



APPRAISING BENINESE EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS ON FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN THE COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH CONTEXT

Arlette J. Viviane Hounhanouⁱ

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FASHS),
University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC),
Benin

Abstract:

This study explores Benin EFL beliefs on the two forms of assessment: formative and summative. Both forms of assessment are important in teaching adjustments, in determining priorities and addressing learners' needs. The study was conducted in two EFL classes of Ouémé regions in Benin republic. Six EFL teachers and 106 EFL students of upper sixth forms (Terminales) were involved in this study. The data include interviews with Educational Facilitators (Head Teachers), School Board Educational Administrators, Educational Advisors and Schools Board Administrators at the departmental division of secondary education. Questionnaires were addressed to EFL students and class observation was also used as research instruments. The study indicates that EFL teachers need empowerment in making decision in their own classes owing to a certain number of constraints. It also shows that there is a need to revise test administration strategies in Benin secondary schools.

Keywords: formative, summative, assessment, competency-based approach

1. Introduction

Great achievement and success are subjected to tests and evaluation. In fact, assessment plays an enormous role in the teaching-learning process. It helps teachers and learners to improve teaching and learning. Assessment is a continuous process and a periodic exercise. It helps in forming the values of judgments, educational status, or achievement of student. In a more elaborate way, assessment is the process of gathering data, more specifically, assessment is the way instructors gather data about their teaching and their students' learning (Hanna & Dettmer, 2004). Assessment has many purposes. The main purpose of classroom assessment is to give students the opportunity to show what they have learned rather than catching them out or to show what they have not learned. This

ⁱ Correspondence: email arlette1970@hotmail.com

research study focuses on two types of assessment: formative and summative assessment.

Formative assessment is considered to be one of the most influential ways to improve teaching and learning processes. This type of assessment is conducted to assess students' understanding learning needs, and learning progress concerning a particular unit of learning materials. Formative assessment can help teachers identify the areas of students' difficulty in understanding the learning materials acquiring the essential skills that they need to achieve the learning competence (Ruiz-Primo & Furtak (2007); Newton (2007)).

Regarding summative assessment, it is an overall assessment carried out at the end of a term, chapter or unit. Summative assessment is to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know. Summative assessment is an accountability measure that is generally used as part of the grading process. It is a means to gauge, at a particular point in time student learning relative to content standards. The Competency-Based Approach is a teaching approach which puts a great stress on competencies. It is the teaching/learning/assessment model which lies on cognitivism, constructivism and socio-constructivism.

According to Lasneer (cited in Guerin, 2000), it is a theory through which the learner is the main actor; he builds his knowledge methodically. In the context of CBA programs, formative and summative assessment should be viewed differently. The Competency-Based Approach in EFL teaching requires three disciplinary competences: disciplinary competence CD1, disciplinary competence CD2 and disciplinary competence 3. They correspond respectively to listening and speaking (CD1), reading a (CD2), and writing (CD3). This research study focuses on the beliefs of EFL teachers about formative and summative assessment and more specifically its application in the context of the CBA curriculum. It is hoped that educational specialists and Benin curriculum designers will rethink the issue by finding solutions to overcome the barriers related to assessment.

2. Literature Review

This review focuses on four different rubrics. The first one is in the importance of assessment; next, the research will explore the two types of assessment and their objectives: the formative and the summative assessment. Thirdly, the research will provide the definition of the CBA curricula, and its characteristics. Finally, the review will analyze some aspects of the two types of assessment in the context of the CBA curriculum.

2.1 Definition of Terms

2.1.1 Assessment in Teaching and Learning Process

Assessment has been defined by many scholars. Simply defined, it is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to

develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do as a result of their educational experiences. Lewy, (2000:13) defined Assessment as the provision of information for the sake of facilitating decision making at various stages of curriculum development. Classroom assessments are highly concerned with qualitative judgments that are used to improve students' knowledge and learning. Assessment also gives teachers useful information about how to improve their teaching methods. The three steps that form the foundation of formative assessment have remained the same over the last 30 years: knowing (1) where the learner needs to be, (2) where the learner is, and (3) what needs to be done to get him or her there (Brookhart, 2007; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Ramaprasad, 1983; Sadler, 1989; Wiliam, 2010). Moreover, William (2007), contends that Assessment are linked to language teaching methodology programs outcomes, language teacher competencies. It can serve many different policies and can come in different forms. Cook (2009) investigated on two forms of assessment: spontaneous and planned assessments. Spontaneous assessments occur when activities provide information about student learning in real time as when question-and-answer sessions are conducted during a lesson. Planned formative assessments include activities such as quizzes and homework exercises that are assigned to assess student progress.

In teaching learning process, the term has been perceived as the responsibility of the specialists. For a number of experienced teachers, it is important to know how to assess English language learners' progress. Without assessment it is impossible to know whether learners have learned, whether teaching has been effective, or how best to address student learning needs. The over goal of assessment is to improve students' performance and achievement. Information gathering about students includes different kinds of assessment: Formative and Summative assessments. Both types of assessment allow teachers to make adjustments and revision. Teachers are required to have a good understanding of formative and summative assessment. The understanding will certainly affect their ability in determining the follow-up actions that they need to do to improve their students' learning achievement and develop their professional teaching practices.

2.1.2 Formative Assessment

Formative Assessment is part of the instructional process. When incorporated into classroom practice, it provides the information needed to adjust teaching and learning while they are happening. Numbers of researchers have provided several definitions of Formative Assessment. The term has been defined as "*activities undertaken by teachers and by their students in assessing themselves that provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities*" Black & Wiliam (2010: 82). Thus, formative assessment encompasses a whole host of tools that provide feedback to teachers or students to help students learn more effectively. During their annual workshop, the collective of EFL teachers (2013) re-define the concept. For them, Formative assessment is more valuable for day-to-day teaching when it is used to adapt the teaching to meet students' needs. It helps teachers to monitor their students' progress and to modify the instruction

accordingly. It also helps students to monitor their own progress as they get feedback from their peers and the teacher. Students also find opportunity to revise and refine their thinking by means of formative assessment.

In addition, many scholars worked on the goals of Formative Assessment and teachers' beliefs on the term. For (Elliott & Yu, 2013, Good, 2011), the main objective of Formative Assessment is intended to give feedback to the teachers on learning materials and teaching techniques in order to be more successful in teaching and the students related to instructional processes and to oversee the gaps between the learning process and the desired learning outcomes. In the same dynamic Wiggins (1998: 7) also confirmed that, *"The aim of formative assessment is primarily to educate and improve student performance, not merely to audit it"*. Dealing with teachers' understanding of Formative Assessment, the concept varies from one setting to the other one.

For Cook (2009), the term includes first of all teachers' understanding of the nature of Formative Assessment, next the characteristics and principles of Formative Assessment ability in giving feedback properly and this requires that students know about their learning progress so that they can modify their learning style to improve themselves. For the same author, the concern in education is whether students attain the objectives of the course of study or curriculum, scope and sequence. Objectives refer to goals of a course of instruction. Formative approaches should be conceptualized as part of a comprehensible system in which all components work together to facilitate learning. In Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, Fourth Edition (2010), two different types of objectives are distinguished.

- 1) General objectives or aims they are the underlying reasons for or purposes of a course of instruction. They are also called long-term goals.
- 2) Specific objectives or simply objectives are exactly what a learner is expected to be able to do at the end of a period of instruction. This might be a single lesson, or a chapter of a book.

2.1.3 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment can be simply defined as a means to gauge, at a particular point in time student learning relative to content standards. Summative assessment is to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know. For Gardner (2010), Summative assessments are almost always graded, are typically less frequent, and occur at the end of segments of instruction. Examples of summative assessments are final exams, state tests, college entrance exams (e.g. GRE, SAT, & LSAT), final performances, and term papers.

Summative assessment is an accountability measure that is generally used as part of the grading process. Summative assessment is given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know. Summative assessment is to evaluate student learning and teachers teaching after a teaching period (Anthony J. & Susan M., 2005). Summative assessment is that teacher wants to find out what the students can remember about the course material so that a mark can be determined. It

lets the teacher sum up what the students have learned, or to make judgment (Luo Shaoqian, 2003). According to Taras (2005: 467) summative assessment can be viewed as a sort of “*judgment which encompasses all the pieces of evidence to a given point*”. This “given point” can be materialized in the form of examination or test. For Brown (2004), “*a summation of what the student has learned implies looking back and taking a stock of how well that student has accomplished objectives but does not necessarily point the ways to future progress*”. The main goal of Summative assessment is to record or report the students’ achievement. Harlen (2005). Also, Mumm, Karm and Remmik (2016) conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 student teachers and found that teachers used summative assessment as the main way of assessing student teachers, which occurs only at the end of the semester in the form of examination. Linguist Heaton (1989) argued that summative assessment which takes the main role objective tests treats language as a separate component and has very high reliability.

Many associate summative assessments only with standardized tests such as department evaluation, but they are also used at and are an important part of national and classroom programs. Summative assessment at the classroom level is an accountability measure that is generally used as part of the grading process. Summative assessment seeks to make decisions about the worth of different aspects of the curriculum. It is concerned with determining the effectiveness of a program, its efficiency, and to some extent with its acceptability. It is conducted after a program has been implemented and seeks to answer if the course was an effective one and whether the students have really learned. The other aspect is in the objectives. Were they adequate? The time spent on each unit, and the teaching methods used are also important in summative evaluation.

2.2 Definition of Competency

The concept of competency involves in general an idea of being good at doing something. The new Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2005: 294) defines the term competency as the “*ability to do something well*”. Dobson (2003: 62) considers the term as synonymous of competences. For him it is the ability to perform tasks and duties to the standard expected in employment. For Blakemore (2008: 2) competency is a skill performed to a specific standard under particular conditions. It is the result from breaking down a job or role into the specific and observable skills that are needed to do it well. A number of scholars also define the word as a combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes required to perform a task to the prescribed standard.

2.3 Definition of the Competency-based Approach

Richards and Rodgers (2002:141) defines the CBA as “*an educational movement that focuses on the outcomes or outputs of learning in the development of language programs. CBA address what the learners are expected to do with the language*”. The focus on outputs rather than on inputs to learning is central to the competencies perspectives.

2.4 Characteristics of the CBA Programs

The main characteristic of the CBA is the focus on learning and students' activities (learner's centered) rather than on the teacher's role. The CBA is also socio constructivist approach based on training students to construct their own knowledge to be able to use it in the daily life. The main features that are included in implementing the CBA syllabus are a focus on successful functioning in society. It aims to give students a chance of learning with themselves to encounter problems in the society. The focus is centered on life skills and the outcomes are made explicit. They are decided by both learners and teachers. A great emphasis should be perceived through a continuous and ongoing assessment. Evaluation is the important integrated part in implementing the CBA which considered not only in exam but also in an ongoing instruction. The CBA is also related to Bloom's taxonomy classification of the different objectives that educators set for students Chelli (2010: 74). The objectives are summarized into six levels:

Knowledge: the learner recalls previous knowledge.

- Comprehension: the ability to recognize and to understand the meaning.
- Application: the ability to exploit new knowledge in order to solve problems so the learner implements new knowledge in new situation.
- Analysis: the ability to divide information into parts and to examine them in order to achieve a good understanding.
- Synthesis: the ability to construct new knowledge from collecting several parts of information.
- Evaluation: the ability to judge new information.

2.5 Formative and Summative Assessment in a Competency-Based Approach Context

The teacher has a great role to play in the conception of the CBA programs. The teacher is judged on his/her ability to manage the contents of the curriculum. Teachers can assess language to find what students have learnt. Teachers may assess the four language skills to find out what learners can do exactly. There should be an emphasis on the integration of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in class activities to ensure good coverage of these skills. The teacher should have content knowledge, well plan and good strategy teaching and learning. Taras (2005) perceives of formative and summative assessment in a competency-based approach context in terms of the ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) where learners are considered less competent to reach a standard position and teachers as MKO (More Knowledgeable Other).

Dealing with feedback, teachers have to take responsibility for their students' learning. Making and correcting errors should be seen as part of the learning process. Language learners often produce errors of syntax and pronunciation thought to result from the influence of their L1, such as mapping its grammatical patterns inappropriately onto the L2, pronouncing certain sounds incorrectly or with difficulty, and confusing items of vocabulary known as false friends. EFL teachers should ensure that there is sensitivity and flexibility in error correction. Correction should be viewed as a gentle one.

“Assessment in the context of the Competency-Based Approach should be in line with the communicative approach. This means that it should be meaningful and relate validity and reliability to classroom learning and teaching”. (Training Module by the group of Specialized Inspectors in English, 2011)

Teachers should then test what they teach. Teaching should not be a permanent testing. Learners should be aware of the wash back effect of any assessment written/oral.

3. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research study is to explore the beliefs of EFL teachers on the two types of assessment: formative and summative. Basing on the purpose of the study the following questions were formulated to guide the research:

The first question intends to know how EFL teachers perceive formative and summative assessment.

The second question investigates on how they carry out formative and summative assessment in their own classes.

The last question explores how both assessments can improve EFL learning.

4. Materials and Methods

The main instrument used to collect data in this research study was a survey (see Appendix page). Questions from the survey were constructed from existing research on seasons and school calendar and its impacts on academic results. The survey was designed to measure the extent to which teachers agree or disagree with statements from the research. The questionnaire intends to guide the decision-making process for the curriculum specialists in designing school calendar and delivery of curriculum at the national level. Interviews were also directed to learners and Schools administrators especially Pedagogical Advisers (PA). Finally, classes were observed during the two main seasons: the rainy season and the dry season. The researcher has considered the two semesters of the whole year to collect reliable data. The researcher observed moments of the class activities and took notes in the observation checklist. In an attempt to generate data to answer the research questions the researcher studied various documents which included the class attendance register, and the text register. Attention was especially focused on attendance and the level of progression in the program.

4.1 Class Observation during Summative Assessment

The observation on the representation of EFL teachers on Summative assessment was conducted in three phases:

- **1st phase:** It includes the preparation of the different tests. The researchers have checked if the teacher scheduled for the design considered the level of progress of all pedagogical groups.

- **2nd phase:** It takes into account the realization of the test, its content. Here the adaptations of the curricula, the needs of students are analyzed for a comparison with the proposed tests. Do all these correspond to the needs of students?
- **3rd phase:** It involves the follow-up activity, after the evaluation, the feedback.

4.2 Data Collection

Data were collected through a questionnaire. Questionnaires were addressed to EFL teachers. The main rubrics of the questionnaire were concerned with the number of assessments administrated each term, the feedback, the ad equation of the content and the instruction, and the results of assessment. Interviews were concerned with Educational Facilitators, school board educational administrators, Educational Advisors, and Schools Board Administrators at the departmental division of secondary education. Finally, class observation was used to measure the way EFL teachers use formative and summative evaluation and their representation on the two types of evaluation.

The following section describes the statistic of the results from EFL teachers' questionnaire on formative and summative assessment.

5. Findings and Data Analysis

Table 1: Questionnaire Results

Questions	Number of teachers	Responses/Statements				
		Yes	No	One	Two	
1	06	-	-	00	06	Number of tests / semester
2	06	02	04			Providing feedback on time
3	06	01	05			Remediation after the assessment
4	06	06	00			Matching of contents and assessment
5	06	06	00			Impact of classroom size
6	06	04	02			Knowledge on other types of assessment
7	06	03				Use results of formative assessment to collect information for decision-making
		03				To diagnose weaknesses so as to Improve
8	06	04				As regular as possible
		02				Once in a while
9	06	03				To provide feedback to students
		02				For my self- evaluation
		01				To interpret them for my improvement
10	06	02				Use decision to change teaching strategies
		03				To regulate teaching/learning strategies
		01				To prepare for further decision-teaching
11	06	06				Size influence to a great extent assessment

5.1 Findings from Questionnaire

The results from questionnaire have shown that the number of tests administrated per semester is two. Four out of six teachers provided feedback on time. This result correlates

with teachers' perception on the two types of assessment. A teacher out of six worried about remediation. All of the six teachers agreed on the matching of contents and assessment. On the ground the researcher has noticed that those results did not correlate. The results on the table have shown that all EFL teachers agreed on the impact of classroom size on assessment. Four of them were knowledgeable on the other types of assessment, that is diagnostic assessment, and criterion-Referenced assessment. Three EFL teachers have used formative assessment to collect information for decision-making. Three of them also used formative assessment to diagnose weaknesses so as to improve and four EFL teachers out of six used formative assessment as regular as possible. The analyses on the table indicated that two EFL teachers used formative assessment once in a while and three used it to provide feedback to students. A single teacher used results of formative assessment for an interpretation for his own improvement. Two teachers were concerned with the use of decision to change their teaching strategies while three teachers used decision to regulate teaching/learning strategies. Only one teacher used decisions to prepare for further decision-teaching. Finally, all teachers agreed that class size had an influence to a great extent on assessment.

5.2 Findings from Class Observation on Formative Assessment

Three EFL teachers were prepared on the objective of the class observation and the other half were not. Five EFL teachers had a wrong representation on the concept of formative assessment. For the teachers who were not informed about the class visit, one of them has finished a chapter a week before the Christmas holidays. (The researcher has checked the information source on the notebook for the class curriculum's progression). When students resumed classes on January, the 6th, the teacher has assessed his learners to check if they revised the course during the break, and if they did not spend all the time for entertainment. The assessment itself was essentially based on the previous chapter and an item on irregular verbs. The instruction provided for the assessment was not clear enough and students were confused about the gap filling exercise on the board. Were they going to write the answer only or were they going to re-write the whole sentences? Two students asked the question, but the teacher did not answer and warned them to focus their attention on the current assessment.

The second teacher was not also informed about the class visit. The teacher assessed learners as a means of punishment. He asked some questions and he realized that things were not going smoothly, he administrated a test. That type of assessment did not reflect what the teacher was expecting from his learners. The assessment was based on the very first chapter of the school year. The matching exercise on word formation was difficult for learners and did not fit their level.

The third teacher was unprepared about the class visit. He has assessed learners for he was late to provide marks for the semester. The teacher would get into trouble with the school board if he tested learners on only two evaluations. Then, he has an obligation since the main teacher should calculate the means and assign personal grades.

The fourth EFL teacher was informed about the class visit. He has used assessment as a retake. The content was too easy, and the purpose was just to give a second chance for learners who did not do well on the previous test.

The fifth EFL teacher was also prepared on the objective of the class visit. He has just finished a chapter and right away asked learners to pick a piece of paper for a quick check test. The assessment really matches with the lesson provided. Instructions were clear enough and time allotted was sufficient to treat the two items.

The last teacher, although he knew the purpose of the class visit, he had tested learners on a difficult topic. He assigned students to write on a topic he himself did not master. (cf Go for English Tle) Classifying people P23 *"It is only a tiny step from classifying people to judging them"*. He did not teach vocabulary prior to the test and did not explain the statement. Students were confused and did not have an idea on where to start.

Figure 1 illustrates the representation of EFL teachers on Formative assessment.

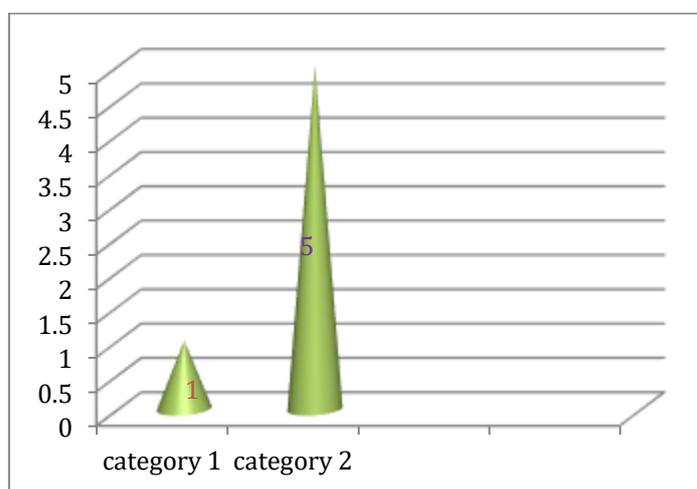


Figure 1: Representation of EFL Teachers on Formative Evaluation in Class Observation

5.3 Findings from Class Observation on Summative Assessment

Phase 1: For Summative assessment, four EFL teachers failed to prepare tests adequately. The researchers examined the text book of the six different pedagogic groups. The remark was that EFL teachers were not at the same level of progression. Teachers agreed upon staying on learning situation 2. But in reality, there are sub-sequences that all teachers had not covered. Thus, the design of the test did not fit learners' expectations. The preparation was not well-structured. Two out of six were assigned to prepare the test three days before the due evaluation. The researcher has noticed that the design was not authentic. Items and texts proposed belong to another school; the heading was changed, and one item was removed.

Phase 2: Only 2 EFL teachers succeeded in following the program as scheduled in the guide. The variation is remarkable regarding the items proposed. Learners were not able to treat item 4 on rephrasing. The researcher noticed a great gap between the grammatical

structures taught and the test proposed to measure learners' acquisition. Tests proposed did not reflect what students have learned.

Phase 3: The researcher spent additional time for this phase. Feedback was a theory. Correction was written on the board by a student and papers were distributed randomly. In a class, marks were categorized from the lower rank to the higher. The correction was not flexible, and the teacher laughed at students who did not do well on the composition part. Errors were read aloud, and the atmosphere was not comfortable. Only one teacher provided learners with an efficient feedback. Three teachers spent their time in criticizing learners that they were going to fail for the exam, that they do not have a good level.

5.4 Results from the Interview

EFL Educational Facilitators and school board administrators have different views on the way tests are administrated to learners. The meaning of the term assessment is summarized in the following words:

"To assess in the context of CBA programs means teachers be trained on how to assess efficiently with that specific program. It is also meaning teachers adapt assessment to Benin context. School board administrators have indicated that classroom assessment should take into account suitability of general instructional goals and objectives associated with what is taught".

While preparing summative test for students the difficulties include time constraints and pressure from the administrators, and the design of the test itself. Educational Facilitators have confessed that EFL teachers who are responsible for designing a test for their pedagogical group do not always submit tests on the due date. This impacts negatively learners' achievement. A pedagogical Advisor complains on the fact that tests proposals most of the time are not original. EFL teachers do not make an effort on test design. There is a kind of exchange on the English papers between schools. The heading is simply changed, and the content remains the same regarding the text, the instructions, and the writing production.

Also, facilitators are not available to check if the different items proposed are appropriate or not. They are so pressurized by the vice principal that the test is handed without control.

To a great extent facilitators do not check the conformity of tests with their contents. Regarding the number of evaluations per semester, the interviewees maintained that if the assessment is well organized four main tests are sufficient. They suggested that Educational Facilitators work effectively with teachers to prepare tests in good conditions.

Regarding Schools Board Administrators at the departmental division of secondary education, they confess that it is important that EFL teachers follow the rules recommended by the authorities on the matter from the ministry of education. The rules stated that three main tests are compulsory for the formative assessment each semester

(from September to February) and four tests for the summative assessment during the academic year.

They would have suggested training on how to assess learners. This should be a continuous process. They proposed a modification on test formats, and on the length of text administered especially for advanced learners.

5.5 Perception of EFL Teachers on Formative and Summative Evaluation

Six EFL teachers' perception on formative and summative assessment was reported. It reflects that they are all equipped with the main tools to assess learners in the context of the CBA programs. However, in class the majority (five teachers) has a wrong representation of the concept. (See figure 2).

"Formative and Summative assessments are terms used in education to determine whether learners are doing well or not in class. My view of assessment is strongly based on the way tests are administered and the conditions under which teachers submit learners to different tasks. What do EFL teachers assess? When do EFL teachers assess? How do EFL teachers assess? Those three questions are relevant while dealing with evaluation. The difficulties are related to time constraints." (Teacher A).

"My beliefs on formative and summative assessment are built around two main areas. The first one is in goal setting and the second is in the frequency EFL teachers should assess students especially on formative assessment. I mean quick check tests, and quizzes. Are EFL teachers obliged to have to have three different types of formative assessment per semester if I consider the size of a regular classroom? Is it compulsory to impose the number of tests to EFL teachers? The difficulties are due to organization problems." (Teacher B).

"My view of formative and summative assessment in Benin context is different from what the majority of EFL teachers think. When I consider the four skills in language teaching (Listening, speaking, reading, and writing), I really think that a language teacher may organize his/her learners and use the form of assessment that may fit learners' needs. For instance, I may test my learners orally to check if they will be able to express themselves. Furthermore, the classroom size is another obstacle for the teacher to really appreciate learners' level." (Teacher C).

"Assessment, whether formative or summative, should fit the content of curricula. Teachers should always evaluate learners based on what has been taught. I do believe that EFL teachers need hands on how to assess learners especially inexperienced ones. Another issue is in the big size of the class. In Benin context it is important to revise tests administration due to the number of students and to initiate teachers so that they take action of remediation. Short term remediation may be designed to get students ready for the summative assessment." (Teacher D).

“The application of formative and summative assessment in Benin EFL classes does not reflect my understanding of the two concepts. Formative assessment in my point of view should not be included in a grading decision. It should only be used to provide feedback to students in order to improve learners’ performance.” (Teacher E).

“Formative Assessment is essential for providing feedback on a student’s progress so that any error or difficulty can be identified and corrected. Formative Assessment is a continual process in which teachers and students work together every day, every minute to gather evidence of meaning, by keeping in mind three questions: Where am I going? Where am I now? What strategy or strategies can help me get to where I need to go. For me, the number of formative is limited; I think school specialists should increase the number of tests per semester.” (Teacher F).

The following figure introduces the perception of EFL teachers on formative and summative assessment

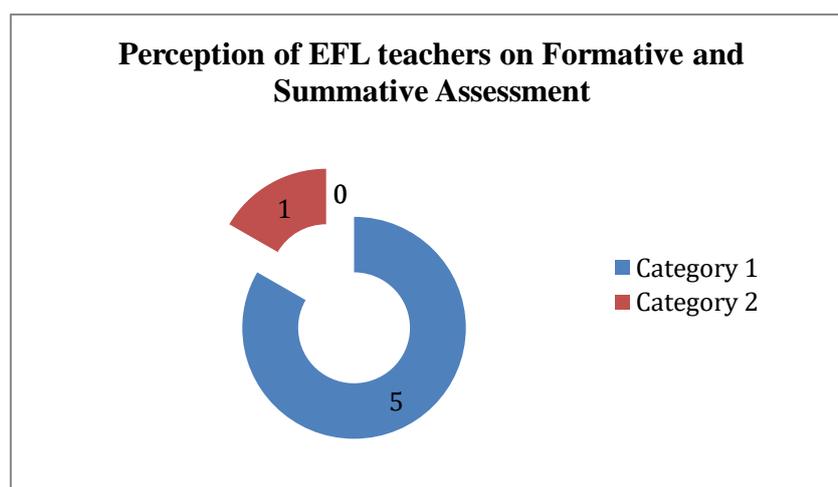


Figure 2: Perception of EFL Teachers on Formative and Summative Assessment

The perception of teachers on assessment is good but contradicts what the researchers have observed on the field. The pie chart shows that Five EFL teachers out of six are knowledgeable on the concept of evaluation. The evaluation practice of EFL teachers does not reflect what they think about the concept. There is a great discrepancy between the theory and the practice.

6. Suggestions and Discussion

Schools authorities should empower teachers to manage formative assessment in their classes. There is no need to impose the number of assessments on them. The teacher is the responsible in his/her classroom. Also due to the size of the class, test administration should be revised. The teacher may decide to evaluate learners orally, or in group with projects.

Training is another aspect of assessment. The observation in class indicates that EFL teachers need hands on how to evaluate learners. The achievement of teaching and learning event depends on teachers' training. Teachers have a greater role in assessing students with more credibility given to their professional judgment. The use of formative and summative assessment like other assessment strategies demands special skills from EFL teachers who must be convinced of what they are doing in order to be able to impact positively school results. In addition, EFL teachers need to be drilled and instructed on how to carry out both types of assessment in their classes. What is also important in assessment is in the content of instruction. Learners should be assessed on what they are taught. Summative assessment should reveal how well students have learned what we want them to learn while instruction ensures that they learn it. For this to occur, assessment learning objectives and instructional strategies need to be closely aligned so that they reinforce one another. This idea on assessment stays on line with curriculum alignment and it is reinforced by La Marca and Colleagues (2000) who emphasized that the assessment must allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills with respect to the expectations set up in the curriculum frameworks so that proper interpretations of their performance can be made. As they put it:

"Alignment is the degree to which assessments yield results that provide accurate information about student performance regarding academic content standards at the desired level of detail, to meet the purposes of the assessment system. The assessment must adequately cover the content standards, provide scores that cover the range of performance standards, allow all students an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency and be reported in a manner that clearly conveys student proficiency as it relates to the content standards." (p. 24).

Alignment is so important because when assessment is misaligned with learning objectives or instructional strategies, it can undermine both student motivation and learning.

The aim of Formative assessment is not only useful to find out the learners' problems in learning, but it is also essential for the teachers themselves to improve their learning styles. This definition of formative assessment stays in line with the idea of Good (2011) when he confirmed that formative assessment is used to gather information related to appropriate learning content, context, and learning strategies, and to fill the existing gaps between the students' current performances and the targeted learning goal. Based on the findings, and on the class observation, Teacher A and Teacher C appeared to have a good representation of the understanding on formative assessment. The findings of the interview display different perceptions about formative and summative assessment; the researchers suggested training on the concept of remediation after both assessments. Teachers will perform well if they reflect on their teaching practice and seek for improvement. In fact, the objective of remediation teaching is to give additional help to learners who for one reason or another, have fallen behind the rest of the class. Teacher

D has reinforced the same concept of remediation. In fact, remediation action is intended to correct something that is wrong or to improve a bad situation. His formulation strongly correlates with the perception of Chang, et al. (2014). For the authors:

"...remedial teaching is established to cover the needs of students who are unable to cope with the class in a normal classroom. They are typically performed at a lower than average level due to learning or learning related problems. Thus, the major objective of remedial teaching is to equip the low-proficient learners with necessary skills they could not by one way or another acquire in normal classes". (Chang, et al., 2014).

The same idea was developed by Soliday M. (2002). For him:

"Remediation can be perceived as a cure for little learning, no learning or wrong learning. It rather helps slow proficient learners gain the basic skills to pursue their higher studies". (Soliday M., 2002).

7. Conclusion

Effective assessment requires an understanding of the role of assessment in planning and delivery instruction. Assessment in the context of the CBA programs needs to be continuously improved. It calls on teachers to become agents of change, more reflective in their classrooms actively using the results of assessment to modify and improve the learning environment they create. Hanna and Dettmer (2004) suggested that EFL teachers strive to develop a range of evaluation strategies that match all aspects of their instruction plans. This paper has presented the CBA Curricula: Benin EFL teachers' beliefs on Formative and Summative Assessment. The perception of EFL teachers on the two types of assessment varies from an EFL teacher to the other one. Based on the interview they have a good perception of the two forms of assessment. But on the ground, the results of the findings especially for class observation have shown that EFL teachers have a wrong representation of formative assessment.

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Appendix

A. Questionnaire: We are undertaking a research on formative and summative Assessment in the context of CBA curricula. Please tick the square that best describes your beliefs and feelings.

1. How many summative tests do you often administrate to your students within a semester?

One

Two

2. Do you succeed in providing feedback on time for formative and summative evaluation?

Yes

No

3. Is there any remediation scheduled after the evaluation?

Yes

No

4. Do the contents of evaluation correspond to what is really taught?

Yes

No

5. Is your class size impact the way you test your students with the CBA curriculum?

Yes

No

6. Do you know other types of evaluation? If Yes, cite them

Yes

No

.....

7. For you what are the purposes in evaluating learners?

a. To diagnose my students' weaknesses so as to improve,

b. For grades,

c. To motivate my students,

d. To collect information for decision-making.

8. How often do you use formative assessment in your classes?

a. As regular as possible,

b. Once in a while,

c. Rarely.

9. How do you use the results of formative assessment?

a. To provide feedback o students,

b. To interpret them for my improvement,

c. For my self-evaluation,

10. What type of decision do you take in using formative and summative assessment?

- a. To change teaching strategies,
- b. To make suggestions for curriculum change,
- c. To regulate teaching/learning strategies,
- d. To prepare for further decision-teaching.

11. How far does your class size influence the way you assess your students?

- a. To a great extent,
- b. To a minimal extent,
- c. To an acceptable extent.

B. Interview Sheet for Educational Facilitators, Pedagogical Advisors and the School Board Administrator

- 1) What is that mean to you to assess in the context of CBA curriculum?
- 2) What types of difficulties do you face while preparing summative test for students?
- 3) Do you check if the content of the assessment fit what have been taught?
- 4) Do you think that four main summative assessments can judge a student performance in a year?
- 5) Do you think the period of test preparation is enough for teachers?
- 6) What would you have suggested for a good design of summative assessment?

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