancing summative and formative assessments.

Keywords: Assessment, Formative Assessment, Summative Assessment, Feedback, ELT

1. Introduction

Assessment is one of the major components of language teaching and learning. The literature on educational assessment classifies types of assessment according to the purposes that this assessment is meant to serve. There are several terms that have been developed to refer to the functions that assessment is supposed to fulfill. The two functions of educational assessment that have gained much attention in recent years are labelled formative assessment and summative assessment.

In this paper, it is argued that a clear understanding of the terms related to types of assessment is the most important step in developing theoretical and practical applications. Additionally, the paper argues that capturing a more comprehensive and overarching picture of students' learning requires the incorporation of an assessment model that balances summative and formative assessment. Therefore, the paper starts by examining the definitions and terminology associated with educational assessment. It begins with defining the term 'assessment' as well as other terms that are used in relation to it. Second, a clarification of the terms 'summative' and 'formative' assessment follows. Then, the paper moves to discuss the relationship between summative and formative assessment and how they can be both used to improve students' learning in the context of second or foreign language classrooms.

2. Definition of Assessment

According to Bachman (2004), the term 'assessment' is "commonly used with a variety of different meanings that there seems to be no consensus on what precisely it means" (p. 6). Ouakrime (2016) also points out that it is difficult to find a clear-cut definition of the term assessment. The author, however, argues that scholars in the field of education generally agree that the term entails,

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collecting data and making decisions concerning academic achievement and measuring the extent to which the student has mastered the content of a given course of study and has developed cognitive and affective abilities in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes (p. 53).

Similarly, Chapelle and Brinley (2002) define assessment as the “act of collecting information and making judgments about the learner’s knowledge of a language and ability to use it” (p. 267). Brown (2004) defines assessment as “any act of interpreting information about students’ performance, collected through any of a multitude of means or practices” (p. 15).

From another perspective, Black and William (1998) view learner assessment as “all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged” (p. 2). The first idea to infer from this definition is that conducting assessment is not limited to the teacher. Students are also involved in their assessment. More importantly, assessment does not simply mean giving students tests and assigning them grades. It is, rather, an on-going process whereby teachers gather information about students’ performances and abilities. On the basis of this information, teachers may consider adjusting their teaching methods and students may consider refining their learning strategies. If a teacher, for instance, notices after administering and correcting a test that most of the students demonstrated low achievement, he or she will be incited to devise any necessary remedial work to meet the needs and requirements of the learners.

As the needs of all learners and situations cannot be catered for using the same procedure, multiple techniques of assessment can be implemented. In other words, the process of assessing learners is not limited to one tool such as tests or exams but it can include data from students’ performance in different language activities. This would help learners know how they are progressing and help teachers measure the effectiveness of their methodologies and materials. As such, classroom assessment includes four essential aspects; ‘events’, ‘tools’, ‘processes’, and ‘decisions’ (Cheng & Fox, 2017). Assessment ‘events’ are related to the types and frequency of the classroom activities used. Considering when to use an activity and how often to use it helps the teacher determine the areas of instruction that need more improvement, and the student(s) who might need further support. Assessment ‘tools’ are “the instruments we use to collect evidence of students’ learning” (p. 2). These instruments should be diverse and relevant to the learning objectives. Assessment ‘processes’ are the ways in which the assessment activities are carried out. Feedback is a crucial component of the process of assessment; the type and amount of feedback provided facilitate the learners’ understanding of what is required of them. Finally, the assessment ‘decisions’ a teacher makes should support students’ learning whether they are made at the level of lesson design and planning or at the level of making final judgments based on grades.

Strictly speaking, assessment means gathering information about students’ learning and their level of attainment of the learning goals. This is generally accomplished through tests, home and classroom assignments, projects that students prepare, and performance on classroom tasks and activities. The information gathered is, then, interpreted in the form of grades or comments with the aim of making decisions or suggesting ways for future improvement.

Evaluation and testing are terms that are closely related to assessment and are even used interchangeably sometimes. Mundrake (2000, cited in Ghaicha, 2016), for instance, asserts that “assessment, testing, and evaluation are terms used to describe the outcomes of the educational process” (p. 2). Nevertheless, the distinction between these three labels is worth clarifying. Sárosdy, et. al. (2006) describe evaluation as a “broad term which involves the systematic way of gathering reliable and relevant information for the purpose of making decisions” (p. 131). Similarly, Cunningham (1973) defines evaluation as “the collection and use of information to make decisions about certain entities. In the field of education, these entities could be as diverse as a curriculum, textbook, slide projectors, teacher, and school system” (p. 2).

The term evaluation is, thus, more encompassing than assessment. It concerns different components of a course such as the teaching methodology adopted, the quality of the teaching materials used, learners' achievement, the appropriateness of the objectives, the curriculum, the effectiveness of an educational system as a whole, etc. In short, while assessment focuses on the students' learning and the outcomes of teaching, with evaluation the focus is on providing judgments concerning the effectiveness of any aspect in the educational process. Hence, assessment may be one part of evaluation.

The second term that is often associated with assessment is testing. Brown (2004) defines a test as "a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain" (p. 14). This definition implies that a test is a tool or an instrument that measures an individual test-taker's general ability or specific knowledge or skill. Multiple choice questions with predetermined correct answers, a writing task with detailed grading rubrics, or an oral interview with a checklist of expected responses are examples of such instrument. Mitchell (1992, cited in Suskie, 2010) describes the test as a "single-occasion, uni-dimensional, timed exercise, usually in multiple choice or short-answer form" (p. 14). In other words, testing is often formal and usually administered under standardized conditions. The results of testing students are reported in the form of grades. Higher grades reflect higher levels of learning or competence in relation to the target content, while lower grades reflect a deficiency or lack of competence. Therefore, testing is only one component of assessment.

3. Types of Assessment

3.1. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is the most basic and traditional form of assessment. Brown (2004) refers to this form of assessment as "a summation of what a student has learned" (p. 6). This means that, as its name entails, summative assessment is used to summarize and measure the extent to which a student has been able to demonstrate that he or she has met the goals of a given course of study. Cheng and Fox (2017) explain that "summative assessment is used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period" (p. 5). This assessment is, therefore, used primarily to make judgments about the overall performance or ability of students, assign them grades, and determine whether they are ready for progression or not. The judgements and grades obtained from using summative assessment can be regarded as a way of looking back at the past and summing-up a student's achievement without necessarily assessing students' progress or development over a period of time. This is also confirmed by Taras (2005) who describes such assessment as "a judgement which encapsulates all the evidence up to a given point. This point is seen as a finality at the point of the judge" (p. 468).

According to Faulty and Savage (2008), an important aspect of summative assessment is "separating the teaching process from assessment" (p. 5). Summative assessment occurs periodically, at the end of a semester, school year, or unit of study. It is usually carried out in the form of quizzes, tests, and end-term exams which are typically assigned to students to measure what has been learned and how well it was learned whether at the school and classroom level or at wider levels. This is closely linked to the traditional view of education which considers learners as passive recipients of knowledge transmitted from the teacher. Such assessment results typically in grades that form a portion of a student's final score and that can also determine whether a learner is to pass or fail a certain course of study. Summative assessment is, therefore, directed towards the final product rather than the process. That's why it is also referred to in the literature as "final assessment" (Ouakrime, 2016, p. 54).

Cheng and Fox (2017) list three main criteria that define summative assessment. First, the assessment tools used are meant to measure the extent to which a learner has learned what he or she is supposed to learn. That is to say, what matters the most in summative assessment are the decisions made on the basis of this assessment rather than the way the assessment is designed and used. Second, summative assessment is conducted at the end of learning. As such, this assessment is evaluative; measuring learners' achievement, determining the extent to which an educational program is effective,

or making placement and progress decisions. The third criterion is related to the results of summative assessment which are usually interpreted in the form of grades or scores.

Criticism over the effectiveness of summative assessment is widely discussed in the literature on educational assessment. Several scholars express their concern with summative assessment and consider this form of assessment as not being the most effective means of assessing and enhancing learning, especially that it places much emphasis on examinations and hence encourages rote learning. Pelligrino (2001, cited in Irons, 2008, p. 14-15), for instance, summarizes the problems of summative assessment in four major concerns. The first concern is related to the fact that this type of assessment fails to capture all the complex skills and competences that learners should develop. Second, the type of information gathered through summative assessment is limited in the sense that no feedback is provided to teachers on what is required to enhance learning. The third concern is that summative assessment focuses on learners' achievement at a specific time only without measuring learners' progress throughout the learning process. The final concern is related to bias and subjectivity in grading which brings to the fore issues of equity and fairness.

3.2. Formative Assessment

Before clarifying what formative assessment means, a short background to the term is worth highlighting. Bell and Cowie (2002) mention three educational assessment trends that have led to an increased interest in formative assessment. The first is attributed to "the development of more valid assessment procedures" (p.7). The summative assessment that dominated the field of education in the 1970s and 1980s has been criticized for lacking validity. Furthermore, the reliance on standardized testing and external examinations has been considered insufficient in assessing the wide range of learning outcomes. This led to an interest in 'internal' assessment or assessment that is conducted by the teacher in the classroom. Thus, the term formative assessment started to be used initially to refer to continuous summative assessment that is conducted by the classroom teacher as opposed to summative assessment that is developed and marked by external examiners for national qualifications.

The second trend was the move towards "multiple purposes of assessment" (Bell & Cowie, 2002, p. 8). Assessment, the authors argue, has multiple audiences, and this creates a need for re-evaluating the assessment procedures to address the goals of these specific audiences. Hence, there was a need for assessments that serve different purposes such as improving students' learning, awarding qualifications, reporting educational progress, providing feedback to parents and students, and teachers, etc. These multiple assessment purposes gave rise to what is known as formative assessment.

The third trend that has put the light on the type of assessment known as formative assessment is "teaching for and assessment of conceptual development" (Bell & Cowie, 2002, p. 10). This is based on the view that both students' thinking processes and their existing knowledge have an impact on learning outcomes and thus should be considered in teaching. By considering students' thinking in the teaching process, teachers interact with and respond to students thinking and therefore help students construct an understanding for themselves rather than just absorb knowledge. In this way, teachers are said to be undertaking formative assessment while teaching for conceptual development. These three trends the authors discussed resulted in an increase in using what is labeled 'formative assessment'.

Formative assessment focuses on "evaluating students in the process of "forming" their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process" (Brown, 2004, p. 17). It is an assessment that accompanies students throughout their learning enterprise to equip them with the necessary skills and abilities for the development of their language. The provision of appropriate feedback on performance and achievement is a fundamental component of formative assessment. Irons (2008) defines the term formative assessment as "any task that creates feedback (information which helps a student learn from formative activities) or feed-forward (information which will help a student amend or enhance activities in the future) to students about their learning achievements" (p.7) In fact, the essence of formative assessment is designing tasks with the aim of

creating feedback to help learners learn from classroom activities and adjust and improve future performance. The author ascertains that formative assessment is beneficial for learners in several ways. It helps them think about what they are supposed to learn and what they want to learn, try new things and learn from their mistakes, discuss different subjects, and more importantly think about and reflect on their needs as learners (Irons, 2008, p. 20).

Formative assessment is designed to assist not only learning but teaching as well. It is the “frequent, interactive assessment of students’ progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately” (Benseman & Suttan, 2008, p. 2). The purpose of such assessment is not to assign grades to students, but to collect data about students’ learning. These data serve a feedback-providing function to both teachers and students. It provides feedback to the learner, which can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses and hence improve future performance. Besides, they serve as the basis whereby teachers can reflect on and improve their teaching practices. This is also confirmed by McMillan, Andrade and Heritage (2018) who argue that “when any high-quality classroom assessment is used for formative purposes, it provides feedback to teachers that can inform adjustments to instruction, as well as feedback to students that supports their learning” (p. 3).

Black and William (1998) further stress these ideas. The authors define assessment as any assessment activities in which both the teacher and his/her students engage with the aim of providing feedback for developing teaching and learning. When the information obtained from this assessment is used to align teaching to students’ needs, the assessment is said to be ‘formative’. In other words, formative assessment is seen as an integral part of students’ learning and does not occur separately from the teaching process. In this form of assessment, teachers, learners, and their peers all have an important role to play throughout the teaching and learning processes.

In general, formative assessment has three main characteristics (Ouakrime, 2016). First, it is “Informative”, helping to collect information about learners’ achievement and about the purposes and practices of the teaching program. It is, then, important that students, teachers and administrators are made aware of all items of information relating to assessment. This is likely to increase responsibility among students for their learning, foster teachers’ feeling of accountability to their students, and also provide administrators with a rationale for well-informed decision-making.

Second, formative assessment is “participative”. It seeks to encourage the learners to be actively involved at all stages of the process. This could be achieved through getting students engaged in peer and self-assessments throughout the course of their studies which is likely to change students’ negative attitudes towards assessment, and to develop a more collaborative teacher-student relationship.

Third, and as the name implies, formative assessment is “formative” in nature. Its primary focus is to provide feedback to all the participants in an educational program. This feedback enlightens students about their strengths and weaknesses. It also provides teachers with insights into the objectives, methodology and content of the course. This feedback can be also the basis for administrators to introduce any necessary changes regarding enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, formative assessment is not an end in itself; it is rather a means of improving the overall teaching and learning process. As such, this type of assessment is process-based and constitutes an integral part of the teaching learning process as has been mentioned earlier.

Similarly, Gattullo (2000, cited in Ketabi, 2014) lists three main characteristics of formative assessment. First, formative assessment is an ongoing multi-phase process that is conducted on a daily basis through interaction between the teacher and his/her students. Second, formative assessment is characterized by the provision of feedback for immediate action. Finally, this type of assessment aims at amending and modifying the teaching activities for better improvement of learning processes and outcomes.

As can be inferred from the discussion above, the most critical component of formative assessment is feedback. Feedback is defined by Ramaprasad (1983) as “information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way” (p. 4). This definition stresses three important points. First, feedback should not focus on input only. Rather, the focus could also be on output or process as system parameters. Second, for feedback to be effective three conditions are required; the existence of data about the current level, the existence of data about the previous level (reference level), and the implementation of appropriate techniques for comparing between the two levels to identify the gap. The third point is related to the information obtained about this gap. This information is considered feedback only if it is used for bridging the gap, otherwise the information per se is not regarded as feedback. Drawing on this definition, Sadler (1989) explains,

the learner has to (a) possess a concept of the standard (or goal, or reference level) being aimed for, (b) compare the actual (or current) level of performance with the standard, and (c) engage in appropriate action which leads to some closure of the gap (p. 121).

Accordingly, feedback must be clear to learners so that they can understand and identify their strengths and work towards overcoming their weaknesses. Feedback must also focus on the learning process and be relevant to the learning goals. When used effectively, feedback has the potential of enhancing learning and facilitating the attainment of the learning goals. Hattie & Timperley (2007) assert that for feedback to be effective, there are three main questions that students and/or teachers should ask, “where am I going? How am I going? And where to next?”

The first question emphasizes the importance of clearly formulated learning goals. In this respect, Hattie and Yates (2014) confirm that “feedback does not work in a vacuum. Instead, it registers discrepancy between the current state and a known objective” (p. 48). That is to say, the power of feedback is maintained when clear and challenging objectives are articulated and made known to all parties involved at the start. Thus, teachers are required to invest adequate time and effort to ensure that students understand the desired learning outcomes and standards of performance.

The second question, (How am I going?), is about the progress that the student is making in the process of achieving the pre-set goals. This means that feedback should serve the function of assessing “how far along the journey the student has come and can serve to reduce cognitive load by showing the students where in this sequence they need to exert their thinking and effort” (Hattie & Yates, 2014, p. 49). Feedback is, thus, process oriented, and is more effective when it shows the student’s actual level, what accomplishments are achieved, and what needs to be further developed.

The third and last question is related to guiding students and directing them towards the next steps. Teachers are required to provide appropriate resources and support to help students employ effective strategies in order to move forward in the right direction to meet the initial learning outcomes. Strictly speaking, the main purpose of feedback is to decrease the discrepancy between students’ actual understandings and performance and a pre-determined goal. To serve this purpose, Hattie and Timperley (2007, p. 87) suggest a framework consisting of four types of feedback. The first type is ‘task level’ and it is related to the extent to which a task is understood and performed. The second type is ‘process level’ and it has to do with the process that is required so that a task could be understood and performed. The third type is referred to as ‘self-regulation level’ and it is associated with students’ monitoring and regulating of actions. The final type of feedback that the authors mentioned is ‘self-level’ and it is about the learner’s personal evaluations.

McMillan, Andrade, and Heritage (2017) add another crucial aspect of feedback that the authors believe to be often overlooked. This aspect is “revision”. For the authors, feedback is most effective when it provides teachers an opportunity to adjust instruction and grants students the chance to revise and amend the work on which they received feedback.

In conclusion, effective feedback is at the core of formative assessment which emphasizes the significance of assessing learners' understanding of the information provided to them during the process of learning to match the subsequent teaching practices to the actual understanding of learners. This is one of the main features that distinguish formative assessment from summative assessment. Other distinguishing characteristics of these two assessment modalities as well as the relationship between them are discussed below.

4. The Relationship between Summative and Formative Assessment

This distinction between summative and formative assessment is best summarized in the following figure by Faulty and Savage (2008).

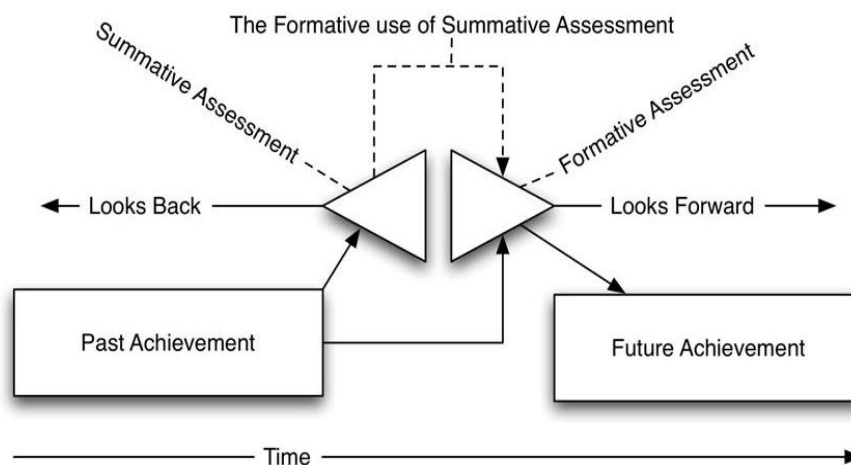


Figure 1. Assessment Modalities (Faulty & Savage, 2008, p. 27)

As illustrated in the figure, summative assessment looks back on past achievement summarizing what the student has learned and the amount of knowledge he or she has accumulated. Formative assessment, on the other hand, looks forward seeking to evaluate the process of learning and looking for ways of future improvement. According to Andersson (2008), “the difference between the two (summative assessment and formative assessment) does not lie in the method in itself, but rather in the way the method is being used” (p. 8). That is why it is not easy to make a clear-cut distinction between formative and summative assessment. For the author, the two types could be combined. For instance, formative assessment can be employed in a summative way when a teacher assigns students grades at the end of a course or term. Likewise, tests which are a summative assessment tool can be used in a formative way when, for instance, a teacher invites his or her students to reflect on their test results so that they get insights into what they know and what needs further improvement.

In an attempt to elaborate more on the relationship between summative assessment and formative assessment, Sadler (1989) says,

Formative assessment is concerned with how judgements about the quality of student responses (performance, pieces, or works) can be used to shape and improve the students' competence by short-circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial-and-error learning (p. 120).

What the quote implies is that an assessment is considered to be formative only if the judgements made on its basis are used by the student. If, on the other hand, the judgements are seen as an end in themselves, then the assessment is a summative one. This means that summative assessment should

come first as it is important to measure the quality of the student's work before providing him or her with feedback (Taras, 2005).

Another distinction that is often made in the literature is the distinction between "assessment of learning" and "assessment for learning" attributing a formative function to the latter while the former takes a summative function (Stiggins, 2002). There is also formal versus informal assessment. Informal assessment is performance-based. It is "embedded in classroom tasks designed to elicit performance without recording results and making fixed judgments about a student's competence" (Brown, 2004, p. 16). This takes a number of forms such as observing students' performance on classroom tasks or engaging in classroom discussions. Other examples include marginal comments on a written assignment, advice on how to better spell or pronounce a certain word, and suggesting strategies for overcoming a reading difficulty. Informal assessment can also be as simple as providing '*impromptu feedback*' to the learner. Comments like 'good job!', 'did you say can or can't?', 'I think you mean 'he speaks' not 'he speak', etc. all count as informal assessment.

Conversely, formal assessments are "systematic, planned sampling techniques constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of student achievement" (Brown, 2004, p. 17). As such, formal assessments encourage a written evaluation by using data that come from standardized tests against which the outcomes are compared. It is, nevertheless, worth mentioning that formal assessments are not confined to tests. Tests are only one example of formal assessment. Other examples might include students' journals and portfolios.

5. Balancing Summative and Formative Assessments

Effective teaching and learning are bound by a balanced framework that views summative and formative assessments to play complementary roles. As Yow (2019) puts it "many of the strategies shown to have the greatest improvement on student learning, with the least cost, sit within a balanced formative and summative assessment model of teaching" (p.4).

One important strategy for balancing summative and formative assessment is to align assessment tasks with the learning objectives. Learning objectives that are clearly articulated help in developing tasks that can capture not only the product of learning but the learning process as well (Biggs & Tang, 2011). In other words, formative and summative assessments are more likely to reinforce each other when they are designed in alignment with learning objectives.

Balancing formative and summative assessments requires the two types of assessment to work in synchronization and support one another. Burke (2010) suggests that the same assessment strategies could be employed for both summative and formative assessments. The difference between the two lies only in the purpose of the assessment strategy and its timing. While the formative assessment strategies seek primarily the provision of continuous feedback and are used during learning, their summative assessment counterparts are used at the end of learning with the aim of proving learning through the evaluation of the learner's efforts. Examples of these strategies are summarized in the table below.

Table 1. The Balanced Assessment Model (Burke, 2010, p.25)

Formative Assessment Strategies	Summative Assessment Strategies
Informal questions	Formal oral interviews
Informal observation	Formal observation
Rough drafts of written work	Final copy of written work
In-progress learning log	Final learning log entries
Multiple drafts of journal	Final journal entries
Rehearsal of presentation	Final presentation
Working portfolio	Showcase portfolio
Practice checklist for do-overs	Final checklist
Practice rubrics (analytical)	Final rubrics (analytical and holistic)
Homework and quizzes	Teacher-made tests
Benchmark/interim tests	High-stakes standardized tests

The provision of continuous feedback enables teachers to adjust their teaching practices according to the emerging learning needs of their students. In addition to benefiting learners, the feedback that is provided throughout the learning process has the potential of increasing the validity of the summative assessments used as learners are allowed sufficient time to better prepare for their summative assessments (Shute, 2008).

Making use of digital technologies is another approach for integrating formative and summative assessments and bridging the gap between the two. Assessment tools that are technology-enhanced such as automated feedback platforms provide both students and teachers with real-time insights which can help balance formative and summative assessments (Pellegrino et al., 2016).

Generally, the adoption of a balanced framework that combines both summative and formative assessment strategies promotes a dynamic learning environment. The thoughtful and careful combination of the two assessment types not only enhances learners' growth and development but increases the reliability and validity of the assessment system as well.

6. Conclusion, Implications, and Suggestions for Future Research

6.1. Conclusion

This paper is an attempt to review the literature on educational assessment with the aim of clarifying the terms 'summative' and 'formative' assessment. In conclusion, one would say that whether an assessment task is to be regarded as summative or formative depends on the purpose that this assessment is supposed to serve as Sadler (1989) puts it, "the primary distinction between formative and summative assessment relates to purpose and effect" (p. 120). When the purpose is to assign grades and make final decisions about how well a student has demonstrated the attainment and mastery of course content, and hence has become ready for progression, the assessment in such a case is a summative one. Conversely, when the assessment is conducted primarily with the purpose of giving feedback to students, then it is a formative one.

6.2. Implications

In light of this literature review, the present paper recommends the incorporation of both summative and formative assessments in second or foreign language classrooms. Teachers are advised to utilize the assessment data that is collected using formative assessment methods in order to support and reinforce data that summative assessments provide. When the two assessment types are implemented in a congruent manner, individual learner differences and preferences are better addressed and catered for within the classroom, a more overarching picture of students learning is captured, and students' engagement and participation in the educational process is enhanced. This, in turn, has the potential of ensuring equity and fairness among learners, leading to increased motivational levels and more effective learning.

More importantly still, incorporating formative assessments in addition to summative ones helps teachers better reflect on their teaching practices. In other words, the information gathered through the combination of both assessment types serves as a checking device through which teachers can realize what teaching practices work best for their learners, and what areas need further focus and adjustments.

The paper also highly recommends the provision of adequate feedback to learners throughout the educational process. Feedback has the potential of providing learners with clear insights about their strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, learners are better equipped to overcome any difficulties they might encounter while learning and thus attain the learning goals with ease and efficiency.

6.3. Suggestions for Future Research

Although the current paper provides invaluable insights into the significance of summative and formative assessments in the context of second and foreign language learning and the interplay between these two assessment forms, it has some limitations. Overlooking other educational disciplines and contexts is the first limitation of this paper. Additionally, most of the sources selected focus on classroom-based assessment, with little, if any, attention to technological and digital assessments that are gaining much attention and focus in today's educational systems. Therefore, further research should be conducted to explore the use of summative and formative assessments in diverse educational contexts. Future research could also focus on examining how these two assessment types could be balanced using technology-enhanced tools and platforms. In addition, empirical studies should be carried out to investigate the impact of balanced assessment strategies on students' learning.

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