

Exploring EFL Learners and Teachers Attitudes towards Summative Assessment Effect on Writing Motivation in Middle School

استكشاف مواقف متعلمي و معلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه تأثير التقييم
النهائي على دافع الكتابة في مرحلة التعليم المتوسط.

*Fadel Houda

فاضل هدى

Mohamed Lamine Debbaghine University, Setif 2/ Algeria

جامعة محمد لامين دباغين - سطيف / الجزائر

houdafadel2014@yahoo.com

dep. Day : ...04/11/2020	Acc. day: 04/04/2021	Pub. day: 02/06/2021
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Abstract :

It has become axiomatic that assessment impacts powerfully on student learning. This study explored the attitudes of EFL learners and teachers towards the effect of summative assessment on the motivation to write in middle school. The obtained results reflected that both learners and teachers have positive attitudes towards the effect of summative assessment. In short, summative assessment motivates learners to write better.

Key words: summative assessment, motivation, writing, learners.

ملخص البحث

لقد أصبح جليا التأثير القوي للتقييم النهائي على عملية التعليم. استطلعت هذه الدراسة مواقف متعلمي و معلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه تأثير التقييم النهائي على دافع الكتابة في مرحلة التعليم المتوسط. بينت النتائج المحصل عليها الموقف الايجابي لكل من المتعلمين و المعلمين تجاه تأثير التقييم النهائي. و بالتالي التقييم النهائي يحفز المتعلمين على الكتابة بشكل أفضل.

* Fadel Houdal. Houdafadel2014@yahoo.com

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University of Tamanghasset Algeria

جامعة تامنغست - الجزائر



1) Introduction

Assessment is a very important activity during foreign language teaching and learning. It is a scientific method of the evaluation of teaching quality and learning outcomes. Efficient evaluation is like a mirror, because it timely feeds back the information of teaching and learning, makes teachers and learners see the achievements and shortcomings clearly and improve teaching and learning efficiently.

2) Background to the Study

The ability to write in English is important for both professional and academic needs. Professionally, the need to write in English has become essential for all people, as it allows citizens from different cultures to communicate through letters, emails, business reports, web pages...

Furthermore, writing is very important in education today. So, everyone wants to know the best ways to learn it and teach it. Meanwhile, learning to write is usually one of the most difficult tasks to foreign language learners to cope with.

For teachers, as important as planning activities to help learners develop their writing skill is assessing their written work. It is invaluable to both learners; who can learn from their errors, and teachers; who can check the learners' progress and identify specific problems.

Learner assessment is essential to measure the progress and performance of individual learners., plan further steps for the improvement of teaching and learning and share information with relevant stakeholders. Assessment is believed to be one of the teacher's most complex and important tasks. What teachers assess, how and why send a clear message to learners about what is worth learning, how it should be learned, and how well they are expected to learn it.

Assessment is a process of collecting and interpreting evidence of learner progress to inform reasoned judgments about

what a learner or group of learners knows relative to the identified learning goals (National Research Council, 2001). Therefore, assessment is a key component of all educational programs. It is a means of identifying the learners' knowledge, understandings, abilities and skills.

There are two types of assessment, which occur in different times and different forms to accomplish multiple purposes; formative and summative assessments. First, formative assessment is used while learning is taking place. It can be referred to as continuous assessment. Ouakrime (2000: 62) asserts that this type of assessment "has three main characteristics which distinguish it from a summative oriented evaluation: it is informative, participative and formative".

Second, summative assessment is characterized by the cumulative scoring of student progress, traditionally after a section of a course is taught and a cumulating examination is given (Dennen, 2008). In this sense, Anthony and Susan (2005) add that summative assessment is to evaluate student learning and teacher teaching after a teaching period.

The purported benefits of this form of assessment are in its ability to rank participants against fellow students, and identify learning objective deficits and to provide "accountability for various stakeholders" (Shute and Kim, 2014: 313). Moreover, Bloom et al. (1971) point out that summative assessment is an assessment of the course, the education program's validity, and education research in order to classification, identification and evaluation of progress after a teaching program or the end of a term.

The purpose of summative assessment is to determine the learner's overall achievement in a specific area of learning at a particular time (Harlen, 2004).

Assessment is the most important way teachers have to do to gather some data concerning the matters of students, teachers themselves, and the process in teaching-learning activities as well. The importance of assessment has been discussed for many years, and it has been agreed that the impact of assessment on student learning is generally held to be profound. Elton and Laurillard

(1979) state that the quickest way to change student learning is to change the assessment system.

Additionally, Bound et al. (1999) argue that assessment is the single most powerful influence on learning in formal courses. Then, assessment may well be one of the most powerful tools we have at our disposal to influence student learning.

Assessment helps to focus attention on the learning progress and outcomes of each student. Collecting learner assessment information is essential to improve teaching and learning strategies and meet information needs at the level of students, parents, teachers, school leaders, policy makers and the general public. It provides extrinsic motivation and impacts on the amount and distribution of student's learning efforts. In other words, assessment motivates learners to learn, and thus influences the quantum of effort expended on learning (Miller & Palett, 1974; Snyder, 1971; van Etten et al., 1997).

In particular, the strong impact of summative assessment on teaching and learning has been widely reported. In many contexts, summative assessment dominates what students are oriented towards in their learning, this is typically described as the 'back wash effect of summative assessment (Alderson and Walln 1993; Somerst, 1996; Biggs, 1998; Baartm et al., 2006).

The use of summative assessment often rests on the assumption that if the assessment matters to students, they will seek to influence the results by increasing effort and improving performance (Becker and Rosen, 1992). Hence, the need to perform on test or to hand in an important assignment may concentrate or energize students' learning activities. The marks, transcript, and diplomas that summarize student performance can be seen as rewards for learners' efforts and achievement, which provide an extrinsic motivation for learning (Sjogren, 2009) .

Assessment is a tool which provides diagnostic feedback about learners' mastery of specific skills and helps teachers to get a richer data about the effects of their teaching approach on learners. More importantly, it motivates performance for both learners and teachers' self-evaluation, and relates to learner's progress.

3) Purpose of the Study

The current study seeks to explore EFL learners and teachers attitudes towards summative assessment effect on the motivation to write in middle school.

4) Research questions

Tow main research questions are posed:

1. What are EFL learners' attitudes towards summative assessment effect on the motivation to write ?
2. What are EFL teachers' attitudes towards summative assessment effect on the motivation to write ?

5) Assumptions

It is assumed that summative assessment has positive effect on learners' motivation to write.

6) Method

a) Participants

The sample of this study comprises 100 middle school learners (third and fourth grade) from 04 middle schools in Ksar el Abtal, Setif and their EFL teachers (10).

b) Instruments and Data Collection

Data were quantitatively collected through questionnaires. tow questionnaires were administrated. Questionnaire 01 (see Appendix A) was administrated to learners, and questionnaire 02 (See Appendix B) was administrated to teachers.

7) Findings and Data Analysis

a) Learners' Questionnaire Analysis

1- Do you like writing?

	yes	no
Number	60	40
percentage	60 %	40%

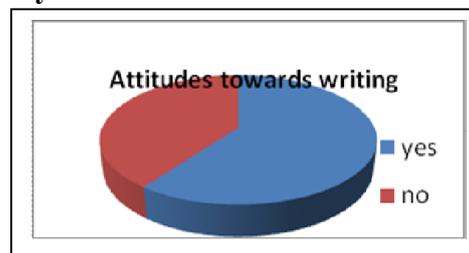


Table 01; learners' Attitudes towards Writing.
(60%) of the participants answered that they like writing, whereas (40 %) answered that they do not. Writing is considered to be one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners.

2- Is writing an easy task?

	yes	No
Number	30	70
percentage	30%	70%

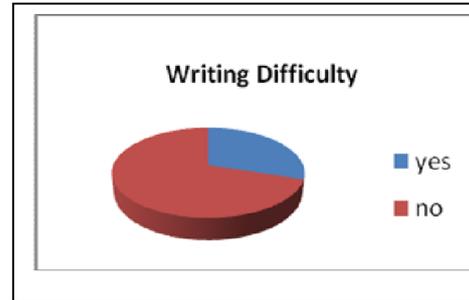


Table 02: Writing Difficulty
(70 %) of the learners declared that writing is not an easy task. Writing is a difficult skill as it requires certain steps an criteria to be done effectively.

3- Do you like your writing to be marked?

	yes	No
Number	80	20
percentage	80 %	20%

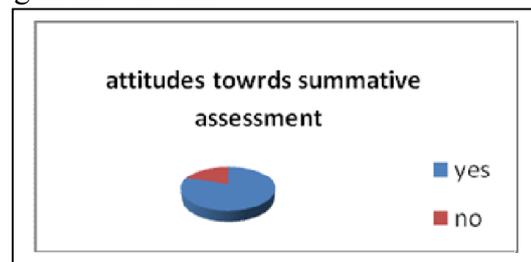


Table 03: learners' Attitudes towards Assessing Writing.
(80%) of the participants stated that they like their writing to be marked, whereas (20 %) stated that they do not like. Being assessed in a summative manner can help learners to assume their proficiency level and highlight their mistakes to be refined.

4- Do you like motivated to write again when you get a good mark?

	yes	no
Number	100	00
percentage	100 %	00



Table 04: Learners' Motivation.

All the participants (100%) declared that they feel motivated to write again when they have good marks. Summative assessment can work as a motivating factor to do more efforts.

5- Do you try to improve your writing to get a good mark?

	yes	no
Number	100	00
percentage	100 %	00



Table 05: Improving Writing to get good marks.

(100%) of the participants responded that they try to improve their writing to get good marks. Marks given through summative assessment are rewards for learners to improve their proficiency.

b) Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis:

1- Do your learners like writing?

	yes	no
Number	05	05
percentage	50 %	50%

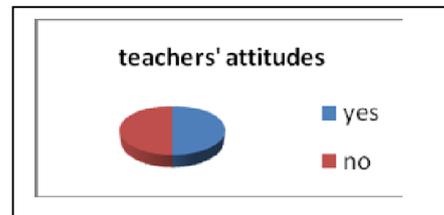


Table 06; Teachers' Attitudes towards Learners' Liking of Writing.

(50%) of the teachers claimed that their learners like writing, whereas (50%) declared that their learners do not like writing.

2- Do you ask them to write in their free time?

	yes	No
Number	02	08
percentage	20%	80%

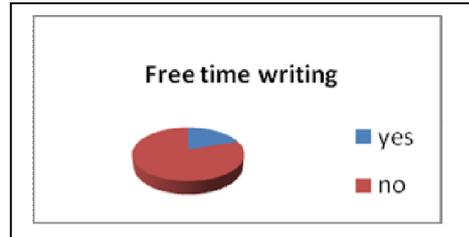


Table 07: Free time writing.

(80%) of the teachers stated that they do not ask their learners to write in their free time, and only (20%) stated that they do.

3- Do they write just for test, exam and assignment purposes?

	yes	no
Number	09	01
percentage	90 %	10%

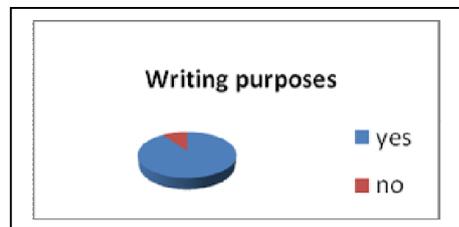


Table 08: writing Purposes.

(90%) of the teachers answered that their learners write just for educational purposes an summative assessment.

4- Do they perform better when they are marked?

	yes	No
Number	10	00
percentage	100 %	00

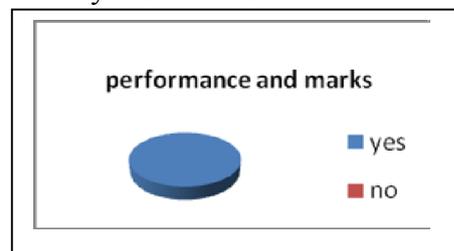


Table 09: performance and Marks.

All the teachers answered that their learners perform better when they are marked. Marks motivate learners to perform well to get rewards.

5- Do you think that good marks motivate them to write better?

	yes	no
Number	10	00
percentage	100 %	00

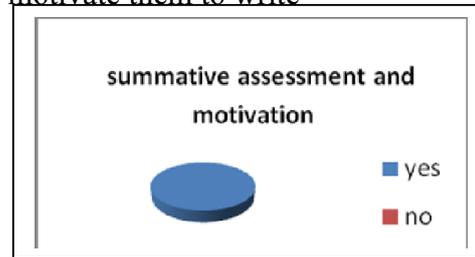


Table 10: Summative Assessment and Motivation.
(100 %) of the teachers think that marks motivate their learners to write better.

8) Results and Findings

From the analysis of the obtained data, it seems that both learners and teachers have positive attitudes towards the effect of summative assessment. First, the analysis of learners' questionnaire shows that learners are motivated to write better when they are marked, and they try to improve their writing to get good marks. Second, teachers see that using summative assessment in writing can work as a motivational factor for the learners to perform better in their assignments in order to get good marks.

9) Suggestions and Recommendations

The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Information from summative assessments can be used formatively when student or faculty use it to guide their efforts and activities in subsequent courses.

The usual procedure is that summative evaluations are done at the end of an instructional period. Thus, summative assessment is considered to be evaluative in nature rather than being mentioned as diagnostic. The real meaning is that evaluation is made to find out the learning growth and attainment.

Also, the presence of summative assessment is a motivator as it assists the individuals and offers them an opportunity to develop a learning environment. Likewise, the outcome of summative assessment is considered as a boosting factor when it is positive.

10) Appendices

Appendix A Learners' Questionnaire

Dear participant,

This questionnaire is developed to explore EFL learners' attitudes towards summative assessment effect on the motivation to write in middle school. Your response is highly important. Your answers will be anonymous and will be used only for research purposes.

Please, put a (\checkmark) in the appropriate column.

1- Do you like writing?

Yes No

2- Is writing an easy task?

Yes No

3- Do you like your writing to be marked?

Yes No

4- Do you feel motivated to write again when you get a good mark?

Yes No

5- Do you try to improve your writing to get a good mark?

Yes No

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix B Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear participant,

This questionnaire is developed to explore EFL learners' attitudes towards summative assessment effect on the motivation to write in middle school. Your response is highly important.

Your answers will be anonymous and will be used only for research purposes.

Please, put a (√) in the appropriate column.

- 1- Do your learners like writing?
Yes No
- 2- Do you ask them to write in their free time?
Yes No
- 3- Do they write just for test, exam and assignment
purpose?
Yes No
- 4- Do they perform better when they are marked?
Yes No
- 5- Do you think that marks motivate them to write better?
Yes No

Thank you for your cooperation!

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