Formative Assessment Practices in Online Learning for Assessing the Junior High School Students' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

The development of students' reading comprehension can be reached by implementing formative assessment during the reading instruction so that the teachers are able to monitor students' reading comprehension progress and make a development. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the teachers faced a new learning situation namely online learning. However, conducting formative assessment for assessing students' reading comprehension has to be conducted constantly. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the formative assessments practices by the teachers for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning, include the plan and its implementations. The implementations of FA were gained from teachers' point of view. The study involved four junior high school English teachers at SMPN 7 Denpasar. The design of the study was qualitative study. The data were collected by using three methods namely document analysis, survey, and interview. The result of the study showed that there were several formative assessment methods that were planned and implemented by teachers. Those methods were categorized into self-assessment, peer-assessment, teacher-feedback, sharing an understanding of formative assessment goals, and varied assessment methods.

Keywords: formative assessment; online learning; reading comprehension

Introduction

Reading is a process of understanding and interpreting the information that is achieved from printed text (Yunus, 2018), it means that reading is not only a process of spelling the words but also comprehending and interpreting the text to get the meaning. Ikhsan (2017) states that students' reading comprehension can motivate them to be active learners in the learning process in order to increase their knowledge and critical thinking. Students are able to get much of information related to their study during the reading, increase their prior knowledge, and add their experiences by comprehending the text that is being read. In addition, Rohman (2017) and Taka (2020) state that reading comprehension should be developed and perfected over time because it is a basic skill of understanding of what is being read. The development of students' reading comprehension cannot be separated from assessment activity. Sardareh & Saad (2013) and Setyowati et al. (2020) explain that assessment and learning activity cannot be separated because it is a process that is used to improve the learning instruction in teaching and learning activity. Conrad & Openo (2019) also argue that assessment is the main component in the learning cycle which can be defined as a way to improve the quality of the learning process and learning outcomes. One of the assessments that can be implemented in assessing reading comprehension is formative assessment. Prastikawati et al. (2020) argue that formative assessment is conducted for several times in an instruction and give the ongoing feedback in term of beneficial information for the students in order to improve the teaching and learning quality.

However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, all of the teaching and learning activities must be conducted in online learning, as well as the assessment process. Habib (2016) argues that assessing reading comprehension can be done formatively to help teachers identify problems that are faced by students in comprehending a text, especially during the online learning. Fortunately, involving technology during the formative assessment process is beneficial to teaching and learning process (Luthfiyyah et al., 2021) . Similarly, Puspitayani et al. (2020) also convey that the use of digital technology in assessing students reading comprehension formatively in online learning is highly recommended since it is provided several benefits for the teaching and learning process. There are several benefits of online formative assessment namely students are able to take the assessment anytime as long as before the deadline, students have many times to practice based on the assessment that are given to them until they get the maximum grade, students get feedbacks that help them to identify their weaknesses in the learning process. In addition, the data of students' learning progress can be the consideration in making and deciding the next learning strategy in order to improve students' reading comprehension in online learning.

There were several previous studies that are related with this study. First, Li (2016) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between formative assessment and students' reading achievement. The result of the study showed that

formative assessment is related with students reading achievement positively. Further, the researcher concluded that formative assessment gave positive effect for students' reading achievement in general; even there was no significant relationship between White students and formative assessment. Second, Shore et al. (2016) conducted the study aimed to describe formative assessment effects to support middle grades students' reading comprehension using ELFA (English Learner Formative Assessment) system. The researchers found that formative assessment in form of ELFA was efficient, learnable, and feasible toward students' reading comprehension. It showed that the teachers gave positive response to the formative assessment in teaching students' reading comprehension because it helped teacher to still focus to their teaching instruction. Besides that, they found that formative assessment (ELFA) was efficient of time, and engaged teachers' teaching development and students' reading comprehension development. Third, Boumediene & Elachachi (2017) conducted a study aimed to verify the effect of formative assessment on students' comprehension toward a text. Two results were found in this study. First, the comparison of pre-test and post-test showed students' scores in the post-test was significantly increased. It means that formative assessment gave a positive effect on students' text comprehension. Second, there were positives responses of formative assessment to improve their text comprehension.

Fourth, Hidayati & Rohayati (2017) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of Jigsaw as the formative assessment strategy in students' reading comprehension of exposition text. There were two findings of this study. The first one is, the experimental group showed the higher score than the control group after they were taught by using Jigsaw strategy. The second one is, the data the were collected through questionnaire toward the experimental group's perception of learning by using Jigsaw showed that Jigsaw instruction was an interesting learning, improved students' motivation and responsibility, and improved their comprehension of exposition text. Fifth, Hooley & Thorpe (2017) conducted a study to find out the comparison of the effect between teacher's teaching strategies by using standard reading that includes summative reading assessment compared with computerized formative reading assessment that are conducted while students are reading. The result of the study showed that the achievement of students who took the computerized formative assessment can be statistically increased than standard reading and summative assessment. It was caused by the teacher was willing to accept questions and provide feedback during computerized formative assessment conducted. In addition, in answering the questions, students could notice the right and wrong answers through the computer after they have done. The second finding that is collected by using survey and questionnaire showed that the students understood the text better and were more motivated to read by using computerized-based formative assessment (CBA).

Sixth, Sanaeifar & Nafari (2018) conducted a study to find out the effect of

formative and dynamic assessment of reading comprehension on intermediate EFL learners on their anxiety test. There were two results of this study. First, formative assessment gave a significant effect in reducing intermediate EFL students' anxiety. Second, dynamic assessment was also effective to decrease intermediate ELF students' anxiety. The statistical data of formative and dynamic assessment showed that the level of students' anxiety in the pre-test was bigger than the post-test. Therefore, both of formative and dynamic assessment of reading comprehension were effective to decrease students' anxiety. Seventh, Bergeson (2019) conducted a study to find out the effect of verbal protocols that is used by reading specialists as the tool of formative assessment toward students' reading comprehension. The result of the study showed that the three reading specialists argue that they were easier to identify students' reading comprehension difficulties, errors and challenges during the learning process. Further, the three specialists also said that the information towards students' reading comprehension that are found during the learning process using verbal protocols were used as the consideration to the next learning instruction in guiding the students.

The Covid-19 Pandemic caused a sudden change in the offline learning to the online learning. Based on the preliminary study, the junior high school English teachers at SMPN 7 Denpasar have been conducted teaching reading comprehension and formative assessment for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning by using synchronous and asynchronous learning mode. Teaching and assessment activity for assessing students' reading comprehension in synchronous learning was conducted by using Zoom and WhatsApp Group. Meanwhile, teaching and formative assessment activity for assessing students' reading comprehension in asynchronous learning was conducted by using Google Classroom.

Due to the learning transformation from offline learning to online learning, the teacher assessment literacy is important for the teachers in planning and implementing the formative assessment itself. Therefore, it is important to conduct the investigation toward the further formative assessment practices that is conducted by the English teachers at SMPN 7 Denpasar during the online learning, especially in reading comprehension instructions. The teachers' formative assessment practices can be studied from the analysis of two aspects. The first one is the teaching preparation that is explained in the teachers' lesson plans. The second one is its implementation based on the teachers' point of view. From this study, it is expected that there would be the evidence of formative assessment practices in assessing students' reading comprehension assessment in online learning.

In brief, this study was conducted in order to answer the question "how formative assessments are planned and implemented by the junior high school English teachers at SMPN 7 Denpasar for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning?". This study aimed to investigate formative assessments practices by the teachers in term of the planning and the

implementation for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning at SMPN 7 Denpasar. Meanwhile, the novelty between this study and the studies above are the researcher focused on analyzing the formative assessments practices by the junior high school English teachers for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning and the challenges of formative assessment implementations in assessing reading comprehension in online learning. The formative assessment practices include the formative assessment plan and its implementations. The formative assessment implementations are gained from the teachers' point of view.

Method
Research design
The design of this research was qualitative study, especially case study. According to Ary et al. (2010) the objective of case study is to describe a case in detail. Further, he argues that an individual, a group, an organization, or a program is the focus of the case study. Therefore, case study was used to explore the detail information of how formative assessments were planned and implemented by the junior high school English teachers for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning at SMPN 7 Denpasar.

Participants
There were four junior high school English teachers at SMPN 7 Denpasar participated in this study. The selection of the participants of the study considered to the preliminary study in which showed that those four English teachers actively planned and implemented formative assessment for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning, especially in the first semester of 2020/2021 academic year. Those teachers were willing to participate in this study and share the information related to the topic of the study. The participants of the study have been coded into T1, T2, T3, and T4.

Data collection
This study used three methods of data collection, namely document analysis, survey, and interview. First, document analysis is a process of reviewing and analyzing printed and electronic documents Bowen (2009). In this study, document analysis aimed to collect the data about how formative assessments were planned and implemented by junior high school English teachers at SMPN 7 Denpasar for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning. Document analysis was conducted by analyzing 12 lesson plans that were used by the teachers in first semester of 2020/2021 academic year. Second, survey was conducted by using multiple-choice questionnaire as its instrument. In this study, survey was used to find out the formative assessment implementations for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning from the teachers' point of view. The questionnaire that was used in survey consisted of 44 questions related to the topic of the study. The questionnaire was distributed in term of Google Form. Third, according to Ryan et al. (2009), interview is a verbal question and answer process that is directly conducted between the interviewer and the interviewee as one of

data collection's techniques about the participants' experiences, views, and beliefs. In this study, the researcher used telephone interview since the Covid-19 Pandemic. Carr & Worth (2001) define telephone interview as a process of gaining the data in which the interviewer and the interviewee are physically separated or without face-to-face meeting. The data that were collected through interview supported the data obtained from document analysis and survey.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively. The theory of Miles and Huberman's (1994) was used to analyze the obtained data. The stages are data collection, data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification. First, the researcher collected the data by using field note, multiple-choice questionnaire, and interview guide. Second, Data reduction is a process that is occurred after data collection until a final report is completed by selecting, summarizing, paraphrasing, and subsuming in order to reduce and transform the qualitative data Miles & Huberman (1994). In this study, the researcher identified and eliminated the data that were not relevant to this study. Third, data display is a process of classifying the data in form of matrices, graphs, networks, and charts, and text which all designed to show accessible information organizely (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, the data were displayed by using text and table to show the analysis of the document analysis, survey, and interview. Fourth, conclusion drawing is a process of concluding the data started from the beginning of the data collection until the data collection is over (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, the conclusion drawing was taken from the verified and relevance data that were collected from document analysis, survey, and interview.

Results

Formative Assessment Practices by Junior High School English Teachers for Assessing Students' Reading Comprehension in Online Learning

This part focuses on the formative assessment planned and implemented by the teachers for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning. The findings showed that there were several formative assessment methods that were planned and implemented by the teachers. Those methods were categorized into four namely self-assessment, peer-assessment, sharing an understanding of formative assessment goals, and varied formative assessment methods. However, the result of the study showed that the teachers did not implement peer-assessment methods for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning. After analyzing the collected data, the researcher also found that the formative assessment methods were implemented in synchronous and asynchronous online learning by using several platforms. The detail explanation of the findings was presented below:

Self-assessment practice for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning

Based on the document analysis the researcher did not find self-assessment methods that planned by the teachers. The teachers also did not state the platforms that would be used in implementing those planned methods in their lesson plans. Moreover, in order to investigate the implementation of self-assessment, the researcher conducted survey by using questionnaire. Based on the teachers' answer in the questionnaire, it was indicated that the teachers implemented self-assessment methods that did not planned or stated in their lesson plans before. The questionnaire data revealed that there were two self-assessment methods that implemented by the teachers for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning based on their perspectives. Those methods were asking the students some questions related to their development in reading comprehension including their strengths and weaknesses, asking the students to write self-reflection journal that contains of their understanding (strengths and weaknesses) in reading comprehension such as in identifying main idea, making conclusion, identifying pronoun, finding specific information, and vocabulary. Besides, the questionnaire also gained the platforms that were used by the teachers to implement the self-assessment methods namely Zoom and WhatsApp Group.

Based on the interview, it found that 3 teachers asked students to do self-assessment during the reading instruction. The teachers conveyed that they asked the students about their strengths and weaknesses for several time during the instruction during the reading comprehension lesson. They conveyed that it was used to make the students' realize about their understanding during the learning. They stated that this method was implemented during the synchronous learning in WhatsApp group discussion and Zoom meeting. Besides, there was one teacher (T4) who asked the students to write a self-reflection journal that contained of students' strengths and weaknesses toward the reading material that was being discussed. He stated that the self-reflection journal has to be submitted to Google Classroom. It was used by T4 to make the students' aware toward their strengths and weaknesses during the learning. It was also used by the teacher as the consideration in improving the teaching strategy, particularly in teaching reading comprehension.

However, due to the interview T1 revealed that she did not ask the students' to do self-assessment during the reading instruction in online learning. It caused by the online learning was a new learning situation for her and she did not find any effective and appropriated self-assessment methods to be applied during the reading instruction.

Peer-assessment practice for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning

The result of the document analysis and survey showed that all of the participants did not plan and implement peer-assessment during the reading instructions in online learning. Moreover, the interview also showed that the teachers did not implement peer-assessment during the reading instruction in online learning because they did not find the appropriate methods. All of the

respondents stated that they were not able find and design the strategy or method of peer-assessment due to the online learning situation. Teachers also conveyed that the distance between teacher and students, and student with the other students was the main problem in implementing peer-assessment. They argued that the students might be not objectives in conducting peer-assessment during the online learning because the teacher could not monitor the students' directly. Therefore, the researcher did not find any peer-assessment method and it can be concluded that all of the teachers did not ask students to implement peer-assessment during the reading comprehension lesson in online learning.

Sharing an understanding of formative assessment goals practice for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning

The document analysis showed that there were three methods that were planned by the teachers in their lesson plans. Those methods were teacher explains the learning goals, materials, core competencies, basic competencies, and criteria of mastery learning, teacher explains the learning goals and the criteria of mastery learning, teachers explains the basic competencies, indicator, and the learning goals that will be achieved. The four teachers have been planned those methods in order to practice the sharing understanding of formative assessment goals as one of the formative assessments for assessing the students' reading comprehension.

The analysis of the multiple-choice questionnaire showed that there was one method which was implemented by the teachers based on their point of view. The method was explaining the learning objectives and assessment techniques. Besides, there were also several goals of the method that were selected by the teachers in the questionnaire. The teachers also selected two platforms that were used by them, namely Zoom and WhatsApp Group.

Most of the respondents revealed that they implemented these kinds of formative assessment by explaining the goal of the learning, assessment goals, and the type of assessment that would be conducted during the learning process, especially during the reading comprehension lesson. Further, the teachers also conveyed that they implemented this method in order to make the students focus to the learning and assessment goals. The teachers also clarify that they implemented this method during the synchronous learning by using Zoom, WhatsApp Group.

Varied formative assessment practice for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning

Based on the document analysis, the researcher found one formative assessment method. The method was teacher gives several reading comprehension questions regarding to students' reading comprehension to check their understanding. The method was planned by T3 and T4. Meanwhile T1 and T2 did not plan any varied formative assessment methods in their lesson plans.

The result of the survey showed that there was one method that was implemented by the teachers based on their perspectives. The method was giving several reading comprehension questions regarding to students reading comprehension to check their understanding. There were also two goals of this

method that were selected by the teachers in the questionnaire. Those goals were to collect and analyze the evidence of the students' learning and to check the students' understanding and their learning quality. However, there was one teacher (T2) who selected that she did not implement varied formative assessment method. The survey also showed the platforms that were used by the teachers, namely Zoom and WhatsApp Group.

Due to the interview, T2 conveyed that she used to give several reading comprehension questions during the learning process that aimed to check the students understanding and also to involved students during the reading comprehension lesson. It means that T2 also implemented this method. Similarly, the other three teachers also conveyed that they implemented this method during the synchronous learning by using Zoom and WhatsApp Group. They conveyed that they gave the comprehension questions for several times during the instructions in order to collect the information of students' understanding. Therefore, it means that all of the teachers implemented this method as one of formative assessment for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning.

Discussion

First, it was found that the teachers asking students to do self-assessment by using two methods. Those two methods were asking students some questions related to their development in reading comprehension including their strengths and weaknesses, and asking the students to write journal reflection consisted of their strengths and weaknesses in reading comprehension. Armstrong (2013) also explains that asking questions about students' development in learning is able to make the students know their strengths and weaknesses and they will be motivated to improve their weaknesses. Further, Armstrong (2013) states that self-reflection journal is one of several metacognitive strategies to make the students are able to monitor their own learning. It was also supported by Paramartha (2016) who states that self-assessment helps students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and deal with the weaknesses in order to make a learning improvement. Furthermore, Srivastava (2018) also argue that asking students to conduct self-assessment is able to improve their communication skill since they have to convey their learning by themselves. Therefore, it means that implementing self-assessment in students' reading comprehension learning is a beneficial process.

Second, this study revealed that peer-assessment was not implemented by the teachers. Chandio & Jafferi (2015) define peer-assessment as the exchange of students' understanding with their friends in order to support each other. Inderawati et al., (2018) also define peer-assessment as the feedback or grade that is given by the students to the other students' product or performance. Peer-assessment is divided into two namely peer-feedback and peer-grading (Panadero & Alqassab, 2019). The teachers conveyed that it was difficult to find the appropriate strategy in implementing peer-assessment for assessing students' reading

comprehension in online learning. Lu & Law (2012) state that peer-assessment make the students find several challenges and need more time in implementing. Therefore, the teachers decided to do not conduct peer-assessment.

Third, the researcher found that there was one method that implemented by the teachers in sharing an understanding of formative assessment goals. According to Gonzalez (2012), sharing and understanding of formative assessment goals is the activity of involving the students in the formative assessment process and informing the learning objectives and assessment goals to the students. The method that was found in this study was explaining the learning objectives and the assessment techniques. The teachers conveyed that this method was used as one of the methods in implementing the "Openness" principle of formative assessment. Openness in formative assessment means that the process transparent assessment of the students' learning process, learning goals and outcomes, and learning difficulties are reported accurately (Restrepo, 2013). Moreover, Dewi (2014) states that to ensure accountability for the assessment results, the assessment must be transparent in which the stakeholders can access assessment components such as procedures, criteria, and basis for decision making. Arrafii & Sumarni (2018) also state that sharing the learning goals and expectation is one of the key strategies of formative assessment which can lead the students to focus of what they learn and why they learn.

Additionally, the data also revealed that giving several reading comprehension questions regarding to students reading comprehension to check their understanding was the method that implemented by the teachers for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning. The teachers conveyed that the comprehension question contained the reading comprehension aspects such as determining the main idea, finding specific information, making conclusion, and vocabulary understanding. Beside that, it also used by the teacher about their learning instruction whether it was successful or not. It was in line with (Fisher & Frey, 2014) statement that formative assessment has to be conducted for several time during the instruction to ensure students' understanding and to make improvement of the learning instruction. Giving question or also known as questioning is a formative assessment strategy when it is used to develop students understanding, make an appropriate learning decision, and guide students to reach their learning goals (Arrafii & Sumarni, 2018; Milawati, 2017). Moreover, Fitriati et al. (2017)also state that questioning strategy is the way of involving students in the assessment process which helps the teachers to get the information about students understanding in which it can be used as the basis for improving the quality of the instruction.

As a result, the teachers practiced formative assessment for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning. In this study, the formative assessment practices include the plan and its implementation. The formative assessment plan that had been arranged by the teacher was in accordance with the instructional objectives. Moges (2018) states that in order to integrate the formative assessment

and the learning instruction, the teachers have to plan the appropriate formative assessment strategy such as plan the question that can develop students' high order thinking skill and provide the information that can be used to adjust the learning instruction, and plan the assessment task that can help the teachers to identify students' understanding continuously. In other words, formative assessment plan is important in order to be able to implement the structured formative assessment during the learning instructions. It considered to the essential benefits of formative assessment implementations in the learning, such as in the reading instructions. As it is explained by Taras (2010), formative assessment stimulates the students to build their behavior in reading because it is conducted for several times during the instruction. In addition, formative assessment is also effective to help the teachers in identifying the students' difficulties in reading instruction, and make an adjustment of their learning instruction accordingly (Snyder, 2005). Therefore, the it is essential for the teachers to develop their assessment literacy (TAL) in order to be able to prepare and implement the appropriate formative assessment for assessing students' reading comprehension. Kanjee & Mthembu (2015) explain that TAL is the important part that should be developed by the teachers in order to achieve the successful learning. It is because assessment is important to adjust the student' learning and the learning instruction quality, particularly formative assessment. TAL consists of the teachers' ability in planning and implementing formative assessment strategies (Lam, 2019).

In addition, it can be seen that the formative assessment that was discussed in this study was conducted in online learning, both in synchronous and asynchronous learning. Here, the formative assessment cannot be separated from the electronic learning platforms which mean that the teachers also have to develop their digital literacy. According to Department of Education in Vidosavljevic & Vidosavljevic (2020), the aims of digital literacy in education are to improve the learning and assessment activity, productivity, and the student' learning performance. Moreover, in the 21st century, technology has an important role in the educational field such as improve the teaching, learning, and assessment methods which can give positive effect to the students (Elmahdi et al., 2018). ICT helps the teachers to collect the immediate data about the students' understanding quickly during the formative assessment process and the teachers with good ability in ICT have more potential to develop varied formative assessment activities with many resources (Romero-Martín et al., 2017).

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion of the study, it can be concluded that the junior high school English teachers at SMPN 7 Denpasar planned and implemented several strategies of formative assessment namely self-assessment, teacher-feedback, sharing an understanding of formative assessment goals, and varied formative assessment method. However, the teachers did not plan and implement peer-assessment. The teachers conducted those strategies of formative assessment

by implementing various methods. Several methods were found in the teachers' lesson plans through document analysis which means that the teachers planned those methods for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning. Furthermore, the implementations of the formative assessment methods that have been planned by the teachers were gained through survey and interview. Besides, the survey and interview also revealed that there were several formative assessment methods that did not planned by the teachers but implemented for assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning. In addition, the researcher also found that the formative assessments were conducted in synchronous and asynchronous learning by using various platforms namely Zoom, WhatsApp Group, and Google Classroom.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the study was conducted through document analysis, survey, and interview without conducting classroom observation in collecting the data. Thus, the researcher could not see the practice of formative assessment conducted by the teachers for assessing students reading comprehension in the real class. Thus, the implementation of the formative assessment and the challenges faced by the teachers in implementing formative assessment in assessing students' reading comprehension in online learning were gained from multiple-choice questionnaire and interview based on their perspectives. In responding this limitation of the study, the researcher suggest that the further researchers conduct observation to see the formative assessment practices in the classroom so that the more detail data can be obtained.

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