CHALLENGES IN FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on formative assessment practices in English subjects within junior and senior secondary schools in Indonesia. Specifically focusing on teachers' perceptions, the research investigates how formative assessment was conducted during emergency remote teaching. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires distributed to 82 English teachers across Indonesia via WhatsApp groups. The study addresses four main areas: (1) techniques employed, (2) integrity of assessment practices, (3) utilized media, and (4) encountered challenges. While the majority of teachers expressed a preference for face-to-face instruction over online learning, they adapted by employing various techniques and media despite facing significant challenges. The findings highlight the impact of infrastructure and media limitations, including internet access, on the efficacy of formative assessment during online learning. Participating teachers reported distress associated with formative assessment in the online learning environment, indicating a need for further exploration of adaptation strategies amidst such challenges.
Keywords: *digital technology; English language teaching; online learning.*

INTRODUCTION

The global COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on many industries, including education, and Indonesia was no exception. The country saw a significant impact, with millions of illnesses and thousands of deaths. As a result, the Indonesian government recommended non-essential personnel to transfer to remote work and temporarily stopped all schools, resulting in the implementation of emergency remote teaching (ERT). Hodges et al. (2020) define ERT as a rapid switch to remote instruction due to crisis situations, with often limited time for preparation. This sudden shift requires significant changes in educational activities such as instruction, assignments, and assessment.

Assessment, according to Kyttälä (2022), is "essentially linked to teacher's work and is also one of the key areas of teacher education." Assessment, which includes both formative and summative-assessments, serves as the foundation for educational decision-making. Pastore et.al. (2019) argue that data and information collected through formative assessment can be used to foster students' learning. It is low-stakes and integrated into the learning process. Summative assessment,

on the other hand, serves as a high-stakes final evaluation to determine the level of learning attainment (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). Summative assessments are often given at the end of the learning process and are frequently utilised to make important judgements.

Some experts emphasise the importance of formative assessment in facilitating student learning (see Irons & Elkington, 2021; Leenknecht et al., 2021; Wiliam, 2020). Its main goal is to track student achievement and provide ongoing feedback for educational improvement. Formative assessment enables teachers to discover areas of student difficulty and adapt their teaching approaches as needed. Formative assessment, rather than just evaluating pupils, informs and guides instruction, improving both student results and teacher effectiveness. It includes a number of sources of information regarding student learning, such as observation, peer interaction, self-assessment, and student work, as Harlen and James (1997) point out.

Using formative assessment during emergency remote teaching can be especially difficult. Teachers must work within time constraints to engage students and develop effective learning

communities while guaranteeing relevant evaluation. Teachers were obliged to use emergency remote teaching due to the COVID-19 epidemic, hindering the incorporation of formative evaluation into the learning process. Inadequate infrastructure, limited technology availability, and other constraints contributed to a decline in online assessment practises. Yilmaz et al. (2020) listed six downsides of online formative assessment, including internet connectivity concerns, greater potential for cheating, student anxiety, restricted time, demotivation owing to low scores, and limited device features.

Rahim (2020, p. 59) offers nine guidelines for online assessment during emergency remote teaching:

> "Evaluate prerequisites for implementing online assessment; ensure alignment of assessment activities with stated learning objectives; address the diversity of students' situations; maintain a good balance of formative and summative assessments; stimulate student learning with online assessment; consider format; scheduling and timing of tests; establish clear communication to students regarding assessment matters; ensure high-quality feedback; and address assessment validity threats".

Rahim's instructions provide a thorough foundation for efficient online assessment in negotiating the hurdles of emergency remote teaching. It is impossible to stress the significance of analysing prerequisites and connecting assessment activities with learning objectives. Ensuring that technology and connectivity are trustworthy, and that evaluations reflect course objectives, aids in the establishment of a firm foundation for online assessment. Recognising and responding to the diversity of student situations is critical. Assessment practises that are inclusive ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning. Having a combination of formative and summative evaluations provides for complete evaluation while also promoting student growth.

Online assessments should be more than just evaluations; they can also be effective instruments for stimulating student learning. Engaging assessments promote active participation in the learning process, resulting in improved comprehension and memory of course materials. To adapt to the particular needs of students and instructional objectives, assessment format, schedule, and timing must be carefully considered. Clear and open communication keeps students informed while reducing uncertainty and fear. The provision of high-quality feedback is the foundation of good evaluation. It assists students in their educational path by identifying areas for development and building on their strengths. Rahim's suggestions give a thorough road map for educators dealing with the issues of online evaluation during emergency remote teaching.

Meanwhile, Bond (2021) emphasises the importance of assessment in emergency remote teaching, emphasising the necessity to research the impact of this period on linguistic formative evaluation during and after online learning. Formative assessment is the practise of acquiring information and feedback to monitor and promote student learning while they are learning.

Despite a growing amount of research on educational responses during the COVID-19 epidemic, this study highlights many significant gaps that require more investigation. First and foremost, the study examines the experiences of English language teachers in Indonesian junior and senior secondary schools in a localised setting. While this viewpoint gives vital insights, it is critical to recognise that educational landscapes, resource availability, infrastructure, and sociocultural elements in developing nations such as Indonesia may differ dramatically from more Western or global contexts. As a result, more research is needed to broaden the comparative dimension and give a fuller picture of pandemic-induced problems and adjustments in various educational settings.

The study's emphasis on formative evaluation practises during emergency remote instruction emphasises an area that has received little attention. While many talks have centred on general teaching and learning during the epidemic, a more in-depth evaluation of formative assessment practises provides a distinct perspective. Such practises are critical components of education, and knowing how they evolved during times of crises can help influence educational initiatives and policies. Furthermore, the qualitative element of the research, which captures instructor perspectives and experiences, adds a unique layer of insight that is typically lacking in studies that rely primarily on quantitative data. The study's forward-looking viewpoint, which considers the pandemic's possible long-term effects on education, opens the door for future research endeavours to investigate the long-term ramifications and lessons from this unique moment of upheaval.

This study aims to investigate how the COVID-

19 pandemic affected English language teachers' formative assessment practices during online and offline learning. By understanding these effects, teachers can adapt their approaches to support students more effectively, particularly those facing challenges in remote or hybrid learning environments. Four key questions guide this investigation: (1) Did English teachers modify their formative assessment aspects during online learning? (2) Did English teachers change their scoring techniques for formative assessments during online learning? (3) Did English teachers modify the implementation of formative assessments during online learning? (4) How do teachers perceive the implementation of formative assessments during online learning?

METHOD
This qualitative study makes use of online surveys with both closed-response and open-response items. Participants in the study include junior and senior high school English teachers. The questionnaire is divided into five components, each of which focuses on a different area of formative assessment: planning, techniques, process, and feedback. For closed-response topics, each part provides a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The research focuses entirely on teachers' impressions of formative assessment practises in their classes. Our study, like other online questionnaires, suffered from a self-selection bias. According to Dewaele (2018, p. 273) "only people who are interested in a topic and feel strongly about it, whether positively or negatively, will be willing to spend 20 minutes filling out an online questionnaire on it".

The Google Forms questionnaire was sent out in September 2022 and was available for six weeks. Postgraduate students majoring in English education at Universitas Terbuka were invited to participate. The survey received replies from 158 English teachers from around thirty provinces in Indonesia, with 82 of them being included in the analysis. 72% of those polled were female, while 28% were male. For closed-ended questions, descriptive statistical analysis is utilised, whereas thematic analysis is used for open-ended questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
This section presents the study's four main themes: technique, integrity, media usage, and challenges.

Technique
Assessment procedures vary in focus, processes, data outputs, and measurement accuracy (Urhahne

& Wijnia, 2021). Because they address distinct areas of assessment, these strategies complement rather than compete with one another. It is critical to avoid categorising assessment procedures as correct or incorrect; rather, they serve various functions in the classroom. This variety enables teachers to examine student learning completely.

Table 1. *Techniques used by English teachers*

Technique	Percentage		
	Before	During	After
Written	95.1	76.8	96.3
Practice	75.6	30.5	90.1
Oral	65.9	36.6	76.5
Observation	45.1	18.3	53.1
Task	76.8	82.9	85.2
Journal	14.6	14.6	22.2
Portfolio	29.3	20.7	32.1
Self-assessment	31.7	26.8	40.7
Peer-assessment	23.2	9.8	33.3

Integrity

Table 2. *Assessment integrity during online learning*

Aspect	Percentage of Concern
Cheating	63.4
Academic Dishonesty	45.1
Student Collaboration	65.9

Table 2 presents the concerns expressed by English teachers regarding assessment integrity during online learning. A significant proportion of teachers reported concerns about cheating, academic dishonesty, and student collaboration. This finding is consistent with Bond's (2021) review of the literature, which suggested that cheating is one of issues concerned by both teachers and students when using online assessments, and several countries have outright banned them. It is common for students to plagiarise content for their assignments from online sources and their more intelligent peers (Okebukola, 2020). These findings emphasize the need for measures to ensure the integrity of formative assessment practices in remote learning environments.

Respondents continue to believe that there is a need for real teaching presence by "guide on the side" (Cleveland-Innes et.al, 2018). The practise of teaching in an online context is distinct and demands a diverse set of competencies than teaching in a typical face-to-face environment, according to almost unanimous agreement within the field of K-12 online learning (Barbour, 2018). Formative assessment is used in online learning to develop conscious self-efficacy of learning and

motivation processes, self-esteem of learning needs, and learning strategy development. The framework (design) and leadership (facilitation and direction) required for productive conversation and discourse that results in higher-order learning are provided by teaching presence in online learning. On the other hand, students must be encouraged to be inquirers, which entails taking on regulation (monitoring and administration) of one's own learning" (Cleveland-Innes et.al, 2018). As a result, we can conclude that most respondents do not see formative assessment as a media to scaffold learning rather than a "dragon" to be defeated at all costs and instilled in students.

Media usage
Table 3. *Media usage for assessment*

Media	Percentage		
	Before	During	After
Online platforms	41.5	95.1	63.4
Mobile apps	15.9	10.9	20.7
Social media	9.8	5.5	11.0
Email	18.3	25.6	20.7
Messaging apps	36.6	80.5	59.8
Video conferencing	56.1	95.1	76.8

Table 3 displays the changes in media usage for assessment purposes before, during, and after online learning. The data reveal a substantial increase in the use of online platforms, mobile applications, and messaging apps during online learning. This reflects the shift towards digital tools to facilitate formative assessment in the remote teaching environment.

According to the findings of Aidinopoulou and Sampson (2017), students can achieve positive and noticeably higher learning outcome gains when they are given enough time to transition from face-to-face learning to blended learning. They hypothesised that the 5 to 12 weeks provided by most of the sample in this evaluation might not be long enough for students to adjust to changes in traditional face-to-face approaches. Because Indonesia took more than a year to acclimate students to using technology, we can say that the pandemic aided Indonesian education in adopting blended learning more thoroughly.

Challenges
Table 1 depicts the changes in evaluation procedures used by English teachers prior to, during, and after online learning. The data suggest that written evaluation techniques are the most widely used, both before (95.1%) and after (96.3%) online learning, whereas practise, oral, and observation procedures decrease over the online

learning period. These findings emphasise the difficulties teachers encounter when adjusting their assessment procedures to the remote teaching situation.

Motivation and engagement
Teachers found it difficult to maintain student interest and involvement throughout online learning. The lack of face-to-face interactions and the monotony of online classes were significant contributors. Direct interactions and fast feedback are important in traditional classrooms for keeping students engaged. Screen-based interactions can be less exciting in an online context, leading to student disengagement. It is critical to ensure that students remain motivated and involved in the learning process in order for them to participate in formative assessments and achieve overall educational achievement.

Assessment adaptation
Teachers' formative assessment procedures have to be adjusted as they transitioned from in-person to online instruction. This procedure presented its own set of difficulties, especially for traditional assessment methods that relied on in-person observations and interactions. Many teachers found it difficult to adapt their formative assessment procedures to the online environment. Group discussions and real-time observations, which were excellent in physical classrooms, did not always translate well to remote learning. As a result, teachers needed to experiment with new forms of formative assessment that were more appropriate for the online context

Cheating and academic integrity
Online assessments brought forth concerns related to cheating and academic integrity. Teachers noted an increased likelihood of academic dishonesty when students took assessments online. Ensuring the integrity of assessments became a significant challenge, as monitoring and controlling the conditions under which assessments were taken became more complicated in the absence of physical presence. Preventing and detecting cheating in the online context required additional measures to maintain the credibility and fairness of formative assessments. This challenge highlighted the importance of addressing issues related to academic honesty in online learning environments.

CONCLUSION
Personal experience has taught us that a disrupted practice results in a negative, highly emotional

state. Teachers who are required to implement changes or innovations frequently experience feelings of inadequacy, frustration, and overwhelm, based on their individual experiences. Disruptions to routines, on the other hand, can promote deep growth if these emotions are overcome.

The ideas presented in this article demonstrate that teachers must consider their assessment procedures in a pandemic era and be forced to do emergency remote teaching. However, the goal of teaching is and will always be to improve student achievement. A teacher's reflection, investigation, and revision of their teaching methods can be a transformative experience. However, focusing solely on changing individual teachers will never result in more extensive, systemic change. To have a positive impact on all the children in a system, more than one instructor must change, just as it takes more than one person to execute "the wave." Even though the pandemic itself can be said to bring misfortune, in education, the pandemic forces teachers to change themselves and their teaching methods. As many critics of online education as there are, we can see that teachers can accept the change and incorporate more technology into the classroom. It transforms traditional classroom instruction into a hybrid of physical and virtual classes.

Policy reforms must ensure that the primary challenge of internet connectivity is addressed. Support in providing good connections for students and teachers, especially those from low socioeconomic families and living in rural areas, is a critical need. This action, combined with instruction in the use of specific technology and online student progress monitoring, can be of great assistance in ensuring that the pandemic does not only bring misfortune but also charitable deeds in revolutionising education.

There are a few things to remember about the current study. Primarily, our participation does not represent all English language teachers in Indonesia. Because all the participants were master's students and the sample size was too small, the participants did not represent the population. As a result of these biases, we cannot truly generalise the data as representative of the population.

Given the gaps identified in this inquiry, future research should triangulate with the experiences of parents and students. This is especially important for economically and geographically disadvantaged students and parents. This study found little research on the changes caused by pandemics. Future research on a qualitative study on the same theme is planned by the author of this article to gain more insight into how much and how the pandemic causes change.

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