

# Exploring English Teacher Assessment Strategies: A Qualitative Study of Classroom Assessment Practices in an Indonesian Senior High School

Lisna Isa<sup>1</sup>, Enni Akhmad<sup>2</sup>, Adimawati Helingo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>enni@iaingorontalo.ac.id

<sup>2</sup>adimawati@iaingorontalo.ac.id

✉lisnaisa5@gmail.com

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## Abstract

Assessment plays a pivotal role in English language teaching by providing evidence of students' learning progress and informing instructional decisions. This study aims to explore how English teachers classify, implement, and adapt assessment strategies in classroom practice. A qualitative descriptive design was employed involving two English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bongomeme, Indonesia. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that the two teachers adopted different assessment approaches based on pedagogical considerations and classroom contexts. Teacher A emphasized formative, authentic, and informal assessment through peer assessment and Kahoot to promote student engagement, whereas Teacher B implemented formal summative assessment using written tests distributed via WhatsApp due to limited instructional facilities. The implementation process also differed in terms of assessment stages and feedback delivery. Furthermore, several contextual factors influenced assessment practices, including limited instructional time, inadequate technological facilities, and students' insufficient vocabulary mastery. These findings suggest that assessment strategy selection is highly contextual and should be aligned with students' characteristics, available resources, and instructional objectives. The study recommends that teachers employ more diversified and technology-enhanced assessment strategies to improve students' learning experiences.

**Keywords:** Assessment Strategy, Classroom Assessment, EFL Teaching, Formative Assessment, Qualitative

## INTRODUCTION

Assessment is an integral component of the teaching and learning process, particularly in English language teaching (ELT), because it provides evidence of students' learning progress and supports teachers in making instructional decisions. Contemporary perspectives emphasize that assessment is not merely a tool for measuring learning outcomes but also a process that promotes learning by providing meaningful feedback to both teachers and students. Effective assessment enables teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, adjust instructional strategies, and encourage students to become active participants in their own learning. Consequently, assessment has shifted from a product-oriented activity toward a process-oriented approach that continuously supports students' language development.

In language education, teachers are expected to employ various assessment strategies that accommodate different learning objectives and language skills. These strategies include formative assessment, summative assessment, formal assessment, informal assessment, authentic assessment, self-assessment, and peer assessment. Each assessment strategy serves different pedagogical purposes and provides distinct information regarding students' achievement. Formative assessment, for example, helps teachers monitor students' progress during instruction, while summative assessment evaluates learning outcomes at the end of a learning period. Authentic assessment encourages students to demonstrate their language ability through meaningful real-life tasks, whereas peer assessment promotes collaborative learning and critical thinking. Therefore, selecting appropriate assessment strategies has become an essential aspect of teachers' professional competence.

Globally, educational systems have increasingly emphasized assessment practices that foster learning rather than simply evaluate achievement. Many countries have encouraged teachers to integrate formative and authentic assessment into classroom instruction to improve students' engagement and learning outcomes. However, despite these policy developments, research indicates that many English teachers continue to rely heavily on traditional written examinations because they are easier to administer, score, and report. As a result, assessment practices often fail to capture students' communicative competence, higher-order thinking skills, and authentic language use.

Another global issue concerns the gap between assessment policy and classroom implementation. Although educational reforms advocate learner-centered assessment, teachers frequently encounter practical challenges such as limited instructional time, large class sizes,

inadequate technological facilities, and insufficient assessment literacy. These challenges influence teachers' decisions when selecting assessment strategies, often leading them to prioritize efficiency over pedagogical effectiveness. Consequently, assessment practices become highly contextual, depending on teachers' experiences, school resources, and classroom conditions rather than solely on curriculum expectations.

Recent studies have also demonstrated that contextual factors strongly influence teachers' assessment decisions. Teachers often modify assessment procedures according to students' learning characteristics, available instructional media, and institutional policies. In many developing countries, including those in Southeast Asia, limited facilities and varying student abilities remain significant barriers to implementing innovative assessment strategies. Therefore, understanding how teachers actually select and implement assessment strategies within their specific teaching contexts is essential for improving assessment practices and supporting more effective English language instruction.

In Indonesia, educational assessment has undergone significant changes following curriculum reforms, particularly through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The curriculum emphasizes formative assessment as an integral part of the learning process and encourages teachers to provide continuous feedback that supports students' competency development rather than focusing solely on final examination results. Teachers are expected to design assessment activities that are flexible, meaningful, and responsive to students' individual learning needs. This policy reflects the broader goal of developing students' critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills.

Despite these expectations, the implementation of classroom assessment in Indonesian schools remains inconsistent. Previous studies have reported that many English teachers still depend primarily on written tests because of limited instructional time, heavy administrative responsibilities, large class sizes, and inadequate learning facilities. Assessment activities involving speaking, listening, peer assessment, and authentic performance tasks are implemented less frequently due to practical constraints. These challenges are particularly evident in schools located outside major urban areas, where technological resources and learning facilities are often limited. As a result, there is frequently a discrepancy between assessment policies promoted by the curriculum and actual classroom practices.

A preliminary observation conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Bongomeme reflects this situation. English teachers predominantly employed written assessments, particularly multiple-

choice and fill-in-the-blank questions, while speaking and listening assessments were implemented less frequently because of time limitations and inadequate classroom facilities. These preliminary findings indicate that teachers continuously adapt their assessment strategies according to classroom realities. Rather than simply following curriculum recommendations, they make practical pedagogical decisions based on students' readiness, available resources, and instructional constraints. This context highlights the importance of examining teachers' assessment practices from a contextual perspective.

Several previous studies have investigated classroom assessment in English language teaching. Some studies have focused on teachers' assessment literacy and their understanding of formative assessment practices. Other researchers have examined the effectiveness of authentic assessment, peer assessment, or technology-assisted assessment in improving students' language learning. Although these studies provide valuable insights into specific aspects of assessment, they generally examine assessment strategies separately rather than investigating how teachers classify different assessment strategies, implement them in classroom practice, and respond to contextual challenges simultaneously.

Furthermore, previous research has primarily emphasized the effectiveness of particular assessment methods or teachers' conceptual understanding of assessment. Limited attention has been given to teachers' practical decision-making processes when selecting assessment strategies under resource-constrained classroom conditions. In addition, relatively few qualitative studies have compared different teachers' assessment approaches within the same educational setting to understand how contextual factors influence assessment implementation. Consequently, further research is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' assessment practices in Indonesian secondary schools.

This study offers a novel contribution by integrating three important dimensions of classroom assessment: the classification of assessment strategies, the implementation procedures employed by teachers, and the contextual factors influencing assessment decisions. Unlike previous studies that concentrated on individual assessment techniques, this research compares two English teachers working in the same school but applying different assessment strategies based on students' characteristics, classroom conditions, and available facilities. By examining these dimensions simultaneously, the study provides a richer understanding of teachers' assessment decision-making in a real classroom context and contributes practical insights for improving assessment practices in English language teaching, particularly in

resource-limited schools.

Based on the background above, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do English teachers classify assessment strategies in teaching English?
2. How are assessment strategies implemented in English language classrooms?
3. What factors influence English teachers in selecting and implementing assessment strategies?

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive case study to investigate English teachers' classroom assessment strategies.

### **Participants**

The participants consisted of two English teachers selected through purposive sampling based on their teaching experience and willingness to participate.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected through

- classroom observation
- semi-structured interviews
- document analysis

Observation focused on assessment implementation.

Interview explored teachers' perceptions.

Documentation consisted of lesson plans and assessment sheets.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis involving

1. Familiarization
2. Coding
3. Theme development
4. Reviewing themes
5. Naming themes
6. Reporting findings

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

**Table 1. comparison of Teachers' Assessment Strategies**

| Assessment Aspect      | Teacher A                      | Teacher B                                         |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Assessment Orientation | Student engagement             | Administrative requirement and facility readiness |
| Assessment Strategy    | Peer assessment and Kahoot     | Written test via WhatsApp                         |
| Assessment Type        | Formative, informal, authentic | Summative, formal                                 |
| Learning Activity      | Collaborative group work       | Individual written work                           |
| Feedback               | Immediate oral feedback        | Delayed written feedback                          |
| Assessment Focus       | Learning process               | Learning outcomes                                 |
| Student Participation  | Active collaboration           | Individual response                               |
| Main Constraints       | Time limitation                | Limited facilities and students' vocabulary       |

### Discussion

The comparison presented in Table 1 demonstrates that the two English teachers adopted different assessment strategies according to their pedagogical priorities and classroom contexts. Teacher A emphasized students' engagement by implementing peer assessment supported by Kahoot, which reflects formative, informal, and authentic assessment. This strategy encourages students to participate actively in learning, exchange feedback, and construct knowledge collaboratively. Such practices are consistent with Brown (2004), who argues that formative assessment provides continuous information about students' learning progress and supports instructional improvement.

In contrast, Teacher B relied primarily on written assessments administered through WhatsApp. This strategy represents formal and summative assessment because its primary

purpose was to evaluate students' achievement after instruction. Teacher B selected this strategy because it was considered more practical given the available facilities and classroom conditions. These findings indicate that teachers' assessment strategies are strongly influenced by contextual considerations rather than theoretical preferences alone

The implementation procedures also differed considerably between the two teachers. Teacher A implemented four assessment stages consisting of worksheet distribution, collaborative discussion, classroom presentation, and immediate oral feedback. These stages encouraged interaction among students and enabled the teacher to identify misconceptions during the learning process. Immediate feedback allowed students to revise their understanding before completing subsequent learning activities.

Meanwhile, Teacher B implemented five sequential stages involving question distribution via WhatsApp, individual completion of tasks, submission of answers, teacher correction, and written feedback. Although this procedure provided a structured assessment process, the delayed feedback reduced opportunities for students to immediately improve their language performance. Therefore, the two teachers demonstrated different approaches in balancing practicality and learning effectiveness.

Another important finding concerns the contextual factors influencing teachers' assessment decisions. Both teachers reported that time limitations frequently interrupted assessment activities, particularly those involving classroom discussion and feedback. In addition, damaged classroom facilities, including speakers and projectors, restricted opportunities to conduct listening activities and technology-assisted assessments.

Students' limited vocabulary mastery also emerged as a significant factor affecting assessment implementation. Students with inadequate vocabulary required more time to understand assessment tasks and often experienced difficulties answering oral or written questions. Consequently, teachers adjusted assessment strategies to accommodate students' language proficiency and available instructional resources. This finding reinforces the view that classroom assessment is highly contextual and should be adapted to learners' needs rather than applying standardized procedures rigidly.

The findings suggest that there is no universally superior assessment strategy. Instead, effective assessment depends on teachers' ability to align assessment methods with instructional objectives, students' characteristics, and classroom conditions. While Teacher A's strategy promoted higher student engagement and collaborative learning, Teacher B's strategy offered

greater practicality under limited-resource conditions. Therefore, English teachers should develop sufficient assessment literacy to select assessment strategies that balance pedagogical effectiveness with contextual feasibility.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that teachers' assessment practices are dynamic and highly context-dependent. Rather than relying solely on curriculum recommendations, teachers adapt their assessment strategies according to classroom realities, students' learning needs, instructional objectives, and the availability of learning resources. The comparison between the two teachers demonstrates that different assessment approaches can be equally appropriate when they are aligned with specific classroom contexts and pedagogical considerations. This suggests that effective classroom assessment is not determined by the superiority of a particular assessment method but by teachers' ability to make informed instructional decisions that support students' learning.

Furthermore, the study highlights that contextual factors, including time constraints, limited instructional facilities, and students' vocabulary mastery, significantly influence the implementation of assessment strategies. These findings emphasize the importance of developing teachers' assessment literacy so that they are able to design, implement, and adapt assessment practices that are both pedagogically meaningful and practically feasible. Therefore, professional development programs should provide greater support for English teachers in selecting and applying diverse assessment strategies that accommodate students' varying learning characteristics.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on contextual classroom assessment in Indonesian EFL settings by demonstrating that effective assessment requires pedagogical flexibility and responsiveness to local classroom conditions. The findings also provide practical insights for English teachers, school administrators, and educational policymakers in promoting more balanced assessment practices that integrate both learning-oriented and achievement-oriented assessment.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The research involved only two English teachers from a single senior high school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. In addition, the study focused primarily on teachers' perspectives without incorporating students' experiences of classroom assessment. Future studies are

therefore recommended to involve a larger number of schools and participants, employ mixed-methods or comparative research designs, and integrate students' perspectives to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of classroom assessment practices across different educational settings.

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