Utilización de la evaluación formativa para mejorar los resultados de aprendizaje de estudiantes en los ambientes híbridos de la enseñanza superior

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ES **Resumen.** El objetivo de este trabajo es poner énfasis en la importancia de aplicar los principios de la evaluación formativa y proporcionar retroalimentación periódica a los estudiantes de nivel terciario. Se presentan también resultados obtenidos a partir del estudio de caso realizado con un grupo de estudiantes de segundo año de la carrera universitaria de Filología Inglesa, con el objetivo de investigar la correlación entre la evaluación formativa y los resultados de aprendizaje. Durante un curso de Semántica Inglesa con duración de tres meses, un grupo de estudiantes realizó tareas de evaluación continua regularmente y se les proporcionó retroalimentación cada vez que las realizaron. Otro grupo de estudiantes no tuvo la experiencia de realizar dichas tareas y solo se presentaron a las pruebas parciales obligatorias, requisitos previos para presentarse al examen final. Los resultados que se presentan han sido obtenidos de 10 pruebas de evaluación continua que fueron realizadas cada semana como parte de la lección y del proceso de aprendizaje, y 2 pruebas parciales realizadas por todos los encuestados. Para la presentación de los resultados se utilizó el procedimiento de estadística descriptiva, mediante la cual se calcularon los valores promedio, mínimo y máximo, para posteriormente compararlos y analizarlos. La principal conclusión que se extrae de este estudio muestra mejores resultados de aprendizaje y mejores puntuaciones obtenidos por aquellos estudiantes que participaron activamente en el proceso de evaluación continua.
Palabras clave: Evaluación formativa; retroalimentación; educación superior; aprendizaje híbrido; resultados de aprendizaje.

EN Utilising Formative Assessment to Improve Students' Learning Outcomes in Hybrid Higher Education Environments

EN **Abstract.** This paper draws attention to the importance of applying formative assessment principles and providing regular feedback to students at the tertiary level. It reports on the results obtained from a case study conducted with a group of second-year students majoring in English that aimed to investigate the correlation between formative assessment and learning outcomes. During a three-month English Semantics course, one group of students did continuous assessment tasks regularly and were provided with feedback each time. Another group did not do these tasks and they took only two compulsory midterm tests that were prerequisites for taking the final exam. The results were obtained from 10 continuous assessment tests which were taken by one group of students every week as part of the lesson and the learning process, and 2 midterm tests taken by all the respondents. Descriptive statistics was used to present the results, whereby the average, minimal and maximal values were calculated, and subsequently compared and analysed. The main conclusion drawn from the study shows better learning outcomes and better scores obtained by those students who were actively involved in the continuous assessment process.
Keywords: Formative assessment; feedback; higher education; hybrid learning; learning outcomes.

^{FR}Utilisation de l'évaluation formative pour améliorer les résultats d'apprentissage des étudiants dans les contextes hybrides de l'enseignement supérieur

^{FR} **Résumé.** L'objectif de cet article est de mettre en exergue l'importance d'appliquer les principes de l'évaluation formative et de fournir un retour d'information régulier aux étudiants du niveau supérieur. On rend compte également des résultats obtenus à partir d'une étude de cas menée auprès d'un groupe d'étudiants de deuxième année de Licence d'anglais visant à étudier la corrélation entre l'évaluation formative et les résultats d'apprentissage. Dans un cours de sémantique anglaise qui a duré trois mois, un groupe d'étudiants a effectué régulièrement des tâches d'évaluation continue pour lesquelles il a reçu des retours. Un autre groupe n'a pas eu l'expérience de ces tâches et a seulement passé les examens de contrôle continu obligatoires, condition préalable pour passer l'examen final. Les résultats ont été obtenus à partir de 10 tests d'évaluation continue réalisés par un groupe d'étudiants chaque semaine dans le cadre de la leçon et du processus d'apprentissage, et de deux examens partiels passés par tous les enquêtés. Des statistiques descriptives ont été utilisées pour présenter les résultats, où les valeurs moyennes minimales et maximales ont été calculées, puis comparées et analysées. La principale conclusion tirée de l'étude montre des résultats d'apprentissage et des scores supérieurs chez les étudiants qui ont participé activement au processus d'évaluation continue.

Mots-clés: Évaluation formative ; retours d'informations ; l'enseignement supérieur ; apprentissage hybride ; résultats d'apprentissage.

Sumario: 1. Introduction. 2. Theoretical framework. 3. Research Context and Methodology. 4. Research Results Analysis and Discussion. 5. Conclusion. 6. Bibliography.

Declaración de contribución de autoría

Valentina Gavranović: conceptualization, writing (first draft), writing (review and editing), research
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1. Introduction

The importance of applying a learner-centered approach in foreign language teaching has been emphasised for decades, and although the concept of learner-oriented assessment has been an integral part of it, acknowledged and incorporated in various laws and strategies at all levels of education, it still needs to be developed and fully comprehended across higher education. Finding a balance between summative assessment and learning could be achieved through formative assessment and providing feedback on learners' progress, which contributes to creating a qualitative and purposeful framework for teaching and learning. Studies investigating the effectiveness of applying formative assessment and providing feedback have been carried out and the evidence can be found in the studies reporting on practices in elementary and secondary school; however, there is not much research in higher education (Morris et al., 2021).

The crisis caused by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic not only imposed abrupt and unprecedented changes on education systems and institutions across the world, but also cast light on the existing teaching and learning practices and assessment processes that required re-examinations and adjustments. In these newly created educational frameworks, the organisation of teaching and learning processes in either exclusively online or combined/hybrid models has proved to be rather challenging not only for teachers, but also for students. Engaging students, and, consequently, assessing their progress and providing them with feedback became even more relevant in contexts wherein the teacher, due to the lack of physical presence of all students, does not have a complete insight into all that is happening in class.

A significant body of research supporting the effectiveness of incorporating formative assessment in teaching and learning practices on the one hand, and on, the other, the insufficient evidence of the balance between theory and practice in higher education has motivated the researchers of this study to investigate whether, and to what extent, incorporating formative assessment tasks as a part of every lesson contributes to students' learning outcomes. This paper reports on the results obtained from a case study conducted with a group of students who attended a one-term English Semantics course at the English Studies Programme at a private university in the Republic of Serbia. The students were involved in various task types that examined their progress continuously every week, and the results of those who performed these tasks and those who just took the exams were compared at the end of the midterms. The goal of this study is to gain a better insight into the effects of continuous assessment on students' progress and learning outcomes. It also aims at promoting the application of formative assessment at the higher education level supported by

evidence-based practices. This paper focuses on the use of formative assessment practices and tools in hybrid teaching and learning models with the purpose of testing whether, and to what extent, they can enhance students' linguistic competence. It also draws attention to re-examining and adjusting teaching practices according to the results obtained from formative assessment and how they can be used as diagnostic tools for lesson preparation and organisation.

2. Theoretical framework

The improvement of the learning process is at the centre of the agenda of relevant educational institutions that comprise a whole range of relevant skills required from learners in the 21st century. In that context, learning and a learner-centered approach are prioritised in UNESCO's global agenda for education and development by 2030 (UNESCO, 2016), supporting a great shift in educational strategies that have redirected attention from teaching to learning. The Covid-19 crisis has imposed a significant challenge for all the protagonists at all levels of education resulting in the need to change and modify the organisation of in-person courses to online or combined hybrid teaching, learning, and assessment models (Rapanta et al., 2020). Nevertheless, even if the pandemic interrupted some of the improvements already made in education, the crisis encouraged educational institutions to re-examine existing practices and strategies.

Online teaching and learning environments demand a diverse set of skills and competences, implying that an instructor should display technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). TPACK is related to creating engaging learning activities and providing distinctive learning experiences in hybrid environments, with the utilization of technological tools (Rapanta et al., 2020). In the hybrid learning environment, these modified aspects demand a formative and socio-formative evaluation that combines synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning processes (Reyes Carrasco, 2020). In that context, assessment, as an essential element of the learning process, aims to ensure adequate and relevant learning for all learners (Fernández, 2017, p. 4). Fernández (2017) emphasises the importance of assessment as an essential element of the learning process that can greatly contribute to creating a qualitative and purposeful teaching and learning framework.

Two very important characteristics of assessment have been recognised: on the one hand, its purpose is to verify what the learner has achieved (summative assessment), and on the other, it serves as a support for learning and teaching (formative assessment). Nonetheless, even though these two assessment types are often contrasted, they are not separate but rather complement each other. Some authors propose innovation and alternatives to actual assessment activities, such as assessment of learning (Birembaum et al., 2006) or aligned assessment tasks with intended learning outcomes (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Assessment activities whose priority is to promote learning can be named formative assessment, continuous assessment, or learner-oriented assessment, and are referred to as assessment for learning (Clarke, 2005; Fernández, 2017; Reynolds et al., 2006). One of the main characteristics of formative assessment is to promote learning and, unlike summative assessment, it takes place regularly, in every lesson, providing a learner with the opportunity to identify those aspects of learning that need more attention, and, subsequently, to develop self-assessment skills, improve and progress.

Various benefits of implementing formative assessment strategies in everyday teaching and learning practices have been described and presented in research. In the first place, integrating formative assessment practices helps learners identify their learning goals and develop learning strategies (Gikandi et al., 2011), supports the development of self-assessment skills (Andersson & Palm, 2017), and enhances students' learning autonomy (Leenknecht, 2021). Furthermore, task repetition can provide learners with opportunities to improve and amend the mistakes they have made with similar linguistic content (Ahmadian, 2012). Additionally, studies conducted with teachers show the positive impact of the application of formative assessment practices on the quality of teaching - the feedback teachers gain from continuous assessment tasks can be used as a guideline on how to improve the instruction and as a diagnostic tool that will direct further teaching (Boston, 2019; Andersson & Palm, 2017).

As regards foreign language teaching and learning, continuous and formative assessment has been emphasised as an essential component of the learning process, and, according to the CEFR, it can be performed by teachers or learners themselves as a self-assessment or peer-assessment process (Consejo de Europa, 2002). Language assessment has been valued as a potential tool to support language learning and encourage students to continue learning (Shohamy, 2001), as well as a regular assessment activity that helps instructors gather information to facilitate teaching decisions and improve learning. Applying various formative assessment practices may offer comprehensible and immediate feedback, which is an essential element of the teaching and learning process that should be performed often and continuously (Consejo de Europa, 2002).

In recent decades, higher education has been evolving from traditional evaluation towards the incorporation of new alternative evaluation systems (Salvador et al., 2007), such as providing regular feedback on learners' progress. Technological advancements and the introduction of an array of digital tools in education have contributed to educational innovation in higher education (Morris et al., 2021; Minton & Bligh, 2021; Rapanta et al., 2020; Salvador et al., 2007). Additionally, continuous assessment systems provide teachers with the mechanism of how to follow the learning process and obtain evidence of the achieved results and the level at which students have developed their skills (Gardner, 2006; Salvador et al., 2007). Regarding formative assessment tools, particularly in the context of a hybrid learning environment, there is a variety of options available online, or in the electronic format. Many of them can be accessed in both synchronous and asyn-

chronous models of interaction; they can be in digital formats, accessible online, or have the characteristics of interactive and game-based activities. The use of interactive technological tools in the classroom can be an addition or an alternative to traditional testing practices. Teachers may engage students and assess their progress, providing feedback to all students, even to those who are not physically present in the class.

In the context of the formative assessment of young and pre-university learners, research shows the beneficial impact of the utilization of interactive and game-based applications (Díaz, 2017; Toma et al., 2021). As regards the university context, even if there are fewer studies, the findings show positive pedagogical experiences of those who used educational interactive online platforms and game-based tools to enhance the effective assessment for learning (Minton & Bligh, 2021; Sánchez Pavón, et al., 2017). Educational tools that were mainly used in these studies included interactive platforms and quiz applications. Online quizzing and testing tools are recognised as beneficial to support students' collaborative and critical thinking skills (Cadieux Bolden et al., 2017) and to engage students and enhance active learning (Plump & LaRosa, 2017).

The use of the game-based learning platform *Kahoot* prevails in many of these studies (Díaz, 2017; Minton & Bligh, 2021; Plump & LaRosa, 2017; Sánchez Pavón et al., 2017; Toma et al., 2021), and some other platforms, such as *Socrative* and *Quizizz,* are also described as effective (Anamalai & Yatim, 2019; Gavranović & Veljković Michos, 2022). Some studies show that the utilization of such formative assessment activities can also improve the involvement of learners in peer assessment and self-assessment activities (Morris et al., 2021; Yorke, 2003). They are beneficial tools for all learners, particularly low achievers, who show better learning results upon experiencing formative assessment activities (Anamalai & Yatim, 2019).

Assessment exercises and tests created with game-based tools and quiz applications, based on adaptive question design and incorporated multimedia elements, are oriented to engage students in classroom activities and improve learning rather than grade their knowledge. Such assessment practices can be also used as regular formative testing instruments that can offer instant feedback supported by the teacher's subsequent clarifications and explanations.

3. Research context and methodology

The research focuses on formative assessment, its characteristics, implications, and relevance in organising teaching and learner-oriented practices at the tertiary level. This paper reports on the results obtained from a case study conducted with a group of 49 second-year students majoring in English, who attended a one-semester English Semantics course, all of whom regularly took compulsory midterm tests, and a part of them additionally did continuous assessment tasks in every class. This study aims to investigate the correlation between the use of continuous assessment tasks and tools and the learners' outcomes on the one hand, and, on the other, the effect continuous assessment has on teaching practices. One of the main tasks of the study was to explore whether, and to what extent, the learning outcomes obtained from the midterm tests - which are obligatory parts of the formal exam system - depended on how regularly the students participated in various tasks and tests conducted during lectures and practice classes.

The total number of students who participated in the study amounts to 49 - 14 (28.6%) male and 35 (71.4%) female students, and there were also 10 students (20.4%) who had the status of working students, meaning they could not regularly attend the classes due to their working obligations. Out of a total of 49 students who took both the first and the second midterms, a total of 34.7% (17 students) regularly participated in various formative assessment tasks conducted during lectures and practice classes.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and changes imposed on educational systems, all classes at Singidunum University, in Belgrade, the Republic of Serbia, were organised in a hybrid model - students could attend the classes and actively participate in all activities either in a face-to-face or online environment (conducted via Microsoft Teams platform). Throughout the English Semantics course, which was organised during the spring term of the academic year 2021/2022, the students were motivated to actively participate in classes by being involved in a variety of interactive activities. With the aim to assess the learning progress continuously, particularly of those students who attended the classes online, help learners improve their learning, and adapt teaching instructions, tasks and materials, the researchers incorporated formative assessment as an integral part of every lesson. Namely, the students were given tasks comprising 10-12 questions related to the content covered during every class. These questions were of various types (multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, drag-and-drop) and levels of difficulty, relating to both theoretical concepts and the application of theory to concrete examples. On the one hand, these questions reflected the expected outcomes for the given course topic, and, on the other, they illustrated the question types the students could expect in midterm tests, so it helped them focus not only on the subject content, but also on the form of questions. The researchers used the Quizizz application as an online tool to deliver the questions to all students who attended the classes either in person or online, and as a means of collecting information on students' learning results. The immediate feedback the researchers got enabled them to provide the analysis of the results upon completing the questions, and the students could get instant feedback on their own results. The formative assessment practice also included the analysis of the answers, discussion, additional clarifications, and instructions that followed the continuous assessment tasks. After five weeks, students did the first midterm test for which they obtained points, and it was the obligatory part of the formal exam system. The same principle of using continuous assessment tasks during both lecture and practice classes was applied for another five weeks followed by the second midterm obligatory test.

The research sample comprises results data obtained from 10 continuous assessment tasks which were not obligatory and were an integral part of every lesson, and 2 midterm tests taken by all the respondents.

The results provided for each test are formatted as a percentage of correct answers. Descriptive statistics was used for data analysis and the calculations regarding frequency and average values obtained from both continuous assessment tasks and midterm test results. Subsequently, the minimal and maximal values, as well as standard deviations were calculated, and if students did not participate in continuous assessment tasks, the value attributed to these data is 0 (zero). The second phase of the analysis includes the mixed between-within analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the aim to test differences between "midterm" (i.e., midterm 1 and 2; within-subjects factor), and "group" (i.e., participated/did not participate in continuous assessment tasks; between-subjects factor), as well as their interaction (midterm x group). For all ANOVAs, post-hoc LSD test was performed. Effects size was presented via eta squared (η^2), where the values of 01, .06, and above .14 were considered small, medium, and large, respectively (Cohen, 1988). The alpha level was set at $p < 0.05$. All statistical tests were performed using Microsoft SPSS 20 (IBM, Armonk, NY, USA).

4. Research results analysis and discussion

Table 1 shows the results obtained from 10 continuous assessment tasks the students were involved in during classes throughout 10 weeks, and the first and the second midterm tests done by all students, which were organised after the fifth and the tenth week, respectively, as a part of the formal examination prerequisites. It also includes the minimum, maximum and mean values, and the last two columns representing standard error (SE) and standard deviation (SD) values.

Table 1. Continuous Assessment Tasks and Midterm Tests Results

|	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SE	SD
Task 1	17	0	90	55.29	7.282	30.024
Task 2	17	0	90	52.94	8.522	35.136
Task 3	17	0	100	35.76	6.806	28.061
Task 4	17	0	88	42.06	8.534	35.188
Task 5	17	0	88	44.47	8.878	36.605
Total points 1	17	0	427	230.53	32.042	132.114
First Midterm 1.1 – did continuous assessment tasks	17	37	87	64.76	3.784	15.603
First Midterm 1.2 – did not do continuous assessment tasks	32	0	90	57.88	3.025	17.114
Task 6	17	0	88	55.41	7.058	29.099
Task 7	17	0	88	47.82	7.745	31.934
Task 8	17	0	100	58.18	8.034	33.123
Task 9	17	0	94	54.59	5.345	22.040
Task 10	17	0	95	58.24	8.660	35.705
Total points 2	17	76	406	274.24	24.588	101.378
Sec. Midterm 1.1 – did continuous assessment tasks	17	57	97	83.18	3.341	13.776
Sec. Midterm 1.2 – did not do continuous assessment tasks	32	40	90	64.06	2.575	14.569

Source: Elaborated by the authors

The results obtained from the first five continuous assessment tasks show that the average value of all task results amounts to 46.106. After the first five weeks of being exposed to new subject content, differentiated tasks, and activities including both theoretical concepts and application of theory in practical examples, the students took the first midterm test which is the obligatory part for all students as being the exam prerequisite. The results obtained from the first midterm test point out two findings: on the one hand, there is progress among those students who participated in classes and were involved in various continuous assessment tasks that comprised the aimed subject content - the average score attained in these tasks rose from 46.106 to 64.76 as obtained in the first midterm test. The average score obtained in the first midterm test by the group that did not do these continuous assessment tasks is 57.88, and even though not such a significant difference of 6.890 points between the two groups, a better score was attained in the first midterm test by the group of students who regularly and actively participated in formative assessment practices throughout the first five weeks of the semester than those who did not and just took the first midterm test.

After the first midterm test, another five weeks of lectures and practical classes followed, and the results obtained from five more formative assessment tasks show that the average value calculated for the results obtained from tasks 6-10 amounts to 54.848. These continuous assessment tasks also focused on various targeted concepts that were studied in English Semantic classes whose aim was to involve the students in the learning process during classes on the one hand, and, on the other, to provide both the students and the teacher with the feedback on their progress. After five weeks of lectures and practical classes, all the students took another obligatory midterm test. The average score obtained in the second midterm test by those

students who participated in formative assessment tasks amounts to 83.18, while the score calculated for the group that took only the second midterm test amounts to 64.06.

Additionally, the interrelation of results obtained from both midterm tests and the students' participation in continuous assessment tasks is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Midterm Tests Results vs. Participation in Continuous Assessment Tasks
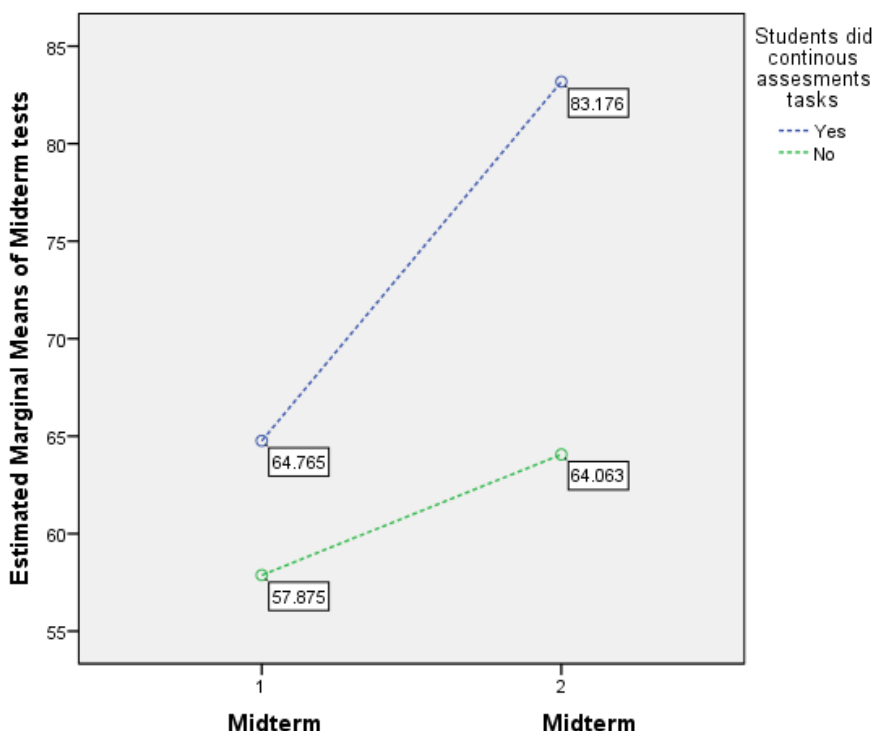
Source: Elaborated by the authors

Figure 1 shows exponential growth in second midterm test results values in both groups of students, with a more important difference in growth in the group of those students who regularly participated in formative assessment tasks.

Furthermore, the analysis including significant main effects of midterms [$F_{(1,47)}$ = 32.636, η2 = 0.41, p < 0.01], groups (students who participated/did not participate in formative assessment tasks) [$F_{(1,47)}$ = 9.937, η2 = 0.175, p < 0.01] and midterm x group interaction [$F_{(1,47)}$= 8.059, η2 = 0.146, p < 0.01] was done. The subsequent *post hoc* analysis shows that there are no significant differences between these two groups (comprising students who participated/did not participate in formative assessment tasks) and the results obtained in the first midterm test (p = 0.174). However, even though there were slight differences in the average values obtained in both groups in the first midterm test (those students who participated in continuous assessment tasks scored on average 6.890 more points), the second midterm *post hoc* analysis shows a significant difference between the two groups (p < 0.01), and on average 19.114 points better results scored by the group who regularly did additional practice tasks throughout ten weeks of the semester. Statistically, both groups had better results in the second midterm test, whereby the group that did not participate in formative assessment tasks scored at the level of p = 0.02, and the group that participated in formative assessment tasks scored at the level of p<0.01.

The results obtained from this study show that students' active participation in classes on the one hand and the teacher's monitoring of students' progress, on the other, contribute to the learning outcomes. The outcomes were achieved to a higher degree by those students who actively participated in classes and were involved in various tasks that encouraged them to take over the responsibility for their own process of learning. The importance of receiving regular feedback proved to be rather efficient because the results show that those students who received feedback on their learning outcomes and progress every week scored higher in both midterms than those who were not involved in such activities. These results are in compliance with the findings presented in similar studies investigating the effectiveness of incorporating formative assessment practices in teaching and learning (Andersson & Palm, 2017; Gikandi et al., 2011; Leenknecht, 2021). Furthermore, the second midterm test results point to the relevance of long-term continuous assessment practices. Namely, even though the average score attained in tasks 6-10 is not that significantly higher than those obtained from tasks 1-5, the students who did these tasks regularly scored better in the second midterm, and these findings show that formative assessment is a process, it takes time and adjustments according to the results obtained. Additionally, the comparison of the average score of continuous assessment tasks and the first and second midterm test results obtained from the group of students who were regularly involved in these continuous assessment practices support the claim that task repetition can have a positive effect on the learning outcomes, as stated in Ahmadian (2012). Apart from attaining a higher grade, the active involve-

ment throughout the course makes learning a continuous process supported by continuous assessment that can be used as a tool for deeper learning.

Finally, an important implication arising from this study relates to the use of formative assessment tools and tasks, as well as the feedback obtained from the analysis of these tasks with the students in classes, to improve the quality of teaching practices and assessment, which have been particularly challenged in the online educational framework. The feedback the researchers obtained from continuous assessment tasks helped the researchers evaluate teaching practices - how to focus more on some aspects, what to work on again, what needed to be revised, or approached and explained differently, and subsequently modify and adjust instructions. Additionally, the analysis of the results and the feedback led to the improved question design tasks - some questions needed to be reformulated because some tasks were ambiguous, and they needed improvement in terms of the quality of test content and instructions.

5. Conclusion

Although the importance of formative assessment has been emphasised for decades and its relevance in higher education was acknowledged long ago (Yorke, 2003), the changes imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, newly created educational frameworks, the possibilities, and obstacles of teaching and learning in a hybrid model have affected various aspects of teaching and assessment practices. This study drew attention to the importance of incorporating formative assessment practices at the tertiary level and was aimed at gaining a better insight into the effects of continuous assessment on students' progress and their learning outcomes, on the one hand, and, on the other, on the quality of teaching and assessment practices.

The case study was conducted with a group of 49 students who either actively participated in all activities organised within the course - formative assessment tasks and two obligatory midterm tests, or just took the obligatory midterm tests after the fifth and the tenth week of the semester, without being involved in these tasks conducted in classes. Several conclusions can be drawn from the results obtained from both groups of students, all of which contribute to the relevance and value of incorporating formative assessment at the tertiary level.

First of all, the study statistics show better learning outcomes for those students who were actively involved in formative assessment tasks, and, consequently, regular participation in classes contributed to a better final grade. Furthermore, the analysis of the tasks the students were involved in during classes encouraged the students to focus on those aspects they did not do well, which needed more attention, clarification, and revision. The feedback the students were provided with after each continuous assessment task served as a tool for strengthening their self-evaluation skills, self-directed learning, and the guidelines for improvement. It also showed an important aspect of providing immediate feedback - it allows for improvement, unlike giving feedback at the end of the course when there is not much space or motivation for students to improve. The application of formative assessment tools and tasks also contributed to the improvement of test tasks and instructions as these were adjusted and modified according to the analysis and feedback attained during the classes. Finally, the use of formative assessment tasks also proved to be a good self-evaluation for language instructors because they provided them with feedback on the students' learning outcomes which subsequently served as feedback on their own teaching practices - what was well explained and delivered to the students, and what needed more attention and explanation, a different approach, or a teaching technique.

The main conclusion drawn from the study shows that students' active participation in classes and the teacher's monitoring of students' progress and providing them with feedback contribute to better learning outcomes and better results scores for those students who were actively involved in continuous assessment tasks. Namely, the progress and better scores were more noticeable in the results obtained from the group who did continuous assessment tasks regularly in the second midterm test, which points to the relevance of long-term continuous assessment practices. Both groups had better learning outcomes in the second test, which points to the importance of the evaluation of teaching practices and assessment task types and their subsequent modifications and adjustments to the learners' progress.

Relevant implications arising from these findings point to the importance of incorporating formative assessment principles, tools, and tasks at the tertiary level because such practices can improve the quality of teaching, instructions, and assessment, on the one hand, and enhance students' learning outcomes, on the other. However, even though the researchers used formative assessment practices to self-assess their teaching practices and improve instructions accordingly, this study does not show clear evidence that proves the objective indicator of the correlation between continuous assessment practices and improved instructor's teaching competences. Finally, incorporating formative assessment practices in teaching and learning can lead to learning that is deeper, long-lasting, and more meaningful.

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