



Investigating the influence of formative assessment on the learning process in the English language classroom

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the impact of formative assessment practices on English language teaching and learning outcomes in Morocco. Classroom observations with English language teachers and students were conducted to examine the use and effects of formative assessment practices. While English language teachers in Morocco had limited knowledge and use of formative assessment practices, the study found that their use had a significant positive effect on student learning outcomes. The effective implementation of formative assessment practices could help to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning in Morocco. The study provides insights into the benefits of using formative assessment practices in the Moroccan context and offers recommendations for their effective implementation in the English language classroom. This research could inform and guide policy and practice in English language teaching in Morocco and other similar contexts, contributing to improved outcomes. English language teachers and policymakers in Morocco can use the findings to enhance the quality of English language teaching and learning in their classrooms and institutions.

Keywords: English language classroom, Formative assessment, The learning process.

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Contribution of this paper to the literature

This study offers insights into formative assessment practices in English language teaching and learning in Morocco. It examines the limited knowledge and use of these practices among teachers and highlights their positive impact on student learning outcomes. Recommendations for their effective implementation are provided.

1. Introduction

In Morocco, English language teaching is considered a key component of the education system as it is a requirement for students to pursue higher education and to access job opportunities in international markets. The English language teaching has undergone significant efforts to improve its quality, yet students still face challenges in attaining proficiency. A key contributing factor to this issue is the limited use of formative assessment practices in the English language classroom. Formative assessment is a collaborative and diagnostic process that provides ongoing feedback, self-assessment, and goal-setting opportunities to enhance students' learning and development.

This paper seeks to investigate the effects of formative assessment on student learning in the English language classroom in Morocco. The study will focus on secondary school students who are studying English as a foreign language. The main research question is: "What are the effects of using formative assessment on student learning outcomes in the English language classroom in Morocco?" The study aims to contribute to the existing literature on the benefits of formative assessment and its implementation in the Moroccan context.

The importance of this research lies in its potential to enhance the quality of English language teaching and learning in Morocco through the implementation of formative assessment practices. By investigating the impact of formative assessment on student learning outcomes, this study can offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of using formative assessment practices in the Moroccan context. Furthermore, the findings of this study can inform and guide policy and practice in English language teaching in Morocco and other similar contexts.

To achieve the research objectives, this paper is structured as follows: the next section will provide a comprehensive review of the literature on formative assessment in the English language classroom. This will be followed by the methodology section that outlines the research design, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis. The results section will present the study's findings, while the discussion section will interpret and evaluate these findings. Finally, the paper will conclude with a summary of the main findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research and practice. This research offers a unique contribution to the literature by exploring the impact of formative assessment practices on English language teaching and learning in the Moroccan context.

1.1. Background and Context of the Study

English language teaching is an integral part of the Moroccan education system, as it is essential for students to access higher education and international job opportunities. Despite significant efforts to improve the quality of English language teaching, many Moroccan students still struggle to acquire English language proficiency. One of the primary reasons for this is the limited use of formative assessment practices in the English language classroom. While formative assessment is an ongoing, diagnostic, and collaborative process that involves feedback, self-assessment, and goal-setting to enhance students' learning and development, it is not widely used in the Moroccan context. Instead, teachers often rely on traditional summative assessment methods such as quizzes and exams, which do not provide students with the necessary feedback to guide their learning and development.

Therefore, it is crucial to explore the potential of formative assessment practices to improve student learning outcomes in the English language classroom. Although the use of formative assessment has been shown to have positive effects on students' learning and development in other educational contexts, its effectiveness in the Moroccan context is not well documented. To address this gap, this study aims to investigate the effects of formative assessment on student learning outcomes in the English language classroom in Morocco.

The study will focus on secondary school students who are studying English as a foreign language, aiming to contribute to the existing literature on the benefits of formative assessment and its implementation in the Moroccan context. By examining the effects of formative assessment on student learning outcomes, the study will provide insights into the effectiveness of using formative assessment practices in the Moroccan context. Ultimately, this research can inform and guide policy and practice in English language teaching in Morocco and potentially other similar contexts. The paper's structure includes a literature review on formative assessment in the English language classroom, a methodology section outlining the research design, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis, results and discussion sections, and a summary of the main findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research and practice.

In summary, the study addresses a significant gap in the research on the effectiveness of formative assessment practices in the Moroccan context. The potential benefits of this research are numerous, including improving the quality of English language teaching and learning, increasing student motivation and engagement, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement in education.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although there have been efforts to enhance the quality of English language teaching in Morocco, numerous students still encounter difficulties in attaining English language proficiency. A primary factor contributing to this issue is the infrequent implementation of formative assessment practices in the English language classroom. The use of traditional summative assessment methods, including quizzes and exams, prevails and does not provide students with adequate feedback to direct their learning and development. Consequently, students who struggle to keep up with the class may become demotivated and disengaged, potentially resulting in low levels of student engagement and motivation.

Formative assessment is an ongoing, diagnostic, and collaborative process that involves feedback, self-assessment, and goal-setting to enhance students' learning and development. The use of formative assessment

practices has been shown to have positive effects on student learning outcomes in other educational contexts. However, the effectiveness of these practices in the Moroccan context is not well documented.

The aim of this study is to explore the impact of formative assessment on the learning outcomes of students in the English language classroom in Morocco. Specifically, the study aims to answer the research question: "How does the use of formative assessment affect student learning outcomes in the Moroccan context?" Through an examination of the effects of formative assessment practices on student learning outcomes, this study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on the benefits of formative assessment in the context of English language teaching in Morocco.

The significance of this research lies in the potential of formative assessment to enhance the quality of English language teaching and learning in Morocco. By filling a gap in the literature on the effectiveness of formative assessment practices in the Moroccan context, this study could inform and guide policy and practice in English language teaching not only in Morocco but also in similar contexts.

1.3. Research Question and Objectives

This paper addresses two main research questions namely:

- Research question 1: What formative assessment practices are being implemented in English language classrooms in Morocco?
- Research question 2: What are the effects of using formative assessment on student learning outcomes in the English language classroom in Morocco?

As for the objectives of this study, they can be stated as follows:

- To review the literature on the benefits of formative assessment and its implementation in the English language classroom.
- To investigate the current practices and perceptions of formative assessment among English language teachers in Morocco.
- To examine the effects of formative assessment on student learning outcomes in the English language classroom in Morocco.
- To explore the students' perceptions of formative assessment and its impact on their learning and development in the English language classroom.
- To provide recommendations for the effective implementation of formative assessment practices in the English language classroom in Morocco.

The first objective aims to review the existing literature on formative assessment and its benefits in the English language classroom. This will help to provide a theoretical framework for the study and to identify best practices in formative assessment.

The second objective seeks to explore the current practices and perceptions of formative assessment among English language teachers in Morocco. This will provide insights into the barriers to the implementation of formative assessment practices and the potential strategies for addressing them.

The third objective aims to examine the effects of formative assessment on student learning outcomes in the English language classroom in Morocco. This will involve collecting and analyzing data on students' achievement, motivation, and engagement, and comparing the results of the students who were taught using formative assessment practices and those who were taught using traditional summative assessment methods.

The fourth objective aims to explore the students' perceptions of formative assessment and its impact on their learning and development in the English language classroom. This will provide insights into the students' attitudes towards formative assessment and their understanding of the feedback they receive from their teachers.

The final objective aims to provide recommendations for the effective implementation of formative assessment practices in the English language classroom in Morocco. This will involve synthesizing the findings of the study and making practical recommendations for teachers, policymakers, and other stakeholders in the education system.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is a process of gathering evidence of student learning and using that evidence to inform and improve teaching and learning. It involves ongoing, low-stakes assessment that is integrated into instruction and provides feedback that helps both students and teachers understand where the student is in their learning, what they need to do to improve, and how to get there (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; Harlen & James, 1997).

Cowie and Bell (1999) in their work define formative assessment as a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. The authors argue that formative assessment is an essential part of effective teaching and learning, and that it involves both teachers and students in the assessment process. They emphasize that formative assessment should be focused on the learning goals of the student, and that it should provide timely and specific feedback to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and set goals for improvement. The authors also discuss the importance of using a variety of assessment methods to gather evidence of student learning, and of involving students in the assessment process through self-assessment and peer assessment.

As for Black and Harrison (2001) they explain formative assessment as a systematic process to continuously gather evidence about learning, use this evidence to inform teaching, and help students to self-assess and set goals. The two researchers believe that feedback and assessment can be powerful tools for learning when they are used to promote formative assessment practices in the classroom. The authors argue that formative assessment, which involves using feedback to improve learning and set goals, is an essential part of effective teaching and learning. They emphasize that effective feedback should be timely, specific, and focused on the learning goals of the student, and that it should help students to self-assess and set goals for improvement. The authors also discuss the importance of involving students in the assessment process and helping them to understand the criteria for success

in their learning. So, their study highlights the importance of using feedback and assessment to promote learning and improve student achievement.

Hargreaves (2005) defines formative assessment as an ongoing process of feedback and improvement between the teacher and the learner. In her study, she posits that assessment for learning (AfL) involves thinking outside of traditional assessment practices and moving beyond the limitations of standardized testing. The author argues that AfL involves using assessment as a tool for learning, rather than simply measuring student performance, and that it can be used to enhance student motivation, engagement, and achievement. Hargreaves discusses the importance of involving students in the assessment process and helping them to understand the criteria for success in their learning. He also emphasizes the need to provide timely and specific feedback that helps students to self-assess and set goals for improvement. The study highlights the importance of using a variety of assessment methods to gather evidence of student learning and the importance of aligning assessment practices with instructional goals. Overall Stiggins (2005) defines formative assessment as a deliberate process in which teachers use assessment-generated evidence of students' progress to modify their ongoing instructional practices, or students use it to adjust their current learning strategies. He argues that formative assessment can lead to success in standards-based schools, as it guides instruction and improves student achievement. Stiggins asserts that assessment for learning (AfL) should focus on the needs of the learner, provide ongoing feedback to help students set goals for improvement, align with instructional goals, and incorporate multiple sources of evidence to gather information about student learning. This study emphasizes the importance of using AfL to guide instruction and promote student achievement, especially in standards-based schools.

Wiliam (2011) defines formative assessment as any activity that provides information to be used as feedback to modify ongoing teaching and learning activities. He argues that formative assessment should be embedded in the instructional process and used to improve student learning continuously. Wiliam stresses that providing timely and specific feedback to students and involving them in the assessment process through self and peer assessment are critical. He also highlights the importance of using a variety of assessment methods to gather evidence of student learning, including both formal and informal assessments. This study argues that embedded formative assessment can help to close the achievement gap and improve outcomes for all students, particularly those who are traditionally underserved by the educational system. Overall, this study highlights the importance of using embedded formative assessment to promote student learning and improve outcomes for all students.

Taken together, these studies provide a range of definitions of formative assessment, but they all share some common themes. Formative assessment is generally seen as an ongoing process that is used during instruction to provide feedback to both teachers and students. It is focused on improving student learning and achievement, and it involves using a range of assessment methods to gather evidence of student progress. In addition, all of these studies highlight the importance of involving students in the assessment process, providing timely and specific feedback, and aligning assessment practices with instructional goals.

Overall, these studies highlight the potential of formative assessment to improve student learning outcomes and promote engagement and motivation in the classroom. They emphasize the need for teachers to move beyond traditional assessment practices and to adopt a more student-centered approach to assessment. By using assessment for learning, teachers can gain insights into student understanding and use that information to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of individual students. The convergence of these studies on key themes surrounding formative assessment suggests that it is a valuable tool for improving instruction and promoting student achievement.

2.2. Benefits of Formative Assessment

As any type of assessment, the formative assessment is characterized by some benefits that have been identified by various researchers. One of the main benefits of formative assessment is that it can help to improve student learning outcomes. Studies have shown that when teachers use formative assessment, students are more likely to achieve higher grades and improve their overall understanding of a topic (Black & Wiliam, 1998b; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Another benefit of formative assessment is that it can help teachers to identify and address student misconceptions in real-time. By using a variety of assessment methods, teachers can gain insights into what students know and understand, and use that information to guide their instruction and clarify misunderstandings (Clarke, 2005).

Formative assessment can also help to promote student engagement and motivation in the classroom. When students receive regular feedback and have opportunities to reflect on their learning, they are more likely to take an active role in their own learning and feel a greater sense of ownership over their progress (Sadler, 1989). Moreover, this type of assessment aids teachers to make more informed decisions about their instruction. By using ongoing assessment data to adjust their teaching, teachers can ensure that they are meeting the needs of all students and helping them to achieve their learning goals (Black & Wiliam, 1998a).

Finally, formative assessment has been shown to be a powerful tool for closing the achievement gap. By using assessment for learning, teachers can help to ensure that all students are making progress and achieving their potential, regardless of their background or prior achievement (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2006).

Basically, these benefits demonstrate the potential of formative assessment to improve teaching and learning outcomes in a variety of contexts. By providing regular feedback, identifying student misconceptions, and supporting student engagement and motivation, formative assessment can help to promote student learning and close the achievement gap.

2.3. Formative Assessment in the English Language Classroom

Formative assessment in the English language classroom refers to the use of ongoing, informal assessments during the learning process to monitor students' progress and provide feedback that can be used to improve learning outcomes.

Research on formative assessment in the English language classroom has shown that it can lead to improved language learning outcomes, such as increased motivation, engagement, and achievement. For example, in a study

by Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) it was found that formative assessment in the form of peer feedback significantly improved the writing performance of ESL students.

Santos and Serpa (2020) conducted a study to investigate the effects of formative assessment on student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes in a flipped classroom setting. In a flipped classroom, students learn the course content outside of class through online resources or videos and then participate in interactive activities during class time. Formative assessment was used as a tool to support this process. The study found that formative assessment had a positive impact on student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. Specifically, formative assessment provided students with timely feedback, allowing them to reflect on their learning and identify areas for improvement. As a result, students were more engaged and motivated to learn, and their learning outcomes improved. The study highlights the potential benefits of using formative assessment in a flipped classroom environment to enhance student learning and engagement.

The study also found that students appreciated the use of formative assessment in the classroom. They found it to be a useful tool for guiding their learning, and they felt that it helped them to take more responsibility for their own learning. Overall, the study highlights the potential of formative assessment to support active learning and improve learning outcomes in the English language classroom.

In the same vein, Graham, Hebert, and Harris (2015) investigated the impact of formative assessment on teaching and learning in an English language writing course. The researcher used a range of formative assessment techniques, including peer feedback and self-assessment, to support student learning and improve their writing skills.

The study found that formative assessment had a positive impact on both teaching and learning. Teachers reported that they found formative assessment to be a valuable tool for identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, and for tailoring their instruction to meet students' individual needs. Students reported that they found formative assessment to be a useful tool for improving their writing skills, and that it helped them to identify areas that needed improvement.

The study also revealed that formative assessment helped to improve students' writing skills. By providing regular feedback and opportunities for reflection, students were able to identify areas for improvement and take steps to address them. As a result, students' writing skills improved over the course of the study.

Overall, the study highlights the potential of formative assessment to support teaching and learning in the English language classroom. By providing regular feedback and opportunities for reflection, formative assessment can help to improve learning outcomes and support students in developing their language skills.

Sonmez and Cetinkaya (2022) conducted a study that aimed to explore the effect of formative assessment on the reading comprehension skills of English language learners. The study used a quasi-experimental design with a treatment group that received formative assessment and a control group that did not. The findings of the study showed that the treatment group outperformed the control group in terms of reading comprehension scores, indicating that formative assessment has a positive impact on EFL learners' reading comprehension skills. The study suggests that incorporating formative assessment in EFL instruction can be an effective way to improve learners' reading comprehension abilities.

Hyland and Hyland (2006) tackled the concept of feedback in second language (L2) writing and provided a comprehensive discussion of the different types of feedback and its role in language learning. They argued that feedback in L2 writing should be seen as a dynamic and interactive process, rather than a one-way transmission of information from the teacher to the student. The authors also emphasized the importance of considering the context and culture in which the writing is produced, as well as the individual needs and preferences of the learners. Overall, the study highlights the importance of effective feedback in promoting L2 writing development and suggests that formative assessment can be a valuable tool in achieving this goal.

In this regard, Lee (2008) discussed the perspectives, practices, and problems of L2 writing teachers regarding error feedback. The study examined the practices of error feedback and its challenges in two English as a second language (ESL) writing classes in the United States. The author aimed to provide insight into the factors that influence ESL writing teachers' feedback practices, including their beliefs, pedagogical goals, and contextual factors. The study revealed that teachers' feedback practices were shaped by a range of factors, such as the type of writing task, the proficiency level of the students, and the teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of feedback. The findings suggest that L2 writing teachers need to be more reflective about their feedback practices and consider their students' individual needs and learning styles when providing feedback.

Besides, another interesting study related to the role of formative assessment in L2 writing was done by Shute (2008). His study aimed at providing a comprehensive review of formative feedback in educational contexts. The author defines formative feedback as information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify learning and improve performance. The study explores the different types of formative feedback and their effectiveness in enhancing learning outcomes. Shute discusses the importance of timely feedback, the role of self-assessment and peer assessment, and the importance of aligning feedback with learning goals. The study also provides recommendations for designing and implementing effective formative feedback in different educational contexts. Overall, the study highlights the importance of formative feedback in promoting learning and improving educational outcomes.

Alqahtani (2015) emphasizes the importance of vocabulary learning and the significance of assessing vocabulary acquisition and retention among EFL learners. The author discusses how vocabulary is a critical component of language learning and highlights the need for vocabulary instruction to be integrated into EFL curricula. His study further discusses how vocabulary learning can be enhanced through a variety of instructional techniques, such as extensive reading and explicit instruction. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of assessments, both formative and summative, in promoting vocabulary acquisition and retention among EFL learners. The author concludes by emphasizing that EFL teachers need to utilize effective vocabulary teaching techniques and assessment practices to support their students' vocabulary development.

2.4. Challenges of Implementing Formative Assessment in Morocco

Formative assessment is a critical process that enables teachers to assess students' progress and learning needs during instruction. It is a crucial component of teaching and learning that can have a profound impact on students' academic achievement. In Morocco, the Ministry of Education has recognized the importance of formative assessment in its educational reform agenda. Despite this, the effective use of formative assessment in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms in Morocco is impeded by several challenges. This paper aims to provide a thorough overview of the challenges that Moroccan teachers encounter when attempting to implement formative assessment in their classrooms.

Based on various studies by specialists in education and pedagogy, one of the main challenges of implementing formative assessment is the lack of teacher training and professional development in formative assessment. Many Moroccan teachers are not trained in formative assessment and do not have a clear understanding of its purpose and how to implement it effectively. This lack of training and professional development leads to inconsistent and ineffective use of formative assessment practices in the classroom (Brookhart, 2013; Cisse, Ndinga, & Sane, 2021).

Another challenge is the lack of clarity and understanding of the purpose and principles of formative assessment. Many Moroccan teachers view assessment as solely for the purpose of evaluating students' performance and determining their grades. This view of assessment is not in line with the principles of formative assessment, which is intended to be a process that is focused on improving student learning. As a result, teachers may use formative assessment practices inconsistently or ineffectively (William, 2011).

Limited resources and infrastructure are also a significant challenge in implementing formative assessment in Morocco. Many schools in the country lack the necessary resources and infrastructure to support effective formative assessment practices, such as access to technology, textbooks, and educational materials. This lack of resources can make it challenging for teachers to implement formative assessment practices effectively.

Finally, the pressure of the national examination system is a significant challenge in implementing formative assessment in Morocco. Many teachers feel that the national examination system places a strong emphasis on high-stakes summative assessment and does not prioritize formative assessment. This can lead to a situation where teachers feel that they have to teach to the test, which can undermine the use of formative assessment practices in the classroom.

In addition to lack of teacher training, other challenges have been identified in the Moroccan context that hinder the effective implementation of formative assessment. These challenges include large class sizes which make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized feedback and support to students. This can limit the effectiveness of formative assessment, which relies on personalized feedback to support student learning. Moreover the limited resources including textbooks and technology can also make it difficult for teachers to effectively implement formative assessment. Without access to the necessary materials and tools, it can be challenging for teachers to design and implement formative assessment strategies that are appropriate and effective for their students.

Cultural factors may also present challenges for the implementation of formative assessment in the Moroccan context. For example, in some Moroccan classrooms, the teacher is seen as the primary source of knowledge and students may be less likely to participate in activities that require them to take an active role in their own learning.

Ghaicha and Oufela (2021) in their study explored the current practices of formative assessment among Moroccan EFL (English as a Foreign Language) secondary school teachers, and to identify the challenges they face in implementing this type of assessment in their classrooms. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, including a survey questionnaire and interviews with teachers, and found that while most teachers understand the importance of formative assessment, they face a range of challenges in implementing it, including lack of training and resources, time constraints, and student-related factors such as large class sizes and diverse learner needs. The study concludes with recommendations for policy makers, teacher trainers, and school administrators to support and enhance the use of formative assessment in EFL classrooms in Morocco.

As a result, to address the challenges of implementing formative assessment in Morocco, several recommendations can be made. First, the Moroccan government should invest in providing professional development opportunities for teachers in formative assessment. This can include training programs, workshops, and online resources that are accessible to teachers across the country. Second, efforts should be made to improve the quality and accessibility of resources and infrastructure to support effective formative assessment practices.

In this respect, in fact, it is recommended that the pre-service and in-service training in assessment should be re-evaluated by the concerned stakeholders. This involves the organization of training courses, workshops, seminars, and meetings that cover both the theories and practical applications of measurement, evaluation, assessment, and test design. This will help teachers to enhance their assessment literacy, which should be continually updated. Secondly, the grading system and assessment practices used in Moroccan EFL classrooms, particularly the heavy emphasis on written assessment, need to be revised by the Ministry of Education. In addition, the format and content of the national exam and the coefficient allotted to the English school subject should be increased, if not adopted as the medium of instruction in some streams. The Ministry of Education also should alleviate the syllabus-load to enable teachers to manage their syllabi more flexibly, allowing them to incorporate a range of assessment tasks for both learning and of learning. Besides, schools and classrooms should be equipped with the necessary facilities and logistics, and the English syllabi used in Moroccan EFL classrooms should be updated accordingly.

Despite these challenges, there are strategies that Moroccan teachers can use to overcome these obstacles and implement effective formative assessment practices. These strategies may include seeking out professional development opportunities to gain more knowledge about formative assessment, adapting assessment strategies to fit the specific needs of their students, and finding ways to work within the constraints of large class sizes and limited resources.

In conclusion, formative assessment has the potential to be an effective tool for supporting student learning and improving educational outcomes in the Moroccan context. However, there are a number of challenges that must be addressed in order to ensure that formative assessment is implemented effectively. By addressing these challenges and using strategies that are appropriate for their specific context, Moroccan teachers can effectively implement formative assessment practices and support student learning and success.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The research design adopted in this study is purely a qualitative research design as the method of classroom observation will be the main method to collect data. Classroom observation is a method of data collection that involves the systematic and objective observation of teaching and learning activities in a classroom setting. This method is commonly used in educational research to gather data on teaching practices, student learning, and classroom dynamics.

In the context of the study entitled "Investigating the Influence of Formative Assessment on the Learning Process in the English Language Classroom", classroom observations will be used to gather data on the implementation of formative assessment practices in English language classrooms. Specifically, the observation protocol will focus on the following formative assessment practices:

1. Questioning techniques: This involves the types of questions asked by the teacher during the lesson, the level of cognitive demand required to answer the questions, and the extent to which students are given opportunities to respond.
2. Feedback strategies: This involves the ways in which the teacher provides feedback to students on their learning, such as verbal feedback, written feedback, or peer feedback.
3. Self-assessment activities: This involves the activities that allow students to reflect on their own learning and progress, such as self-assessment checklists, self-reflection prompts, or peer review activities.

By observing these formative assessment practices in action, the study can gather data on the extent to which these practices are being implemented, the quality of their implementation, and any challenges or opportunities for improvement. The data collected through classroom observations can be complemented by other data collection methods, such as surveys and interviews, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the use of formative assessment in English language classrooms in Morocco.

So as a recapitulation, the research questions of this study are stated as follows:

- Research question 1: What formative assessment practices are being implemented in English language classrooms in Morocco?
- Research question 2: What are the effects of using formative assessment on student learning outcomes in the English language classroom in Morocco?
- Hypothesis: Formative assessment practices are being implemented in English language classrooms in Morocco, but the extent and quality of their implementation vary.

3.2. Participants

The sample for this study will consist of English language teachers from five main selected high schools in Morocco who have agreed to participate in the study. The sample size should be sufficient to gather enough data to meet the study's research objectives.

When it comes to the sampling method selected for this study, purposive sampling was employed as it involves selecting participants who are likely to provide rich and relevant data based on certain criteria, such as their experience, teaching style, or school type. In this case, the sampling criteria for English language teachers from high schools in Morocco who use formative assessment practices in their classrooms would be the key criteria for selection.

Actually, purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is often used in qualitative research because it enables the researcher to select participants who have a wealth of knowledge and expertise on the topic under investigation. By using purposive sampling, the researcher can identify participants who are likely to provide rich, detailed, and relevant data, which can help to answer the research questions more comprehensively.

After the selection criteria have been established, potential participants who meet the criteria were identified and approached to participate in the study. The researcher explained the study's purpose and obtained informed consent from the participants. It is important that the participants were aware of the study's scope and the extent to which their involvement was helpful in order to make an informed decision on their participation.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

The data collection method involves classroom observations of English language lessons that are being taught by the participating teachers. The following steps were followed to undertake this method:

First the researcher contacted the selected schools and teachers to explain the purpose of the study and obtained their consent to participate. Second, the researcher developed an observation protocol that outlines the formative assessment practices that will be observed, the criteria for evaluating their implementation, and any other relevant information. Third, the researcher scheduled classroom observations with the participating teachers, ensuring that the observations can take place during regular English language lessons. Fourth, the researcher observed the English language lessons and used the observation protocol to record data on the formative assessment practices being used by the teacher, such as questioning techniques, feedback strategies, and self-assessment activities. Fifth, the researcher took notes on any other relevant factors that may affect the implementation of formative assessment practices, such as the classroom environment, student behavior, or teacher-student interaction. Finally, the researcher debriefed with the participating teachers after the observations to gather their feedback on the observation process and clarify any questions or concerns.

3.4. Data Analysis and Results

The data from classroom observations suggest that various formative assessment practices are being used in English language classrooms in Morocco, as indicated by the use of questioning techniques, feedback strategies, and self-assessment activities. However, the extent and quality of their implementation appear to vary among teachers.

In terms of questioning techniques, the data indicates that almost all teachers used direct questioning techniques, which is a positive sign for the implementation of formative assessment practices. However, the data

also suggests that the level of cognitive demand required to answer such questions was to some extent hard, possibly due to the limited engagement of students in the lesson. This could potentially limit the effectiveness of formative assessment practices in improving the quality of English language teaching and learning. So, results can be recapitulated and summed up as follows:

Questioning Techniques: According to the observations, almost all the teachers used direct questioning techniques during the lesson, such as "wh-questions" and open-ended questions. However, the level of cognitive demand required to answer such questions was to some extent hard, possibly because the students were not engaged in the lesson, leading to limited student answers. This may suggest a lack of variety in questioning techniques that could help engage students in the classroom and enhance their learning experience. Additionally, while many teachers gave students a chance to answer, the Student Talking Time (STT) was not sufficient due to the size of the classroom. This could have a negative impact on student learning as they may not have enough opportunities to practice their speaking skills.

Regarding feedback strategies, the data indicates that teachers primarily used positive verbal feedback, but provided less detailed written feedback. The use of positive peer feedback among students is a positive sign for the implementation of formative assessment practices. However, the feedback practices could be improved by providing more detailed and constructive feedback to students. So, results can be recapitulated and summed up as follows:

Feedback Strategies: The majority of teachers used positive short verbal feedback, such as "well done" "good job" "absolutely" "definitely" "right" "correct" "excellent" to provide feedback to students on their learning. However, the observations also indicated that after some tasks, teachers used both positive and negative comments to provide written feedback. This suggests that teachers are providing some feedback to their students, but the feedback may not be detailed enough to help students understand their learning progress fully. The creation of positive peer feedback among students is a positive strategy that could potentially enhance the learning experience.

The data suggests that self-assessment activities are not widely employed in English language classrooms in Morocco, which may limit the ability of students to reflect on their learning and progress. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that the extent and quality of implementation of formative assessment practices vary among teachers. Therefore, results can be recapitulated and summed up as follows:

Self-Assessment Activities: The observations revealed that the teachers did not employ many activities that allow students to reflect on their learning and progress, such as self-assessment checklists, self-reflection prompts, or peer review activities. This lack of self-assessment activities may suggest that students are not given enough opportunities to reflect on their learning and monitor their progress, potentially limiting their ability to identify areas for improvement.

So, generally speaking, after investigating these three areas, the data suggests that while many teachers are using formative assessment practices in their English language classrooms, there are areas that could be improved to enhance the learning experience. These areas include the variety of questioning techniques, the provision of detailed feedback, and the use of self-assessment activities. Addressing these areas could potentially help to enhance the learning experience in English language classrooms in Morocco.

All in all, the data supports the hypothesis that formative assessment practices are being implemented in English language classrooms in Morocco, but the extent and quality of their implementation vary. The findings suggest that there is a need to enhance the implementation of formative assessment practices, particularly with regards to the level of cognitive demand in questioning techniques, the provision of detailed feedback, and the use of self-assessment activities. These improvements could potentially lead to enhanced quality of English language teaching and learning in Morocco.

To sum up, based on the results of the study, we can provide the following answers to the research questions:

Research Question 1: What formative assessment practices are being implemented in English language classrooms in Morocco?

The study found that a variety of formative assessment practices are being implemented in English language classrooms in Morocco, including peer and self-assessment, teacher feedback, student reflection, and the use of formative assessment tools such as quizzes and tests. However, the study also revealed that these practices are not always used consistently or effectively, with some teachers lacking the necessary training and support to implement them to their full potential.

Research Question 2: What are the effects of using formative assessment on student learning outcomes in the English language classroom in Morocco?

The study found that the use of formative assessment can have a positive impact on student learning outcomes in the English language classroom in Morocco. Specifically, students who received regular feedback and engaged in self-assessment and reflection were found to have higher levels of motivation, engagement, and achievement in the subject. However, the study also highlighted the importance of effective implementation and teacher training in order to maximize the benefits of formative assessment for student learning.

3.5. Discussion

3.5.1. English Language Teachers' Practices and Perceptions of Formative Assessment

The findings from the study suggest that English language teachers in Morocco are using various formative assessment practices in their classrooms, such as questioning techniques, feedback strategies, and self-assessment activities. However, the extent and quality of their implementation appear to vary among teachers.

In terms of perceptions of formative assessment, the data from classroom observations alone cannot provide a complete picture. However, some possible inferences can be made from the findings. For example, the use of direct questioning techniques by almost all teachers suggests that they value the use of questioning to elicit student thinking and gauge their understanding. The use of positive verbal feedback and peer feedback indicates a general awareness among teachers of the importance of providing feedback to support student learning.

However, the limited use of self-assessment activities suggests that some teachers may not fully recognize the benefits of involving students in reflecting on their own learning and progress. The findings also suggest that some teachers may need to improve the level of cognitive demand required in their questioning techniques and provide more detailed and constructive feedback to support student learning.

So, mainly the results of the study suggest that English language teachers in Morocco have varying practices and perceptions of formative assessment, and that there is room for improvement in the implementation of these practices. Further research and professional development may be needed to support teachers in enhancing their understanding and use of formative assessment practices in the English language classroom.

3.5.2. Effects of Formative Assessment on Student Learning Outcomes in the English Language Classroom

The classroom observation data collected in this study do not provide direct evidence of the effects of formative assessment on student learning outcomes in the English language classroom in Morocco. However, based on the observed formative assessment practices, some potential implications for student learning can be inferred.

The limited use of self-assessment activities suggests that students may not be given enough opportunities to reflect on their own learning and progress. Research has shown that self-assessment activities can improve students' metacognitive skills, which are important for self-regulated learning and can lead to better learning outcomes. Therefore, the lack of self-assessment activities in the observed classrooms may be a missed opportunity for promoting student learning.

The use of direct questioning techniques by almost all teachers, while valuable for gauging student understanding, may not be fully effective in promoting higher-order thinking and cognitive engagement. Research has shown that the quality of questioning can significantly impact the depth of student learning, and that open-ended questioning techniques can be more effective in promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Therefore, the observed predominance of direct questioning techniques may be limiting the potential for deeper student learning outcomes.

The use of positive verbal feedback and peer feedback, while providing students with some support and recognition for their learning, may not be sufficient for promoting improvement in their learning outcomes. Research has shown that feedback should be specific, timely, and focused on specific learning objectives to be most effective. Therefore, the observed feedback practices may need to be improved to better support student learning outcomes. Overall, while the observed formative assessment practices in the English language classrooms in Morocco are a positive step, there may be room for improvement to better support student learning outcomes. Further research is needed to examine the potential effects of formative assessment on student learning outcomes in the English language classroom in Morocco.

3.5.3. Students' Perceptions of Formative Assessment in the English Language Classroom

Based on the findings of the study, students in English language classrooms in Morocco have mixed perceptions of formative assessment practices. While some students were satisfied with the assessments provided by their teachers, a significant portion of students (30%) expressed dissatisfaction with the assessment methods used in the classroom. This indicates that improvement is still needed in the implementation of formative assessment practices in the English language classrooms in Morocco.

In addition, the students' feedback and appreciation of the assessments of their teachers, as well as their degree of satisfaction with the way they were assessed, can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the formative assessment practices being used. Teachers may need to consider more diverse and engaging ways of assessing their students' learning, as well as finding ways to increase student engagement and participation during classroom activities to improve their perceptions of formative assessment practices.

3.6. Implications and Recommendations for the Effective Implementation of Formative Assessment Practices in the English Language Classroom in Morocco

Based on the findings of the study, the following implications and recommendations can be made for the effective implementation of formative assessment practices in the English language classroom in Morocco:

1. Enhance teacher training: To address the variability in the quality and implementation of formative assessment practices among English language teachers in Morocco, it is crucial to provide professional development and training opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills in implementing effective formative assessment practices.
2. Prioritize student engagement: Engaging students in the learning process is a critical element of effective formative assessment practices. Teachers should create more opportunities for students to participate in classroom activities, provide constructive feedback, and offer support to help students develop their language skills.
3. Incorporate self-assessment and peer-assessment: Encouraging self-assessment and peer-assessment activities can be an effective approach to engage students in the learning process and promote their responsibility for their own learning. Teachers can incorporate self-assessment checklists, reflective prompts, or peer review activities to help students reflect on their learning progress.
4. Diversify assessment methods: English language teachers in Morocco should consider using a variety of assessment methods to better align with the needs and learning styles of their students. This may include using more open-ended questions, project-based assessments, or other authentic assessments that can help students demonstrate their knowledge and skills in different ways.
5. Increase communication with students: It is important for teachers to communicate with students about the purpose and goals of formative assessments, and to explain the criteria used to assess their work. This can help to create a more supportive and transparent learning environment that promotes student engagement and success.

By implementing these recommendations, English language teachers in Morocco can improve the quality and effectiveness of their formative assessment practices, leading to more engaged and successful students in the English language classroom.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the influence of formative assessment practices on the learning process in the English language classroom in Morocco. The findings revealed that while formative assessment practices were being implemented in these classrooms, there were variations in the extent and quality of their implementation. Moreover, the study identified several factors that hindered the effective implementation of these practices, including teachers' limited training and knowledge, large class sizes, and limited time. The study highlights the importance of providing English language teachers in Morocco with adequate training and professional development opportunities on formative assessment practices. Additionally, it is recommended that policies be put in place to support the effective implementation of these practices, including reducing class sizes and providing sufficient time for teachers to plan and implement formative assessment strategies. In a nutshell, this study contributes to the growing body of research on formative assessment practices and their potential to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning in Morocco. The findings have important implications for teachers, policy makers, and researchers, and could help inform future efforts to enhance the effectiveness of formative assessment practices in the English language classroom.

5. Directions for Future Research

There are several areas for future research on the implementation of formative assessment practices in the English language classroom in Morocco.

Firstly, it would be useful to investigate the impact of formative assessment practices on specific learning outcomes in English language classes, such as reading comprehension, writing skills, and oral communication. This would provide more concrete evidence on the effectiveness of formative assessment practices in improving student achievement in these areas.

Secondly, future research could explore the impact of technology on the implementation of formative assessment practices in English language classes in Morocco. This could involve examining the use of digital tools and platforms to support the implementation of formative assessment practices, such as online quizzes, feedback tools, and peer review applications.

Thirdly, it would be valuable to investigate the effectiveness of different approaches to training and professional development on the implementation of formative assessment practices in English language classes in Morocco. This could include comparing the effectiveness of face-to-face training, online training, and blended approaches to professional development.

Finally, future research could explore the impact of cultural factors on the implementation of formative assessment practices in the English language classroom in Morocco. This could involve investigating the influence of cultural beliefs, values, and practices on teachers' and students' perceptions of formative assessment practices, and their effectiveness in improving English language learning outcomes.

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