

# The Use of Google Form as A Formative Assessment Tool in EFL Classes: An Exploratory Case Study

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**Abstract.** The application of ICT is widely known to facilitate effective teaching and learning even before the pandemic. Although the pandemic is over and the teaching activity is back to offline, some English teachers still utilize the ICT, especially Google Form (GF), as the assessment tool for reading and writing. The purpose of this study is to discover students' perception on the application of GF as a formative assessment tool after the pandemic. This exploratory study seeks for EFL learners' views on how the use of GF is beneficial for them. The data were gained from five EFL students from the interview which cover four aspects namely the benefits, the challenges, the preference and the reasons on the use of GF. The result showed that GF is beneficial for the students in terms of its easy accessibility, practicality of its features, and its relaxing appearance. Students also testified that internet connection is the most challenging issue and other technical issues related to teachers' skill in applying GF. Moreover, 4 out of 5 students preferred GF-based tests regarding its benefits. In addition, one student who preferred the paper-based test was aware of the possibility that students might become dishonest in using GF. Therefore, the use of GF in offline classrooms after the pandemic is positively encouraged but teachers must take some precautions such as supervising the students during the GF-based test.

**Keywords:** Google Form, Formative Assessment, EFL Students' Perception.

## 1 Introduction

ICT provides a big role in teaching learning activities especially during pandemic when online learning was extensively conducted. The use of ICT in the EFL classroom gives a useful impact in a practical way especially during online learning [6]. While currently it is declared that the pandemic has subsided, and schools have already allowed their students and teachers to attend face-to-face meetings, ICT is still regarded as beneficial in providing flexibility in many teaching and learning activities and developing effective learning environments with its substantial technical support [4].

Not only that, a variety of ICT platforms, such as GF and other mobile-based assessment platforms, have been proven by several studies to facilitate effortless learning assessment. [9] explored students' perception on the use of GF as a tool for summative assessment during online learning Covid-19, where it is discovered that students positively react to its attractiveness,

easiness, and efficiency. The main hindrance in accessing GF, however, includes a bad connection leading to GF not responding to any actions applied to it. [8] conducted a literature study focusing on GF for assessing HOTS in teaching Arabic as a foreign language, where it is described that GF is able to be used as a HOTS assessment tool as it provides various types of questions template such as multiple choice, long and short answer paragraph, even uploading and presenting videos and pictures. Moreover, GF automatically stores the responses in Google spreadsheets.

Based on the aforementioned studies, in which each of them focuses on different aspects of how ICT platforms are used as digital assessment tools in classroom environments, this study therefore aims to pursue an alternative path to observe whether ICT platforms, such as GF, still hold significance even after the pandemic has subsided. This study focuses on the perceptions of EFL high school students towards the use of GF in formative assessment of reading and writing skill following the end of COVID-19 pandemic.

Assessment is an activity of collecting and reviewing students' academic achievement through a variety of written and oral tests [7]. Afterwards, the results of assessment are used for evaluating and improving teaching and learning activities in the classroom [13]. In Indonesia, The Ministry of Education has assigned two types of standardized assessments during the teaching learning period; summative and formative assessments [12]. Summative assessment is conducted at the end of the teaching-learning period such as at the end of semester and at the end of school year, whereas formative assessment is conducted during the learning period such as daily tests before going into the next lesson chapter.

One of the common platforms for classroom assessment is mobile-based applications or online platforms, e.g., GF [10], [1], [3], [7], [11], [15]. Previous studies observe that GF is commonly used for assessment in many schools in big cities in Indonesia, such as Kalimantan Tengah [7], Surabaya [15], and Bandar Lampung [9]. GF is also profusely used in assessing university students' achievement [11]. In this context of study, GF was used for assessing weekly tests in teaching reading-writing skills of descriptive, narrative, and recount text.

GF quickly becomes a well-known platform to be utilized as an assessment platform because of its numerous features; one of them is a variety of ready-to-use templates for online quizzes, e.g., multiple choices as well as short and long paragraphs [1]. GF also enables the creator (teacher) and users (students) to upload files in PDF or JPG formats or attach external links whenever necessary [8]. Moreover, students' answers are automatically saved in an online spreadsheet and backed up in Google Drive, preventing the loss of students' scores in the process [8].

Using GF as an assessment medium can also be regarded as a sustainable act in reducing the use of paper for each assessment [3], [15]. On the other hand, teachers can save a lot of their time compiling and distributing the questions to their students as everything can be conducted online [7], [1]. Teachers and students also do not have to go through manual correction as GF instantly provides and displays individual scores upon clicking the "submit" button [10], [7].

However, it cannot be declared untrue that many teachers also experience setbacks when operating GF for their assessment media, despite its numerous advantages. [15] found that only 25% teachers of the total of 40 were observed to utilize GF as their chosen assessment medium, as the majority of teachers have yet to master digital platforms, especially for assessment. Moreover, GF will display inaccurate scoring if teachers fail to set the appropriate and correct answer keys, especially when they provide an "essay answer" option in the questions template [10]. Not to mention that accessing GF requires strong and stable Internet connection [9], [8].

Without stable connection, GF often lags and doesn't respond to any actions applied, which eventually leads to students not being able to save their answers. When it happens, students have to reload and do their assessment from the very beginning in a limited time.

Considering these two sides of the same coin, this study then intends to observe students' perception towards the use of GF as the chosen assessment medium to evaluate weekly tests in teaching reading-writing skills of descriptive, narrative, and recount text in English. Drawing conclusions from their experience in using GF, particularly in offline classes after the pandemic era, can be considered as an insightful feedback towards teaching and learning activities in the classroom. It should also be pointed out that while students may provide both positive and negative perceptions towards the use of GF, both are still significantly calculable to improve the learning experience overall.

## 2 Research Method

The design of this study was an exploratory case study addressed for analyzing and describing a case on a population but not generalizing the others [5]. Research participants were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique required the participants to be compatible based on the researcher provision [2]. The provision was for students who had used GF for formative assessment in reading-writing English class during the post pandemic Covid-19. Therefore, the first grade of 5 students were chosen from Public Senior High School 1 Batu, East Java, Indonesia. The school was chosen because it is one of the favorite schools in Batu and the students have achievements both in academic and non-academic fields.

In this design, the researchers collected qualitative data using semi-structured interview guidelines which employed open-ended questions that enabled the participants to answer in some statements. Research instruments were adapted [9] then validated by an expert in the pedagogy field. The interview questions consist of 5 questions and the results were analyzed by using open coding techniques. Open coding technique simplified the researcher to categorize the interview answers based on its patterns. Then it was easier to determine each interview answer based on the categorizations [2].

## 3 Findings

Based on the results of interviews from the five questions, researchers categorized four main points which are GF's Advantages, GF's Drawbacks, Students' Preferences, Students' Rationale Underlying Their Preferences, and their opinion whether using GF for practice is more profitable than using paper-based assessment. The elaborations are presented in the following paragraphs along with student statements.

**GF's Advantages.** The first question in the interview was about the interesting point of GF according to the students' perceptions. Generally, GF was considered as beneficial to the students. GF is accessible because it is easy to join which is only one click away using the shared link and it can be accessed using any type of smart device. Moreover, GF does not require any additional payment to be accessed which can save the learning cost. mentioned below by the students:

*“The features are easily accessible and do not require separate applications and any subscriptions. It's also easy to use, ma'am, just enter the link that has been provided.” (S1)*

*“What I like about GF is when it is used for practice and tests, the GF is more practical, easy to use and also no need to be complicated to join. Students also do not need to enter a referral code like on other platforms.” (S3)*

*“The second is practical, meaning you don't need to log in, because Google already connects to email.” (S5)*

Other students mentioned that GF is practical because it was simpler due to its features. Apparently, the feature of immediate score or feedback is beneficial because previously when students were practicing on a paper, they had to do the manual correction. Working assessment digitally is also profitable for students and teachers to save the learning cost and decrease the paper used. students stated that:

*“I myself like it when using GF is more practical Miss. As usual, some teachers are still applying paper for the test, which usually takes a bit longer to check the answers. So, it (GF) makes it easier for teachers and students.” (S2)*

*“I like it because it's simpler, all you have to do is press the answer choices and after you finish working on it, the score immediately appears, and you will know where you were wrong and where you were right.” (S4)*

*“... it (GF) is also more efficient because it saves paper and minimizes the loss/damage of our answer sheets.” (S1)*

Lastly, GF encourages students' comfort because of its appearance. GF allowed adjustable themes and display with providing colorful templates and customized text. And most importantly, GF displays a clearer image rather than paper-based assessment as mentioned by a student. Because the appearance is a beginning in creating impression and comfort, then students found it as one of the benefits of using GF.

*“Then the appearance is also attractive, so it doesn't make you bored when doing tests. GF can also display images and can be zoomed in, because in my opinion in some applications it can't be zoomed. The same as on paper, the image is usually not clear.” (S2)*

*“... because GF looks attractive, and there are many types of questions so they are not boring.” (S4)*

*“The reason is because in order to save paper as well, it is paperless, then there is no need for manual corrections, the images can be clearer, because usually when using paper, the drawings are dark or blurry.” (S5)*

**GF's Drawback.** The second question was about GF's drawback when it is used by students in a formative assessment. 4 out of 5 students mentioned that GF is often lagging which causes the page to freeze and unresponsive. Students who had problems with it experience the same situation where the GF is not responding causing their answers to have not backed up yet. Therefore, they have to re-log-in and refill the answers in the remaining time. In addition, there are also some cases where their answers failed to be submitted. mentioned by the students that:

*“While doing the exercises/tests on GF, I had problems. Sometimes when I wanted to fill in a name or answer a question, it was like freezing, so I pressed a button and couldn't answer the question. Apart from that, when I was online, I often failed to attach documents or photos even though the device memory was*

*not full and the network was stable, and that happened during tests, so it was very annoying. There was also a test where the draft of my answer was not saved all the time, even though the network was stable, I had to refresh it first.” (S5)*

*“Yes, sometimes if the connection is not stable, our drafts are not saved automatically, so when the web reloads, our answers might be lost.” (S1)*

Another drawback is caused by the teacher rather than the GF itself. Students experienced that teachers often incorrectly set the answers key. Consequently, the revealed score was mistaken. Although it was a minor fault, students felt confused and frustrated. As a student said that:

*“So far I don’t have any problem with the GF. But, maybe some teachers have given the wrong answer keys, so sometimes I get annoyed when something like that happens. Then if it is only a practice, not an exam, we rarely discuss the questions, which is a shame if there are the same questions in the next test, we still can’t answer them.” (S2)*

**Students’ Preference.** The third interview question was about students’ perception comparing GF and paper-based assessment. 4 out of 5 students prefer to choose GF rather than Paper-based assessment.

**Students’ Rationale Underlying Their Preference.** Most students prefer taking assessment on GF because it provides several benefits such as its features.

*“Of course, because of the features in GF which will make it easier for users to access GF. which is certainly also more efficient because it saves paper and minimizes the loss/damage of our answer sheets.” (S1)*

*“.... Can immediately see the value / score after collecting, .... and Can be done via various devices, can also be accessed by android/ios users.” (S2)*

*“Easier and no need to register/login again, looks attractive, there are many types of questions so they are not boring ...” (S4)*

*“The reason is because in order to save paper as well, it is paperless, then there is no need for manual corrections, the images can be clearer, because usually when using paper, the drawings are dark or blurry. more practical.” (S5)*

Regarding this interview question, students’ again mentioned GF’s benefits as their rationale in choosing the comparison between GF and paper-based assessment. Overall, students choose GF because its features could simplify their activities during the assessment. GF is easy to access by using the shared link and no bother to re-log-in to their Google account because it has linked. GF also enables the auto scoring that will show up immediately after the form was submitted. The auto scoring feature facilitated more efficient time. Students perceived the various types of questions in GF increased their motivation and reduced the tedious situation during assessment in the classroom. Aside from the various questions template that enhance the attractiveness, compared to paper-based questions, GF displays clearer images that are able to be zoomed in and out. While students previously claimed that paper-based questions often had blurry images.

Regardless, another student who had preferred paper-based assessment has a concerning reason.

*“Sometimes when the test was online-based there are students who are still cheating in working on the questions. Such as cheating on Google or something else. Even though it doesn't matter if you use an online test/offline test. The problem of being honest or not depends on the student itself” (S3)*

Accordingly, based on the above statement, this student had awareness that there might be a chance that students become dishonest during the assessment. As it is known GF does not protect access outside the page appearing the possibilities of corrupting during the assessment.

#### **4 Discussion**

This research was intended to explore students' perception towards GF usage as a formative assessment tool after the pandemic. The interview results cite the specific testimony of the satisfaction and drawback of GF. It was found that the use of GF was profoundly supported because it was more efficient, accessible, and easy. While the highlighted obstruction came from the unstable internet connection. Moreover, the interview revealed that 4 out of 5 students would rather practice on GF than paper-based assessment.

This research discovered several benefits of applying GF for assessment. The efficiency of GF comes from cost savings, also time and energy efficiency. Using GF reduces the learning cost from photocopying question and answer sheets. This is in line with [3], and [15]. In their study they mentioned that the use of GF is able to prevent the use of excess paper. Moreover, GF is free from any subscription. The use of GF is also energy and time efficient because students only have to join through the shared link and submit their answers directly through the submit button. After that, the auto scoring is revealed immediately, no bother to do manual correction. GF efficiency is also in line with [7] and [1] that mentioned in their research that the digital use of GF can save more time. Students' awareness increased because the immediate score revealed is also discovered by [14]. In their study, students who know their score immediately became aware of their achievement that is proven through their better performance. GF that directly shows the answer keys after the form is submitted lets the students evaluate themselves and enhance their motivation to become better.

The appearance of GF is considered as attractive by the students. The various types of questions also add more attractive points for GF. As mentioned by the students, the display of GF and various types of questions can reduce their boredom during the assessment. Similar finding was also discovered by [9] that during summative assessment students had more comfort because of the colorful display such as the picture in the questions. The theory that GF has some worthwhile features for conducting online quizzes is also confirmed by this finding [1].

Students mentioned that they consider GF better than paper-based assessment because of the deficiency of paper-based questions in presenting a good quality and colorful picture. Usually, paper-based questions were photocopied and only available a black and white picture or often blurry picture. This finding is in line with [8], that stated GF enables the creator to insert a picture and video in the questions. GF was also considered better by the student because it can prevent the loss or damage of the answer sheet. This also revealed [8] that one of the features of GF was automatically stored and backed up the students' answers into Google Drive spreadsheets.

Besides the benefits of GF, it has some obstruction when used for conducting assessment. The obstruction comes from the unstable internet connection that causes the GF lagging and not responding. Students claimed that the unstable internet connection often occurred and caused

their answers to not be backed up. When the form is refreshed then they have to refill the questions from the beginning in the remaining time. This finding is in line with the research result by [9] and [8] that GF is troubled because of unstable internet connection.

Even though GF has remarkable features that enable auto scoring and immediate feedback, students still claimed that they were not satisfied because of a fallacy score by GF. Actually, it was caused by the teacher that sometimes made a mistake in setting the answers key. [15] stated that some teachers had not mastered the utilization of GF therefore it also reflects the reason of finding by [10] that the fallacy of scoring is one of the limitations of GF that may be caused by the teacher error.

Lastly, a finding that had not been revealed often by the previous studies that GF opens the possibility for students to corrupt during the assessment. A student in the interview claimed that did not prefer GF because some of their peers underestimate the assessment. It refers to a student who preferred to choose paper-based assessment. Moreover, a student confessed that the drawback of using GF for assessment is that they are able to browse the answers on an online browser just by copy-pasting the question. GF itself was not intensively designed as an assessment tool. It is very possible for students to access another platform outside of GF such as online browsers and messenger apps.

## **5 Conclusion**

The dynamic of COVID-19 pandemic—which has currently subsided—has again shifted the education world, where schools in the major parts of the world have allowed teachers and students to meet face-to-face. One of the major effects of the pandemic is the awareness of various ICT tools to be utilized in online classrooms, and they are still in use to this day as many parties have begun to realize their importance in making effective and flexible learning environments. The purpose of this study is to discover students' perception on the application of GF as a formative assessment tool after the pandemic in offline classrooms, particularly in evaluating weekly tests in teaching reading-writing skills of descriptive, narrative, and recount text in English. To conclude, the results present that students completely promote the advantages of GF in regard to its ease, flexibility, efficiency, and practicality. On the other hand, students still worry about the obstruction and drawback of using GF such as the lags that are usually caused by unstable internet connection, and the high possibility of corruption that are likely to occur in the future.

In other words, it is recommended that the use of GF for formative assessment is thoroughly supervised since it is proven that the many advantages of GF outweigh its weaknesses. Before distributing the GF link to students, teachers can manage the classroom by first checking the Internet connection to facilitate smooth examination experience. Teachers can also book a language laboratory with computers set to only open the GF link, giving zero access for students to access other browsers to look for answers. With meticulous planning and detailed supervision, GF can surely be an alternative medium in evaluating students' learning improvement without compromising the examination experience.

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