

Formative and Summative Assessments: English-Majored Students' Perceptions and Expectations

Trinh Boi Ngoc^{1*} 

Trinh Thi Mong Ngoc¹ 

¹Tra Vinh University, Vietnam

*Corresponding author email: trinhboingoc@tvu.edu.vn

<https://doi.org/10.65956/ltlt.2026.57>

Abstract

Assessment is a compulsory and regular activity at all educational levels in Vietnam to measure students' learning outcomes through their courses. On the one hand, it helps instructors identify the students' strengths and shortcomings. From that, they can apply appropriate teaching methods and approaches in order to achieve teaching and learning goals. On the other hand, it creates motivation for students' learning process. At the same time, students can make their own study plans or strategies to gain better results in their academic achievements. There are two popular forms of assessing students' performances, namely formative and summative assessments which are shared by many authors and educators. The purpose of the study was to figure out English-majored students' perceptions and their expectation of the formative and summative assessments in their courses. The participants were 87 English majors at Tra Vinh University. The instruments included the questionnaire and the interview. The questionnaire focused on students' perceptions when accessing these two modes of assessment. The interview related to their expectations towards the future implementation of the formative and summative assessment. The results were beneficial for relevant stakeholders including students, lecturers, course designers, and the institution. The recommendations were also meaningful to neighbouring universities to assist students in overcoming their issues and getting better results in their further tests or exams.

Keywords perceptions, formative assessment, summative assessment, English majors, expectations

Article history Received: 25 Mar 2026 | Accepted: 08 Jun 2026 | Available: 10 Jun 2026

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a mandatory task which is regularly performed in all levels of education. Alsadoon (2017) affirms that assessment is a core element in the educational system to evaluate students' academic achievements throughout their learning courses. Akmaral and Biloliddin (2024) claim that summative assessments are beneficial for students who are concerned about scores and grades. These assessments are also useful for teachers to evaluate whether their teaching methods are efficient or not. According to Kivuti (2015), the procedure of assessment can help teachers judge students' learning activities and outcomes. Additionally, Rocco (2007) claims assessment activities also assist teachers in recognizing students' strong and weak points during their process of mastering knowledge. Through assessments, teachers can constantly keep track of their students' learning progress. Subsequently, instructors can adjust their teaching approaches and methods in order to gain teaching and learning goals (Ho & Dang, 2019). Therefore, teachers are not only equipped with professional skills and knowledge for teaching but also trained assessing skills to evaluate students' performances

appropriately. Assessments also help students to determine their competence and recognize their knowledge gaps. Kivuti (2015) believes that assessments can be performed by various tasks such as projects, field trips, class assignments, exercise revision, formal tests. Those tasks can be conducted either inside or outside the classroom. There are different forms of assessments such as diagnostic, informal, formal, formative and summative assessments, but formative and summative assessments have been mentioned by numerous researchers and scholars (Amalia, 2018; Dixson & Worrell, 2016; Mulia, 2019).

At Tra Vinh University, assessment is a crucial activity in the process of teaching and learning. Formative and summative assessments are obligatory for students of all majors to complete the courses. Depending on the characteristics of different majors and their training programs, lecturers can design different tasks for formative and summative assessments. To students majoring in English, the formative assessments include attendance (10%), doing online exercises (10%), mini tests/presentation (40%), and a midterm test (40%). These activities are organized by the lecturers of the course and accounted for 50% of the final score. The remaining one will belong to the summative assessment which is conducted at the end of the course. The summative assessment includes the final test which is organized and scheduled by the faculty office. For some courses such as Research Methodology, Academic Writing, and Event Management, students have to submit their final papers instead of taking the final exams in class. It is no doubt that these two forms of assessment are significant to lecturers, students and institutions. For teachers, they can identify students' learning gaps, adjust instructions for students' needs and reflect on their own practice, leading to their professional growth. For students, they can identify their own learning gaps to set their personal goals for academic improvement and have more motivation in learning. They can also improve some soft skills such time management, self- correction and goal orientation to achieve life-long learning (Dang, 2024). For educational institutions, assessments help to identify curricular gaps, ensure the accountability and training quality to maintain high educational standards. Due to the significance of assessments, this study was conducted to explore English-majored students' perceptions towards prominent merits and demerits of the two forms of assessment. Besides, the researchers also investigate their expectations towards assessment to enhancing the quality of assessment, and thereby obtain the teaching and learning goals.

The study seeks to answer two research questions:

- (1) What are English-majored students' perceptions towards formative and summative assessments?
- (2) What are English-majored students' expectations towards the organization of formative and summative assessments?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Perception

Burn (2010) defines perception as a process that individuals observe and evaluate information from the internal or external environments with or without awareness. Similarly, Lestari (2023) states that perception is a process of evaluation that individuals make toward an object, which can be understood in both broad and narrow senses. In the narrow sense, perception refers to the way individuals see an object, whereas in the broad sense, it refers to how individuals perceive or interpret an object.

According to Hardiyanti (2016), perception in education is the subjective process that teachers and students analyse, structure and understand their academic experiences. It plays a pivotal role in fostering students' motivation, participation and academic success.

Definition of Expectation

Good and Brophy (2003) defines expectation are the logical predictions teachers make about students' future grades or progress as well as their conduct through observing their current work. Similarly, Mangels et al (2006) say that expectations are the belief that a student can improve through hard work. By comparison, Rubie-Davies (2014) explains expectations are fairness in action. It means giving every student the "premium" version of an education which is the best tools and the most support without pre-judging what they can handle.

What is Assessment?

Assessment is a fundamental activity in teaching and learning at all levels of education. According to Huba and Freed (2000), assessment is a process of collecting and reviewing knowledge by using various approaches in teaching and learning. Cronbach (1971, as cited in Boualem & Mohamed, 2021), emphasizes that assessment is a procedure of measuring someone's knowledge, comprehension, ability, and skills. However, Yambi (2018) affirms that assessment involves four components: (1) measuring students' improvement over time; (2) motivating students to study; (3) evaluating teaching methods; and (4) ranking students' ability.

Kinds of Assessment

Regarding types of assessments, different authors have different classifications of assessments. However, formative and summative assessments are shared by many authors as popular forms of assessment in teaching and learning. Bloom et al. (1971) defines formative assessment as a tool used to give feedback and correction at each stage in the process of teaching and learning while summative assessment is a technique used to assess the degree of achievement of the whole course. Black and Wiliam (1998) claim that formative assessment is considered activities done by teachers and students to provide information as feedback to improve teaching and learning. In contrast, summative assessment is designed to show the performance of students after the course. According to Dixson and Worrell (2016), formative assessment mentions students' progress, and summative assessment focuses on assessing students by using a certain rubric or criteria. Amalia (2018) adds some more ideas for these two forms of assessment. According to this author, formative assessment takes place during the learning process to assess each student's progress and assist teachers in adjusting the course program. In addition, through this type of assessment, teachers give feedback to students, so that they can recognize and overcome their shortcomings after doing the tests. In contrast, summative assessment is held at the end of the course and used for evaluating and classifying students' levels. Mustamin (2024) says that formative assessment is performed during the learning process to check students' progress, give feedback and discover their learning difficulties to help students learn and practice while summative assessment is conducted at the end of the course to evaluate students' performance

Benefits Students Get When Taking Formative and Summative Assessments

In general, both formative and summative assessments offer undeniable benefits to students. According to French et al. (2024), tests and examinations could enhance short-term memory, boost students' motivation, and help them maintain focus on their learning goals. Notably, formative and summative assessments each have their own distinct characteristics and advantages. One prominent merit of formative assessment was that students received continuous feedback from their teachers after doing the tests (Anwar & Hameed, 2016; Zilany & Yakub, 2024). Garrison and Ehringhaus (2011) affirmed that formative assessment was a part of the teaching process. Through this assessment, teachers knew students' levels and have timely adjustments, ensuring students' learning achievements within a set time frame. More importantly, formative assessment enabled teachers to determine the following steps during the learning process since this assessment will orient the summative assessment of the students. Similarly, Anwar and Hameed (2016) confirmed that students prefer formative assessment due to the feedback they receive to as it helps them to prepare for the summative assessment. Zilany and Yakub (2024) clarified that the feedback from teachers would enhance students' self-assessment skills, support their comprehension of their own cognitive processes. However, Pan (2020) found out that students were in favour of summative assessment because they were fair, could assess students' ability and helped students to improve language skills.

According to Pramesti (2024), formative assessment was essential in the learning process because it helped teachers recognize what learning aspects students encountered to give appropriate prompts, create them suitable lessons and foster student-centered learning environment. Besides, formative assessment also assisted students in accessing the course materials thoroughly, developing metacognitive skills and achieving their learning objectives.

Drawbacks Students Encounter When Taking Formative and Summative Assessments

White-Blackburn (1977) investigated how unfriendly, cold, or harsh behaviour from proctors, who showed limited positive interaction, could increase test anxiety and discourage students from raising questions and seeking clarification. Additionally, some proctors could be a source of distraction, such as making noise or giving negative comments. Most importantly, some proctors were inattentive and often failed to monitor cheating or exam violations effectively, which led to unfairness in testing and evaluations.

Anwar and Hameed (2016) highlighted several instructor-related weaknesses in assessment practices, including issues in test design, administration, and the provision of feedback. These concerns were aligned with these of Areekkuzhiyil (2021) and French et al. (2024), who argued that some tests lacked sufficient validity and reliability, and failed to effectively evaluate students' competence. Additionally, problems could stem from a misalignment between formative and summative assessments, as well as inconsistencies with learning theories and learning outcomes.

Pan (2020) noted that students often needed to review large amount of material for both formative and summative assessments, resulting in significant time investment. Students also expressed frustration when some test content was not covered in the course materials. French et al. (2024) further emphasized the issue of academic misconduct during exams, which could demotivate students who perceived the results as unfair. The authors also raised concerns about the stress and anxiety associated with the on-going and final tests, and the potential discouragement of lifelong learning, especially when summative assessments did not provide opportunities for students to receive feedback for further improvements.

Similarly, Akmaral and Biloliddin (2024) agreed that students got limited feedback from summative assessments since they took the exams at the end of the learning courses. Therefore, these assessments could hinder their learning progress and timely adjustments for better academic outcomes. Moreover, taking summative assessments could be considered as a stressor which negatively affected their grades or learning opportunities in the future. In addition, these assessments also put a pressure on test takers and decreased their genuine understanding of the subject matter.

In general, the previous studies above mentioned both advantages and disadvantages of formative and summative assessments. In this study, the researchers continued to investigate the benefits and drawbacks of these two modes of assessments from the English majors at Tra Vinh University via the questionnaire and the interview. The questionnaire was adapted from those conducted by Ghozali and Tyas (2022), Pan (2020), Zilany and Yakub (2024). For the interview, the researchers designed some more questions to ask the participants to give additional information related to these forms of assessments. Moreover, the researchers also explored the participants' expectations towards the organization of the assessments in terms of contents, forms, time, facilities, and the roles of proctors. These additional aspects in this study will fill the gaps in previous studies.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In order to investigate English majors' perceptions and their expectations towards taking the formative and summative assessments, the mixed methods explained by Creswell (2003) were employed in this study to analyse the qualitative and quantitative data from the questionnaire and the interview. The quantitative data from the questionnaire aimed to identify the trends via the average mean scores of the items related to benefits and drawbacks of assessments while the qualitative data from the interview provided explanations for more in-depth understanding of the two forms of assessments. Besides, the designed questions in the interview explored the participants' personal opinions towards their expectations towards the assessments. The semi-structured interview could bring flexible and diverse ideas from the participants. Therefore, the mixed methods were aligned with the research questions in this study.

Participants

The participants involved in the current study were 87 sophomore and junior English majors at Tra Vinh University. Their ages are ranged from 19 to 21. They have participated in the formative and summative assessments every semester of their courses regulated via Decision No. 4363 dated July 31, 2021, on the promulgation of regulations on the organization of course evaluation of Tra Vinh University (2021). This decision was issued by basing on Circular 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT dated March 18, 2021, issued by the Ministry of Education and Training about the Regulations on undergraduate training (Ministry of Education and Training, 2021). According to Decision No. 4363 dated July 31, 2021, the assessments include two compulsory stages: formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment accounts for 50% of the course consisting of attendance, online exercises, contributing in class activities, oral tests, written tests, presentation and other forms demonstrated in the course syllabuses. Summative assessment takes the remaining 50 % including reports, presentation, oral tests, final tests also presented in the course syllabuses. The lecturers will monitor activities of formative

assessment while the faculties arrange the proctors to examine the students' final tests in the exam rooms. Due to experiencing these forms of assessments, the participants can express their perceptions as well their expectations to the assessing process.

Research Instruments

To answer the research questions of the current study, the researcher employed a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire focused on the participants' benefits and drawbacks via assessments which were fully developed through the theoretical background and previous studies conducted by Ghozali and Tyas (2022), Pan (2020), Zilany and Yakub (2024). The researchers read the previous studies, selected and redesigned items related to the benefits and drawbacks students have when taking the assessments. There are 17 items related to advantages students gain when taking the assessment and 10 items focuses on disadvantages students face when taking assessments. All the items were designed by using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The data collected from these items were used to answer the first research question.

The interview included two open-ended questions asking the following aspects: what other benefits and drawbacks students have when taking part in the two forms of assessments, what expectations they have for the university and lecturers to improve the quality of formative and summative assessments.

Procedure

First, the questionnaire was designed and piloted to check if it was clear enough to respondents. The participants involved in the pilot were 10 English majors accounted for about 12% of the participants in the study. According to Isaac and Michael (1995), this percentage could represent the sample population to check the clarity of the items shown in the questionnaire. The data collected from the questionnaire was analysed by using the software SPSS version 25 (Statistic Package for the Social Sciences).

For the face-to-face interview, the researchers used the convenience sampling to choose 10 out of 87 participants. The selected participants for the interview who attended our courses in this semester. Therefore, it was convenient for the researchers to contact and get their opinions if they had other advantages and disadvantages when taking these forms of assessments and their expectations for the school and lecturers. To collect the data for the interview, the researchers contacted the participants to arrange the time for the interview. It took each participant about 15 minutes to answer these questions. The information was recorded, transcribed, and synthesized into themes which could be used for interpretation and discussion in further sections.

FINDINGS

Findings from the Questionnaire

The reliability of the questionnaire

The questionnaires were fully completed by a group of 87 English majors All the data collected from the questionnaires were computed to check the frequency and the internal reliability coefficient. The result showed that the questionnaire employed in this study was reliable with significantly high Cronbach

Alpha’s coefficient of .876 for 27 items in total. Key findings of the current research were discussed in depth in the following sections.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics of the Questionnaire

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of Items
.876	27

Benefits students gained when taking formative and summative assessments

Table 2. Descriptives Statistics of Benefits

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
I take formative and summative assessments regularly and seriously.	4.14	.73
I am told in advance when I will be assessed.	4.18	.81
My lecturer has explained to me the purpose of the formative and summative assessments.	4.07	.90
I understand how the English assessment tasks will be marked via the criteria provided by teachers.	3.98	.79
Feedback on formative assessments is regularly provided by teachers.	3.67	.91
I take the feedback seriously to remedy my weaknesses.	4.00	.95
Formative assessment is very helpful in preparing for summative assessment.	4.16	.66
From the assessments, I know what the assignment expected from me.	3.95	.81
I can realize my misconception of learning materials by participating in the formative and summative assessments.	3.97	.58
The content of the examination correlate well with the learning objectives.	3.91	.73
Tasks used in formative and summative assessments are diverse and stimulate my learning goals.	3.79	.79
The time allotted for the formative and summative assessments is adequate.	3.83	.77
The lecturers/proctors observe and keep quietness in the exam rooms to help students focus on their tests.	4.18	.81
The assessment tasks are relevant to the real world.	3.81	.67
The assessment tasks are relevant to the future workplace.	3.74	.71
I have experienced a variety of learning methods and activities while preparing for the assessment.	3.86	.88
I understand what elements of the course materials are important when I have assessments.	3.97	.83
Benefit mean	3.95	.51

First, the descriptive statistic test shown in Table 2 reveals the overall mean score of benefits related to formative and summative assessments was high (M =3.95, SD =0.51). The participants believed that they gained numerous advantages with the two modes of assessments. In particular, the data indicates that the two benefits of formative and summative assessments “I am told in advance when I will be assessed.” and “The proctors observe and keep quietness in the exam rooms to help students focus on their tests.”

were chosen by the majority of the participants and accounted for the same mean score (M= 4.18) each. Thanks to the announcement of the teachers about the testing dates, students spend time reviewing their own lessons before the exams. In addition, with the proctors' disciplines in the exam rooms, students will focus on their tests better and avoid being bothered by neighboring candidates.

The next two merits were "Formative assessment is very helpful in preparing for summative assessment." and "I take formative and summative assessments regularly and seriously." with M= 4.16 for the former and M= 4.14 for the latter. It is clear that students are in favor of participating in the formative assessment since they support students in their summative assessment. Additionally, participating in these two forms of assessment will assist students in accumulating their knowledge and improve their academic performances. Moreover, the participants emphasized that their teacher has explained to them the purpose of the formative and summative assessments (M= 4.07, SD= 0.90). It is evident that being informed about the test and exam formats can help students have clear study plans during their courses. Last but not least, they believed that they took the feedback seriously to remedy their weaknesses with the mean score (M= 4.00, SD= 0.95). By receiving comments from teachers, students can avoid the same mistakes in further tests and make academic improvements.

Drawbacks students encountered when taking formative and summative assessments

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics of Drawbacks*

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Due to the heavy schedule of taking final tests, I don't have enough time to prepare for the summative assessments.	3.84	1.04
I am under pressure while preparing for taking the assessments.	4.03	.83
The time organized for the final tests is unfavorable for most students.	3.01	1.01
Some lecturers/proctors are not strict, so it is sometimes unfair for students in the exam room.	3.06	1.25
Some lecturers/ proctors are too serious, which can create pressure for students in the exam room.	3.99	.83
The facilities in the test/ exam rooms are not qualified enough (lights, fans, air-conditioners, tables, etc)	2.85	1.23
The facilities (speakers, projectors, computers, Internet signal, etc.) supporting for the listening, interpretation, speaking exams are not qualified.	3.25	1.10
The surrounding noise can hinder students from doing the tests well.	3.99	.86
Sometimes the contents of the final tests are not related to what I learnt in class and reviewed for the exams.	3.75	.82
Sometimes the instructions of the tasks are vague, which make me difficult to understand.	3.83	.94
Drawback mean	3.56	.52

The Descriptive Statistic Test shown in Table 3 presents the total mean score of ten items related to the participants' barriers when taking the formative and summative assessments (M= 3.56, SD= 0.62). It shows that that the participants have obstacles with these two forms of assessments at the high level.

Of all the problems, the participants were mainly under the pressure while preparing for taking the assessments ($M=4.03$, $SD=0.83$). In fact, students have to take part in many formative and summative assessments from 5 to 6 subjects in one semester. It enforces students to spend a lot of time revising their lessons for the tests which causes stress on students. Surprisingly, most of the participants complained that some proctors were too serious, which could create pressure for students in the exam room and the surrounding noise could hinder students from doing the tests well with ($M= 3.99$) each. It can be explained that proctors' manners and surrounding noise can negatively affect students' concentration on their exams. In addition, the factor "Due to the heavy schedule of taking final tests, I don't have enough time to prepare for the summative assessments" with the mean score ($M= 3.84$, $SD= 1.04$) made students concerned. Taking consecutive final tests makes students exhausted. As a results, they sometimes had insufficient time to prepare well for the tests. The last factor "Sometimes the instructions of the tasks are vague, which make me difficult to understand." constituted the mean score ($M=3.83$, $SD= 0.94$). This is surely an obstacle that prevent students from completing their exams as they expected.

Findings from the Interview

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions toward the benefits and drawbacks of formative and summative assessments, semi-structured interviews with 10 students were conducted in addition to a survey. The interview results were synthesized into themes and are reported as follows.

Other benefits students had when taking formative and summative assessments

The interviewees shared additional opinions on the merits of formative and summative assessments, particularly in terms of reinforcing their knowledge, reducing exam pressure, and offering a more comprehensive evaluation.

Knowledge reinforcement: Most students think that regular assessments help them remember and understand the lessons better.

Having two types of assessments allows me to review and understand what I have learned before moving on to new part of the course. It's also a chance for me to reflect on my learning methods and find the most effective way to study. (S1)

Reduced exam pressure and more comprehensive evaluation: Many students are in favor of having more than one test during the course because formative assessment grades can reduce the pressure on final exams, especially for difficult subjects. They have more than one chance to put effort on the test and improve their final scores. Moreover, the combination of the forms of assessments ensures more objective and thorough assessment of learners' abilities. As a student mentioned: "Having two rounds of assessment also helps make students' grades fairer and more accurate, instead of relying on just one form of evaluation." (S1)

Another student added:

There are some small tests prior to the final test, so I can study and review regularly. This helps me have more responsibility for my study and never lose my focus on the lessons to get good results for the upcoming tests. (S2)

Other drawbacks students faced when taking formative and summative assessments

Everything has two sides; therefore, both formative and summative assessments inevitably have their own drawbacks. The interviewees reported several disappointing aspects of these assessments based on their learning experiences, including the stress caused by tests, unfair grading, lack of feedback, and the risk of dishonesty during tests or exams.

Stress from frequent tasks: Some students feel that continuous assessments can be overwhelming and sometimes cause stress for constant test's preparation.

The final exam makes up 50% of the grade, so it can be stressful. Some subjects have too much to learn, and it's hard to remember everything. Frequent test forces me to concentrate on the lessons all the time, which sometimes makes me feel stressful. (S2)

Unfair grading and lack of feedback: A few students commented that formative assessment grading may still be subjective or inconsistent. Sometimes, there are open-ended questions which can make students confused due to unclear direction. Additionally, receiving no feedback from final exams makes it difficult for the students to learn from mistakes and improve themselves.

I think that in some subjects, the process scores are not always fair for all students. Sometimes, the teachers are not very careful and concentrated during the grading process, so the results do not accurately reflect the student's true abilities. (S4)

Cheating risks: Nowadays, with the widespread use of technology and artificial intelligence, there are more concerns about plagiarism or the use of AI in completing assignments or tests. Some students can take advantages of these supportive tools and cheat in the tests or exams which lead to unfair results. A student complained: "I think it is difficult to fully assess students' knowledge because they can easily copy from their classmates or use AI when they have the chance." (S3).

In summary, the interview results reveal that students perceive a range of benefits from both formative and summative assessments. In particular, these assessments can help strengthen their knowledge, reduce exam pressure, and provide a more comprehensive evaluation. However, both forms of assessment also have certain drawbacks. For example, frequent tests and exams may cause stress. In addition, the grading process is sometimes perceived as unfair, and students often do not receive feedback on their final tests to support improvement. Finally, the risk of cheating is a significant concern, as students worry that tests may not accurately reflect their true abilities.

Students' expectations of the organization of the formative and summative assessments

After gaining insight into students' perceptions toward the benefits and drawbacks of formative and summative assessments, their expectations regarding test organization were explored in hopes of improving the effectiveness of assessments. Their opinions are reported as follows:

Fairness, transparency and disciplines: The major concern of the students relates to the fairness when conducting the tests. The students expect that the final scores can reflect students' true abilities. Therefore, they suggest that there should be more exam versions to avoid cheating and transparent grading. In addition, the proctors in the exam room should be serious about supervision but avoid creating additional stress. Regarding proctors' manner in the exam rooms, another student said: "Proctors should also avoid leaving the room, making phone calls, or doing personal tasks during the exam session." (S3).

Some of other students' opinions are shown below:

I think in large classes, tests should be strictly managed so results are fair for everyone. Also, proctors should move around more during tests for better observations but not stay in one place too long, as it can stress the student whom they are standing near. (S1)

Some proctors talk too much during exams, which distracts students. The faculty or school should provide clear guidelines, encourage the exam proctors to be more serious and have professional perceptions without creating unnecessary pressure, so students can stay calm and focused. (S2)

Clear and appropriate exam questions and reasonable review sessions: Many students hope that the tests align well with the lesson's content but still with varying levels of difficulty so that the good students can stand out.

Moreover, some students expect the teachers to hold some mock tests so that they can be more familiar with the test format and levels of difficulty. A student said: "The content of tests should closely align with what students have learned in class, but should also include more challenging questions to differentiate students' levels of proficiency and motivate them to make greater efforts." (S1). While some students expect to have quite challenging tests to demonstrate their competence, others express the contrasting expectation that teachers should emphasize some key points during the review sessions to reduce students' burden and stress. Another student stated: "Regarding exam review sessions, teachers should avoid reviewing all the exact content that will appear in the test, in order to prevent making it too easy to score a perfect 10." (S3)

Facility improvement: Many students reported that outdated facilities can negatively affect their exam performance. Therefore, it is essential to upgrade the sound systems, furniture, and Internet access in examination rooms. In addition, the school should consider installing wall clocks in exam rooms to help students manage their time effectively. Noise was also highlighted as a major issue, particularly during listening tests. In fact, conducting listening test in neighbouring classrooms leads to distractions as students listen via loudspeakers rather than headphones. As a result, the students suggested that listening tests should be conducted in computer labs to ensure a quiet and private testing environment. A student mentioned: "Exam rooms should be spacious and equipped with comfortable desks and chairs. In some classrooms, unstable furniture makes it difficult for students to concentrate and complete their tests effectively." (S2)

Another student reported:

I hope the school will invest more qualified equipment for exams. For example, during listening tests, classrooms should be equipped with high-quality sound devices such as portable speakers instead of using TV speakers, which often produce unclear or distorted sound. (S1)

In short, students expect the faculty to ensure fairness, transparency, and proper discipline during exams. Moreover, they wish to receive clear and appropriate exam questions, along with reasonable review sessions provided by their teachers. Finally, many students hope for improvements in facilities, as these are important factors that can significantly influence their performance on test days.

DISCUSSION

Benefits Students Got When Taking Formative and Summative Assessments

The results from the questionnaire prove that formative and summative assessments help students gain both benefits than drawbacks. In terms of benefits, students confirmed the following outstanding features: being informed in advance for the formative and summative assessments, having responsible proctors in the exam rooms, preparing for the summative assessment well thanks to the formative assessment, taking formative and summative regularly and seriously, getting clear explanations about the purpose of the assessment, and taking the feedback seriously to remedy their weaknesses.

Among them, the factors “formative assessment helps preparing well for the summative assessment” and “getting feedback from teachers for the formative assessment encourages students to make adjustments for their summative assessment” were in accordance with the findings found by Anwar and Hameed (2016), Zilany and Yakub (2024). These authors affirmed that formative assessment plays a crucial role in supporting students to get better results for their summative assessment.

By comparison, Garrison and Ehringhaus (2011) explored other benefits that taking formative assessment enables teachers to recognize students’ levels and have timely adjustments to help students achieve their learning outcomes. However, Pan (2020) found that students prefer summative assessment since it is fair and can evaluate students’ ability and improve their language skills. From another perspective, French et al. (2024) figured out that formative and summative assessments develop students’ short-term memory, enhance students’ motivation and maintain their focus on learning goals.

One prominent merit of formative assessments is that students receive continuous feedback from their teachers after doing the tests (Anwar & Hameed, 2016; Zilany & Yakub, 2024). Pan (2020) added that students were in favour of summative assessments because they were fair, could assess students’ ability and helped students to improve language skills.

Drawbacks Students Encountered When Taking Formative and Summative Assessments

Regarding drawbacks of formative and summative assessments, students encountered some obstacles: being under pressure while preparing for the assessments and having very serious proctors in the exam rooms, being distracted by the surrounding noise, having the heavy schedule of taking the final tests, and facing ambiguous instructions of the tasks. The first challenge is that students are under pressure while preparing for the assessments. This finding is aligned with that of French et al. (2024) who found that stress and anxiety during on-going and final tests could discourage their lifelong learning. The next obstacle is related to having very serious proctors in the exam rooms. This result is similar to the finding explored White-Blackburn (1977) who concluded that cold behaviours of proctors could increase test anxiety and prevent students from asking for clarification. The two difficulties investigated in this study are being distracted by the surrounding noise and having the heavy timetable of taking the final tests were not found in previous studies. The last obstacle is facing ambiguous instructions of the tasks. This finding is aligned with that explored by Areekkuzhiyil (2021) and French et al. (2024), who examined that some tests lack sufficient validity and reliability which lead to ineffectively evaluated students’ competence.

The findings from the interview explore some more ideas related to the benefits and drawbacks of formative and summative assessments. Students affirmed some advantages such as knowledge reinforcement and reducing exam pressure because of taking multiple formative assessments. However, students encountered some other drawbacks such as stress from frequent tasks, unfair grading and lack

of feedback, and cheating risks. The interview also mentioned students' expectations of the organization of the formative and summative assessments. Specially, students expect to have fairness, transparency and disciplines when conducting the tests or exams. They also need clear, appropriate exam questions, reasonable review sections and facility improvement.

CONCLUSION

From the findings above, it is concluded that formative and summative assessments give students both benefits than drawbacks. In terms of benefits, students report the following prominent merits: being informed in advance for the formative and summative assessments, having responsible proctors in the exam rooms, preparing for the summative assessment well thanks to the formative assessment, taking formative and summative regularly and seriously, getting clear explanations about the purpose of the assessment, and taking the feedback seriously to remedy their weaknesses. Regarding drawbacks of formative and summative assessments, students face some difficulties: being under pressure while preparing for the assessments and having very serious proctors in the exam rooms, being distracted by the surrounding noise, having the heavy schedule of taking the final tests, and facing ambiguous instructions of the tasks.

Some more ideas related to the benefits and drawbacks of formative and summative assessments are explored from the interviews. Students affirm some advantages such as knowledge reinforcement and reducing exam pressure because of taking multiple formative assessments. However, students face some other obstacles such as stress from frequent tasks, unfair grading and lack of feedback, and cheating risks. The interview also explores students' expectations of the organization of the formative and summative assessments. Specially, students expect to have fairness, transparency and disciplines when conducting the tests or exams. They also need clear, appropriate exam questions, reasonable review sections and facility improvement.

This article just focuses on some aspects such as benefits and drawbacks of formative and summative assessments and students' expectations towards the school and teachers to improve the quality of assessments. The two instruments: questionnaire and interview were used in this study for data collection. However, the data were mainly based on the participants' personal opinions. In order to get more objective ideas, future researchers can choose test or exam observations as an additional instrument to explore some factors that can motivate or hinder students during their process of taking formative and summative assessments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For improving assessment practices in language teaching and learning, there are some recommendations relevant stakeholders including teachers and institutions.

For teachers, they should provide timely and constructive feedback by utilizing technologies to help students learn from these mistakes and improve their performance in further tests or exams. In addition, teachers can encourage and instruct students to evaluate their own assignments basing on students' provided rubrics. To match students' levels and interests, learning materials, teachers should diversify assessment methods by incorporating projects, portfolios or presentations.

For institutions, the facilities in the testing rooms should be qualified to ensure the best conditions for the assessment process. Moreover, the institutions should conduct surveys on assessments in every semester via collecting students' reflections in order to handle problems arising during the process of assessments. The institutions need to issue periodical regulations on checking, adjusting the training programs, updating the criteria and assessing methods suitable for the educational trend.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our profound gratitude to students at Tra Vinh University, who answered the questionnaire and participated in the interview for data collection of this present study.

REFERENCES

- Akmaral, E., & Biloliddin, S. (2024). Advantages and disadvantages of summative and formative assessment in education. *International Scientific Journal*, 3(12), 65-68.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14278925>
- Alsadoon, H. (2017). Students' perceptions of e-assessment at Saudi Electronic University. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 16(1), 147-153.
<https://www.tojet.net/articles/v16i1/16113.pdf>
- Amalia, R. (2018). *Students' perception of online assessment use in Schoology in EFL classrooms* [Undergraduate thesis, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya]. <http://digilib.uinsa.ac.id/28639/>
- Anwar, M., & Hameed, F. M. (2016). Students' perceptions towards formative and summative assessment: A single institution study. *Journal of Islamic International Medical College*, 11(1), 35-40. <https://journals.riphah.edu.pk/index.php/jiimc/article/view/935>
- Arekkuzhiyil, S. (2021). Issues and concerns in classroom assessment practices. *Edutracks*, 20(8), 20-23. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED613841.pdf>
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 5(1), 7-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969595980050102>
- Bloom, B. S., Hastings, J. T., & Madaus, G. F. (1971). *Handbook on formative and summative evaluation of student learning*. McGraw-Hill.
- Boualem, B., & Mohamed, M. (2021). Investigating students' attitude towards online assessment during the pandemic of corona virus disease 19. *Journal of Faslo El-Khitab*, 10(4), 259-274.
- Burn, C. C. (2010). Perception. In D. S. Mills, J. N. Marchant-Forde, P. D. McGreevy, D. B. Morton, C. J. Nicol, C. J. C. Phillips, P. Sandøe, & R. R. Swaisgood (Eds.), *The encyclopedia of applied animal behaviour and welfare* (pp. 459-461). CABI.
<https://doi.org/10.1079/9780851997247.0000>
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dang, T. T. (2024). Cultural and situational constraints on undergraduate students' performance of learner autonomy in EFL learning. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 15(6), 1791-1799. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1506.04>
- Dixon, D. D., & Worrell, F. C. (2016). Formative and summative assessment in the classroom. *Theory Into Practice*, 55(2), 153-159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1148989>
- French, S., Dickerson, A., & Mulder, R. A. (2024). A review of the benefits and drawbacks of high-stakes final examinations in higher education. *Higher Education*, 88(3), 893-918.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01148-z>

- Garrison, C., & Ehringhaus, M. (2011). *Formative and summative assessments in the classroom*. Association for Middle Level Education. <https://www.amle.org/formative-and-summative-assessments-in-the-classroom/>
- Ghozali, A. S., & Tyas, P. A. (2022). The importance of formative assessment based on students' perception. *Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan*, 10(2), 218-222. <https://doi.org/10.29210/184500>
- Good, T. L., & Brophy, J. E. (2003). *Looking in classrooms* (9th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Hardiyanti, K. (2016). *English teachers' perceptions of the use of media* [Undergraduate thesis, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto].
- Ho, B. N., & Dang, T. T. (2019). Impacts of online formative assessment on EFL students' writing achievement. *Ho Chi Minh City Open University Journal of Science*, 9(1), 55-69. <https://doi.org/10.46223/hcmcoujs.soci.en.9.1.271.2019>
- Huba, M. E., & Freed, J. E. (2000). *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses: Shifting the focus from teaching to learning*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Isaac, S., & Michael, W. B. (1995). *Handbook in research and evaluation: A collection of principles, methods, and strategies useful in the planning, design, and evaluation of studies in education and the behavioral sciences* (3rd ed.). Educational and Industrial Testing Services.
- Kivuti, N. B. (2015). *Influence of formative evaluation on learner performance in mathematics in secondary schools in Embu County, Kenya* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Nairobi.
- Lestari, Y. I. F. (2023). *The students' perceptions on using blended learning in ELT during COVID-19 at SMPN 1 Wates* [Undergraduate thesis]. State Islamic Institute of Kediri.
- Mangels, J. A., Butterfield, B., Lamb, J., Good, C., & Dweck, C. S. (2006). Why do beliefs about intelligence influence learning success? A social cognitive neuroscience model. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 1(2), 75-86. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsl013>
- Ministry of Education and Training. (2021). *Circular promulgating the regulations on university-level training of the Ministry of Education and Training (Circular No. 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT)*.
- Mulia, D. (2019). *Teachers' assessment types in English classroom* [Undergraduate thesis]. Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Ar-Raniry State Islamic University.
- Mustamin, R. (2024). The role of formative and summative assessment in improving learning quality and student learning outcomes. *Journal of Strategy and Transformation in Educational Management*, 1(1), 17-21. <https://doi.org/10.62012/jostem.v1i1.4>
- Pan, Y. C. (2020). Taiwan university students' perceptions of summative and formative classroom assessment in English courses. *TESOL International Journal*, 15(2), 46-64. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1268467.pdf>
- Pramesti, I. D. A. M. M. (2024). Exploring the benefits of formative assessment in the classroom. *Esteem Journal of English Education Study Programme*, 6(1), 188-194. <https://doi.org/10.31851/esteem.v6i1.16142>
- Rocco, S. (2007). Online assessment and evaluation. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2007(113), 75-86. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.249>
- Rubie-Davies, C. (2014). *Becoming a high expectation teacher: Raising the bar*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315761251>
- Tra Vinh University. (2021). *Decision on the promulgation of regulations on the organization of course evaluation of Tra Vinh University (Decision No. 4363/QĐ-DHTV)*.
- White-Blackburn, G. (1977). *The effects of trained and untrained proctors on student performance and satisfaction in a PSI course* [Master's thesis, University of the Pacific]. https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/uop_etds/443

- Yambi, T. D. A. C., & Yambi, C. (2018). *Assessment and evaluation in education*. University Federal do Rio de Janeiro.
- Zilany, M. S., & Yakub, I. (2024, June). *WIP: The impact of formative assessment on students' attitude, anticipated academic performance, and design skills: Insights from three design-oriented electrical engineering courses* [Paper presentation]. 2024 ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition, Portland, OR, United States. <https://doi.org/10.18260/1-2--48318>