

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Definition of Formative Assessment

As one of types of assessment, formative assessment is believed as a type of assessment that helps teacher to make learning adjustment since it is administered during the learning process in order to find out students' learning need and weakness. For Cowie & Bell's as cited in Udoukpong & Okong (2012: p. 205) formative assessment is the process used by both teachers and students to identify and react to student learning for enhancing it and it is done during the learning process. Fisher & Frey (2007) as cited in Bahati, Tedre, Fors, & Mukama (2016) defined formative assessment as checking for understanding. They also added that checking for understanding is a very important step in teaching and learning since without checking for understanding, it is not easy to find out what students got in their learning. Further, research studies have also indicated that "one of the important steps of every learning process is to identify and confront misconceptions" (Bahati *et al.*, 2016)

Formative assessment is believed to have ability to revise shortcomings in learning process for achieving better learning. Regarding to this, Udoukpong and Okong (2012: p. 205) remarked that valid and reliable evaluation data apprise teachers to what extent students understand

the learning material which further will minimize the gap between the planned, the created and the understood curricula. Further, they also added that through this way, formative assessment helps teacher to find out which part of the course that needs adjustment in order to make better learning. It typically involves qualitative feedback (rather than score) for both students and teachers that focuses on the details of content and performance (Huhta, 2010 in Udoukpong and Okon, 2012: p. 205).

Based on the theories elaborated by some experts, it can be concluded that formative assessment is a type of assessment administered during teaching-learning process to identify students need and weakness in order to adapt learning process. By making learning adjustment, it is expected that students will have better learning experience so that performance can be improved.

B. Format of Formative Assessment

Unlike summative assessment that is carried out in the end of a course in order to make judgements toward students' performance, formative assessment is administered when the learning process is still in progress. The aim of conducting formative assessment is to gain information about students learning. To collect this kind of information, teacher needs to utilize certain strategies which refer to the format of formative assessment. Regier (2012 : p. 5) mentioned that formative assessment refers to a process when teacher assesses students using informal strategies in order to gain information on students learning. Cauley and McMilan (2010

: p. 1) also added that “Ongoing formative assessment is conducted primarily through informal observations and oral questions posed to students while content is being taught or reviewed”. Ainsworth (2006 : p. 21) as cited in Al-Shehri (2008 : p. 8) suggested that informal formative assessment can be conducted by doing “ongoing observations, questioning, dialogue, and anecdotal note-taking”. In addition, teacher may ask students to deliver short presentations. Besides conducted informally, formative assessment also can be carried out formally. According to Ainsworth (2006 : P. 21) in Al-Shehri (2008 : p. 8) the formal form of formative assessment refers to “a series of short written exams given under controlled conditions throughout the course. From the information gathered, teacher can determine student understanding and which part they still need to learn so that they can achieve the learning goal and outcome. The information collected should be accurate so that the teacher is able to make learning adjustment that is purposed to improve student learning (Cauley and McMillan, 2010 : p. 1). The information gathered is not used for making judgement or grade about students performance. Teacher lets the students know to what extent they have mastered a material or if the student needs to practice more (Regier, 2012 : p. 5).

Formative assessment is managed to be an integral part of regular teaching and learning process. Strategies applied for collecting information about students learning progress occurs during regular class instruction since formative assessment and instruction are closely related (Regier, 2012

: p. 5). Since in some ways, formative assessment can be administered informally, the strategies used are also considered to be quick and less complicated. These strategies can be in the written or spoken form. In this way, teacher conducts formative assessment at the same time while learning process is in progress so that it will be a seamless process of assessment (Cauley and McMilley, 2010 ; p. 1).

Several ways dealing with the division of students that will be assessed are proposed by Regier (2012 : p. 6) that teacher can assesses students individually, as partners, in small groups, or as a class. It is also mentioned that how teacher groups the students when conducting formative assessment will affect the choice of strategy. In order to adjust to the condition of the class, teacher should not depend on only one type of strategy. Teacher needs to make the implementation of the strategy to be more various when it is applied to the students individually or in group.

C. Time Management of Formative Assessment

Time management is one of important thing to consider in administering formative assessment in the classroom. Ho (2014 : p. 16) stated that “formative assessment takes place before or during the instruction with the explicit purpose of eliciting evidence that can be used by students and teachers to improve the current learning”. It is also stated that formative assessment needs “an indefinite period of time to build students’ dispositions”.

The role of both teacher and students in maximizing the benefit of formative assessment through time management is highly important. There will be students refusing to make efforts to change the habitual routine, and those students cannot be counted to take the value of changes for their learning unless they have experienced the benefits (Black & William, 1998 in Ho, 2014 : p. 16). Black and William (1998) also added that formative assessment needs extra class time, especially if there is a goal to change the students viewpoint towards learning and working methods (Ho, 2014 : p. 16). Besides, Carless (2011) in Ho (2014 : p. 16) argued that teachers feel that they have a pressure to complete the assigned syllabus. This leads teacher to become concerned that formative assessment takes too much time to complete the syllabus. Therefore, managing time properly to conduct formative assessment is needed in order to achieve efficient process of the assessment.

D. Student and Formative Assessment

1. The need of formative assessment

It is believed that formative assessment is crucial in improving overall level of student achievement. Alvarez, Ananda, Walqui, Sato, and Rabinowitz (2014 : p. 3) suggested that a very distinct characteristic of formative assessment is its purpose which is utilized to support student learning. That character distinctively differentiates formative assessment with other types of assessment namely summative assessment which is “typically intended for accountability purposes”

and interim assessment which is “intended to monitor student progress toward proficiency in standards”. It is also added that summative and interim assessments measure students’ learning at the end of a lesson (e.g., an academic year, a unit), meanwhile, formative assessment is “a continuous process that is integral to teaching and learning”. (Alvarez *et al.* 2014 : 3).

A powerful impact on student learning can be got if teachers make high quality formative assessment. Several studies have shown the fact that formative assessment, in some ways, is really beneficial to create better learning. Black and William (1998a) in Büyükkarcı (2014: p. 108-109) remarked that ‘the studies of formative assessment show an effect size on standardized tests of between 0.4 and 0.7, which is larger than most known educational interventions’. (The effect size is the ratio of the average improvement in test scores in the improvement to the range of scores of typical groups of students on the same tests; Black and William indicated that standardized tests are very limited measures of learning). Further, it is found that formative assessment is especially effective for students who have not done well in school. It closes the gap between low and high achievers while raising overall achievement (Büyükkarcı, 2014: p. 108-109). Meta-analysis of studies into formative assessment have shown significant learning achievements where formative assessment was used across all content areas, knowledge and skill types, and levels of education (Black & William,

1998 in Udoukpong and Okon, 2012: p. 206). Crooks (1988) as cited in Udoukpong and Okon (2012: p. 206) showed his review of the research (1988) reporting that effects sizes for summative evaluations are consistently lower than effect sizes for formative assessments. In short, it is formative assessment that has a strong research base supporting its impact on learning (Marzano, 2006 in Udoukpong and Okon, 2012: p. 206). Regarding to those statement, it can be inferred that formative assessment is a good chance especially for students to have better learning and better performance.

2. Motivating students through formative assessment

Student motivation has become important thing to be seen when discussing about formative assessment. It is because formative assessment is believed to have relation with their motivation to learn. As formative assessment is managed to be conducted during a certain period of study, it can be a tool that motivates students for learning. Baume (1998 : p. 6) in Evans, Zeun, and Stanier (2013 : p. 298) mentioned that “there is widespread evidence that assessment and feedback are powerful forces of learning”. Petty (2004 : p. 450) as cited in Evans *et al.* (2013 : p. 298) also added that there are several research showing that “assessment providing informative feedback in students learning gives more effect on student achievement than any other factor”. Further, Ramsden (1992 : p. 184-185, p. 193) as cited in Higgins, Grant, Thompson & Montarzino (2010 : p. 6) remarked that

the feedback given during formative assessment can strongly affect motivation, encouraging interest, commitment, intellectual challenge, independence and responsibility. Thus, by administering formative assessment, students are forced to learn since it will make them feel that they have to be ready to answer teacher's questions which is as one of the forms of formative assessment during the learning process.

There is another distinctive characteristic in formative assessment that is considered to be one of factor affecting student motivation to learn. That factor is the student involvement. Garrison and Ehringhaus (n.d) stated that formative assessment is not utilized effectively when there is no student involvement in it, thus "students need to be involved both as assessors of their own learning and as resources to other students". It is also stated that research shows that "the involvement in and ownership of their work increases students' motivation to learn" (Garrison and Ehringhaus : n.d). Therefore, teacher can not neglect the fact that student can be motivated to learn through the implementation of formative assessment.

3. Formative assessment and student achievement

It has been believed that there is a relation between formative assessment with student achievement in the classroom. A research conducted by Restrepo (2013 : p. 173) finds that the student are helped by formative assessment carried out during the instruction because they are able to know their strengths and weaknesses.

Mainly, students reported FA helped them become aware of their weaknesses and strengths in their communicative competence and of the situations in which this awareness arose; they experienced a sense of achievement because they realized they had learned. Restrepo (2013 : p. 173)

The study also finds that mainly the students declared that as a procedure, formative assessment helps them to identify their weaknesses and enhance their learning (Restrepo, 2013 : p. 176). Another study conducted by Hallam *et al.* (2004 :12) as cited in Al-Shehri (2008 : p. 9) shows that formative assessment is able to increase students' learning and motivation (89%), the quality of students' work (88%), attainment (78%), learning skills (94%), concentration (83%) and behaviour (55%).

Some factors play important role in making formative assessment to become a tool that enhances student learning. Enhancing student learning is believed to have something to do with student achievement in the classroom. Black and William (1998) said that when students learning can be enhanced when they "become open about their weaknesses and concerns and become involved in dialogue with their teachers and peers" (Al-Shehri, 2008 : p. 10). In addition, Iron (2008) as cited in Al-Shehri (2008 : p. 10) expressed that formative assessment raises up a competitive learning environment and promotes students' attitudes toward learning because the primary focus of this kind of assessment is to help students know the level of learning they have achieved.

4. Students' anxiety of formative assessment

Students anxiety when formative assessment is administered in classroom cannot be avoided. This anxiety can be caused by several things that lead student to have negative feelings when they face assessment. Nisbett and Ross (1980) in Crossman (2004 : p. 583) proposed several theories stating that “perceptions are influenced by motivations such as fear, resulting from past painful experiences that may create a kind of assessment avoidance behaviour or the development of defence mechanisms attributing failure to assessment irrelevance, for example” (Crossman, 2004 : p. 583). As it is stated formerly, some kinds of formative assessment is conducted orally. Biggs (1991) as cited in Crossman (2004 : p. 586) asserted that the presence of any kind of assessment can be a threatening process for many students. The forms of assessment like vivas, examinations, oral presentation laboratory assessments, seemed to cause higher levels of anxiety than others. The finding of study conducted by Crossman (2004 : p. 586) shows that the participants of the study feel nerve-racking, daunting, intimidating, very threatening and confronting. Such stressful assessments included the delivering and communicating of learning in real time.

E. Formative Assessment for Assessing Speaking Skill

Speaking skill is highly essential in language learning as it is the core of communication. As its importance, the assessment issue in English language classroom becomes important aspect to pay attention to. Assessing the learners' oral production is the central concern of various scholars (Kang, 2013; Celce-Murcia, 2013; Louma, 2004 in Ounis, 2017 : p. 95). It is seen as “an essentially interactive process, in which the teacher can find out whether what has been taught has been learned, and if not, to do something about it.” (William, 2007, p. 1054 in Ounis, 2017, p. 95). Assessment becomes a tool to link classroom objectives and instruction, it also allows instructors to identify valuable information on the effectiveness of their teaching and the extent to which the objectives are being met (Fakir, 2014: p.183). According to Shepard (2000, p. 4) as cited in Ounis (2017: p. 95), classroom assessment refers to the “kind of assessment that can be used as part of instruction to support and enhance learning”. Thus, to assess speaking skill during the learning process may give positive effect on learning effectiveness and improvement.

Within the realm of english language learning, it is believed that oral performance “arises spontaneously from the naturally occurring classroom environment and leads the teacher to a judgment about an individual student's level of development” (Stiggins & Bridgeford, 1985 : p. 273 in Ounis, 2017 : p. 97). Since speaking is considered as performance skill which students actually demonstrate proficiency (Stiggins and Bridgeford,

1985 in Ounis 2017 : p. 97), giving feedback on students' performance seems very essential as it plays role in improving and accelerating learning (Nicol & Milligian, 2006, p. 64 in Ounis, 2017 : p. 97). As cited in Ounis (2017 : p. 97), Heurta and Macias (1995) added that assessment is “an ongoing process that involves the student and teacher in making judgements about the student's progress in language using by non-conventional strategies”. From the theories elaborated, it is implied that a process of assessment on speaking skill as a productive skill is significantly needed since it plays important role in helping teacher to know the extent of students' learning progress.

F. Perception of Formative Assessment and Students' Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is something that closely relates to the assessment process. It is the outcome of education since it indicates to what extent students, teacher, curricular, and the educational institution has achieved the educational goal that has been determined (Kpolovie, Joe, & Okoto, 2014 : p. 76). Academic achievement is usually measured by doing examinations. Engel (2002), Bennet (2003), and Bishin (1973) as cited in Kpolovie *et al.*, (2014 : p. 77) mentioned that the examinations assess important procedural knowledge such as skills, and declarative knowledge such as facts which student have learnt. Therefore, as an educational outcome, academic achievement is affected by how the learning process

take place as well as the type of the assessment used such as formative assessment.

How students view formative assessment as assessment for learning to enhance student learning needs to be known by teacher. It is because some studies has shown that somehow the way students percept formative assessment conducted in the classroom has something to do with their achievement. A study carried out by Stensaker (1999) as cited in Crossman (2004 : p. 583) revealed that “more attention should be paid to perceptions of relevance in assessment design and for good reason since assessments that make relevant connections with the world of work, for example, appear to have a positive influence on student learning” (Huff and Sireci, 2001; Unwin and Caraher, 2000 in Crossman, 2004 : p. 583). It means that the more positive student’s perception toward assessment, the influence will be more positive in their learning.

Uduokpong an Okon (2012 : p. 208) reveal the finding of their study showing that there is a potitive correlation between students perception of formative evaluation with their performance.

“....Students with positive predisposition to the teachers’ formative evaluation practices performed better than their counterparts who perceived the practice as not enhancing to learning (negative) (63.08 vs. 40.38).” (Uduokpong and Okon, 2012 : p. 208)

This finding is in line with the statement mentioned by Erwin (1995) that how students approach their learning is often caused by the evaluation tasks and evaluation task also causes their feeling about their learning and

themselves as learners (Uduokpong and Okon, 2012 : p. 208). Formative assessment strategies should be well designed to increase students' feeling of accomplishment so that they will have good perception of being successful since it is a key for them to be more engaged in school learning that will lead them to have better achievement (Uduokpong and Okon, 2012 : p. 209). In their research, Uduokpong and Okon (2012 : p. 209) found that students who saw formative evaluation administered by their teacher as “enhancing to learning” that means positive perception, showed better performance in social studies summative assessment examination. It is because they might be found such evaluations and feedbacks could inspire and motivate them to study. From the research result that has been conducted, it can be inferred that those research shows a positive correlation between students' performance and their academic achievement. However, those results are based on certain circumstances that differs from other cases. Thus, another study might show a different result from the previous research as mentioned above.