

English Teachers' Strategies in Creating Formative Test Questions in a Public High School

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 9 August 2023 Reviewed: 12 August 2023 – 20 October 2023 Accepted: 28 November 2023 Published: 31 December 2023	<p>Purpose</p> <p>This research is about the strategies are used and challenges faced by English teachers in creating formative test questions. In this research, there are two research questions were proposed, namely: 1) What are the strategies used by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar in creating formative test questions? 2) What are the challenges encountered by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar in creating formative test questions?</p> <p>Methodology</p> <p>The method used in this research was the qualitative descriptive method. This study involved two English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar.</p> <p>Results/Findings</p> <p>The results of this study indicate there are some types of strategies are used by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar in creating formative test questions, namely: a) The English teacher contacting the other English teachers; b) Discussing with the other English teachers; c) Analyzing the results of the discussion; d) Drawing conclusions; e) Reading or understanding the basic competence of the material; f) Reading a lot of references; g) Creating the questions based on the basic competence; h) Conducting content validity; i) Using students' knowledge; and j) Using level of difficulty. Meanwhile, for the challenges are encountered by the teachers in creating formative test questions, there are some types of challenges, namely: a) The difficulty in selecting of words; b) The difficulty to know the level of students' knowledge and measuring students' ability; and c) The lack of facilities.</p> <p>Implications</p> <p>This research offers some implications for the other teachers because this research can help many people, in this case teacher in creating formative test questions. Through this research, other teachers can know what the strategies used and the challenges encountered by English teacher in creating formative test questions.</p>

Keywords: Strategies; Challenges; English teachers; Creating formative test question

1. Introduction

School as an Educational Institution is certainly very important in the world of Education, especially in guiding children in studying. School is also known as the second place after the home when it comes to learning. In the family, parents are teachers at home. In the school, it is the teacher who is the guide.

The role of the teacher as an evaluator is intended so that the teacher knows whether the goals have been achieved or not. By conducting tests on students, teachers will know the success of achieving goals, the mastery of learners the learning materials that have been given and the effectiveness of teaching methods. According to

Heaton (1987) states that by giving tests, teachers can find out the level of mastery of student competencies, help in solving problems, find what makes it difficult to learn, and as a diagnostic tool or motivate them in progressing their learning achievement.

In conducting evaluations, the teacher can give formative tests for their students. The formative test is an important thing to give for students because it can indicate their knowledge or their ability about the lesson that has been learnt. From the results of the formative test, the teacher can know the knowledge or the ability of their students. Although the scores of formative tests are not the only factor for students to know their knowledge, but it is still an important indicator to know the background knowledge of their students. There are many ways to evaluate students, but the formative test is the best way which can be used to evaluate students.

According to Hughes (2003) state that formative test is use to check the progress of their student. It explained that formative test is used to measure the student mastery what have they learned previously. The formative test is a test that is conducted after the material of each chapter has been learned by the students. But, in doing this the formative test there are several problems when creating the questions of formative test, both in terms of the way the teacher creates questions which sometimes deviate from the material that has been learned by the students, the instruction of the questions sometimes not clearly, the lack of communication between the teacher and students when they want to carry out the formative test which the teacher usually tells the students suddenly, and also there is no preparation was made by the teacher and directly gave the formative test. Some of these problems sometimes make students panic and have pressure when carrying out formative tests. From here, a strategy or preparation is needed before carrying out the formative test, especially in creating the formative test questions because this is one of the important things to pay attention because some mistakes often occur in it.

2. Literature review

2.1. The concept of English teacher

Based on curriculum, teacher is an evaluator and facilitator. In addition, teachers must be able to prepare lesson plans in accordance with the steps that have been set. According to Djamarah and Zain (2015) teacher is someone who is experienced in their profession. English teachers are the teacher that teaches the English language. Teachers are professional educators with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing and evaluating students in early childhood education through formal education, basic education, and secondary education.

2.2. The concept of language testing and evaluation

Language testing is the practice and study of evaluating the proficiency of an individual in a particular language. According to Mc Namara (1998) state that language testing is a media to measure an ability student in a mastering language. Language testing also define that is the test to know how so far students are able to understand the language learner. According to Brown (2001) test would be multiple-choice tests, essay or interview. This evaluation to measure whether student can use the language they have learned too fluently well. This is also to measure whether students can receive the materials or the lessons by the teacher that has been learnt. Therefore, the importance of the language testing and evaluation is that to helps the teachers to know the ability their students or the mastering language of their students according to the results of the test that has been given by the teacher.

In the language testing and evaluation there are four types of testing in schools now, namely formative test, summative test, diagnostic test, and benchmark test. In this research focuses on formative test.

2.2.1. Formative test

According to Sadler (1989) formative test is concerned how judgments about the quality of student responses. Formative test is carried out during the teaching process. Simply, formative test is carried out when a topic or subject ends. In teaching, the teacher should do evaluation to measure the knowledge of students after learn the materials that has been given to them.

According to Brown (2008) state that test is a method or a way to measure ability and knowledge. Therefore, the question must function feasible, both as a measuring tool and as a learning tool. In this case, as an English Teacher need strategies in creating formative test to evaluate their students because based on the strategies that used in creating formative test of course it has impact to students. In the creating formative test questions, of course the teacher needs strategies and sometimes the teacher also has challenges encountered by the teacher. The strategy and the challenges will be explained as follow as:

2.2.1.1. Strategy

Strategy is a design or plan to carry out something in order to achieve certain expected goals and the strategy sometimes consist of some steps.

2.2.1.2. Challenges

Challenges are things or objects that can encourage someone to increase their level of ability in overcoming or solving problems. Challenges can be found in every way, especially in creating questions. Usually, teachers encountered challenges in terms of creating questions, both in terms of internal and external. There are many things that can influence the teacher in creating questions.

3. Methods

3.1. Research design

Research design of this research is qualitative descriptive because the researcher wants to know the strategies and the challenges by the English teachers in creating formative test questions. According to Bogdan and Taylor (2010) qualitative research is a method used to produce the descriptive data. Descriptive data is the data generated through oral or speech. The researcher will use interview technique to collect the data and the participants of this research only needed two English teachers who teach in the science and social department in senior high school.

3.2. Source of data

This research the researcher uses qualitative method. Therefore, the data also use qualitative data. Qualitative data cannot be accurately measured and counted. Therefore, it is generally expressed in words. The data source takes from two types of data, which are primary data and secondary data. For primary data, there are four basic types of primary data which are measurement, observation, interview/interrogation, and participation. The primary data in this research is the interview results of the English Teachers from the English teachers in SMA Negeri 1 Takalar.

3.3. Research participants

The participants of this research are English Teachers which are the teachers of SMA Negeri 1 Takalar. This research is conducted to the teachers who teach the last grade in SMA Negeri 1 Takalar.

3.4. Technique of data collection

This research will be conducted through interviews technique. Interview is the process of obtaining for the researcher by asking and answering face to face between the interviewer and the interviewee (participant) with a tool called an interview guide. Interviews will be conducted with English teachers in SMA Negeri 1 Takalar with using in-depth interviews.

3.5. Technique of data analysis

The researcher used three steps to analyze the data of interviews according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). Miles, Huberman, and Saldana state that there should be three step flows of action, there are: a) data reduction; b) data display; c) drawing conclusion.

4. Result

The findings present the results of the research questions: 1) What are the strategies used by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar in creating formative test questions? 2) What are the challenges encountered by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar in creating formative questions. The data were collected at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar. Two English teachers were chosen as the sources of data. Data obtained through interviews conducted during school hours. The research was conducted for a week. It was start from 11 July, to 18 July 2022. This research only used one technique to obtained the data, namely interviews. It has been done by conducting interview directly with the participants by presenting various questions then classifying the data from the conversations based on the types. The following is a table that includes themes and sub-themes from the data that has been obtained.

4.1. English teachers' strategies in creating formative test questions

According to Sadler (1989) formative test is concerned how judgments about the quality of student responses. Simply, formative test is carried out when a topic or subject ends. In teaching, the teacher should do evaluation to measure the knowledge of students after learn the materials that has been given to them.

In creating formative test questions, of course need some strategies. According to Marrus (2002) strategy is defined as a process of determining the plan of top leaders that focuses on the long-term goals of the organization. Therefore, strategy is a design or plan to carry out something in order to achieve certain expected goals. There are

some themes and sub-themes about strategies in creating formative test questions that will be presented following by the table below.

Table 1: English teachers' strategies in creating formative test questions	
	Theme
a. Communication	
	Sub-themes
	1) The English teacher contacting the other English teachers
	2) Discussing with the other English teachers
	3) Analyzing the results of the discussion
	4) Drawing conclusion
	Theme
b. Basic competence	
	Sub-themes
	1) Reading or understanding the basic competence of the material
	2) Reading a lot of references
	3) Creating the questions based on the basic competence
	Theme
c. Validity and reliability	
	Sub-themes
	1) Conducting content validity and reliability
	2) Using students' knowledge
	3) Using level of difficulty

4.2. The challenges are encountered by English teachers in creating formative test questions

Challenges are things or objects that can encourage someone to increase their level of ability in overcoming or solving problems. Challenges can be found in every way, especially in creating questions. Usually, teachers encountered challenges in terms of creating questions, both in terms of internal and external. In creating questions, of course there are several things that can hinder the process of making questions. There are some themes and sub-themes about the challenges are encountered by English teachers in creating formative test questions that will be presented following by the table below.

Table 2: The challenges are encountered by English teachers in creating formative test questions

	Theme
a. Questions	
	Sub-theme
	The difficulty in selecting of words
	Theme
b. Students' ability	
	Sub-theme
	The difficulty to know level of students' knowledge and measuring students' ability
	Theme
c. Facilities	
	Sub-themes
	The lack of facilities

5. Discussions

In this part will be presents a further explanation of the previous research findings, namely the results of:

- 1) what are the strategies used by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar in creating formative test questions?
- 2) what are the challenges encountered by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar in creating formative test questions?

5.1. The strategies used by English teachers in creating formative test questions

Based on the findings above, there are some strategies that use by English teachers in SMA Negeri 1 Takalar, especially in science and social department. There are:

5.1.1. *The English teacher contacting the other English teachers*

Based on the research findings, this strategy is very important thing to gather the other English to conduct the discussions. It aims to share the idea, knowledge, suggestions, and so on. Therefore, there is no miscommunication occur in it.

According to Morling & Yankhlef (1999) school is the ability to manage knowledge assets, one of which is the teacher as an important. It means that with the follow up of teachers, schools will become more organized and better and of course it has impact for students.

5.1.2. *Discussing with the other English teachers*

Based on the research findings, this strategy is very important thing because to avoid miscommunication with each other. Both participants always discuss about the form of questions that will be tested. Besides that, this strategy also needs to be used as a place to collect some suggestions.

Meanwhile, according to Morling & Yankhlef (1999) state that what will determine the success of achieving, in this case a school is the ability to manage knowledge assets, one of which is the teacher as an important. Therefore, this is needed to build relationships and get a lot of information from English teachers. The information obtained will certainly help the teacher in creating test questions, especially in creating formative test questions.

5.1.3. *Analyzing the results of the discussion*

Based on the research findings, after doing the discussion, English teacher should be analyzing the results of the discussion, for example form of the questions to be used and the knowledge possessed by students. It aims to avoid the miscommunication when want to creating the question later.

Lakoro (2016) said that students' abilities have an important role in developing test. It means that, the teacher must really know some aspects that can support the process of making questions.

5.1.4. *Drawing conclusion*

Based on the research findings, after analyzing the results of the discussion, teacher can draw the conclusion. This activity is very necessary because teacher can know what should they do in creating the questions.

According to Lickona (2012), attitude and responsibility are two basic moral values that must be taught in the school environment. Teachers not only provide teaching to students, but teachers must also have good characteristics that can be emulated by students. In this case, the teacher can make a deciding about the questions that will be make.

5.1.5. *Reading or understanding the basic competence of the material*

Based on the research findings, this strategy also important thing because both participants never will not make questions outside of the basic competences. They are always based on a syllabus or curriculum. Of course, this is to avoid the occurrence of differences in test questions with the material that has been learnt.

Meanwhile, according to Lakoro (2016) state that basic competence has an influence on the question. It can be concluded that the reading or understand the basic competence has an influence in creating questions.

5.1.6. *Reading a lot of references*

Based on the research findings, both participants reading a lot of references and sometimes take the questions from the internet but still adjust to the material that has been learnt and the teachers sometimes not do the test of validation and reliability the question from the internet. Apart from the internet, both participants also usually take from textbooks, modules, questions school exams, questions national exams, and YouTube.

Furthermore, the process of creating test questions, teacher must create questions according to what has been learned and pay attention to all the factors that exist in students. Usually, teachers only take questions from the internet and then test them on students. It can be concluded that take the questions from the internet is good, depends on the situation and as long as the questions still adjust to the material that has been learnt and do the validation and reliability tests.

5.1.7. *Creating the questions*

Based on the research findings, this is something important because the questions that will be made must be in accordance with the basic competencies that have been determined, therefore there are no mistakes when making questions.

In the process of creating test questions, teacher must create questions according to what has been learned and pay attention to all the factors that exist in students.

5.1.8. *Doing content validity*

Based on the research findings above, only Teacher B used test validity. According from the Teacher B the questions that will be tested must really have good quality. Therefore, that later they have valid results. But sometimes, Teacher B not do a validation and reliability depends on the situation.

Furthermore, according to Sudjana (2016) the right assessment tool for a particular purpose will not automatically be valid for other purposes. Therefore, this validation test can be said to be an assessment that shows the level of validity of an item. It means that questions are not valid when teacher do not validity.

5.1.9. *Using students' knowledge*

This strategy is also a strategy that must be considered because in creating questions, teachers must of course pay attention to the abilities of their students. Based on the research findings above, both participants said that they used students' knowledge as a strategy in creating formative test questions. Meanwhile, according to Lakoro (2016) it can cause, students' abilities have an important role in developing test. It means that, the teacher in creating questions must pay attention to students' abilities.

5.1.10. *Using level of difficulty*

Based on the research findings, both participants pay attention to level of difficulty. They use categories of easy, medium, and difficult questions with their respective proportions. They think that the level of students is different. Therefore, they used this strategy in creating questions.

Meanwhile, according to Arifin (2013) the calculation of the difficulty level of the question is a measurement of how much difficulty the problem is. This is because the abilities of students are different, therefore the moderate level of difficulty is a middle way in measuring student abilities. As stated by Santoso (2013) "in compiling items, it is better to use balanced items with a percentage of 25% easy items, 50% moderate, and 25% difficult". Based on the explanation, it means that teacher must pay attention about the level of difficulty because the level of students is different and that is a middle way in measuring student abilities.

5.2. Challenges encountered by English teachers in creating formative test questions

Based on the findings above, there are some strategies that use by English teachers in SMA Negeri 1 Takalar, especially in science and social department. There are:

5.2.1. *The difficulty in selecting of words*

Based on the research findings, only teacher A has a challenge in terms of the selection of words. Sometimes teacher A feel challenge when teacher A want to test some classes. Teacher A usually challenged in the selection of words for certain classes. For example, for classes that have better abilities than other classes, the teacher usually feels whether this question is easy or difficult for students in those classes.

As quoted from the Guru Berbagi website that the teacher sometimes feels challenged when create question because the selection of the words or sentences. The teacher sometimes feels that it is already easy to understand but for students it is still difficult to understand if a teacher is going to take a test. Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that the selection of words is a challenge for teachers in creating questions because if it is not in accordance with the knowledge of the students, the test will be in vain.

5.2.2. *The difficulty to know level of students' knowledge and measuring students' ability*

Based on the research findings, both participants had challenges in terms of students' abilities. According to the information provided by the two participants, they sometimes find it difficult to make questions due to the different abilities of the students. Even though they use students' abilities as their strategy in creating questions, there are still some students who find it difficult to answer the questions even though according to the teacher the questions are quite easy for students.

As quoted from the Guru Berbagi website that teachers felt challenged when creating questions based on the knowledge of their students. It means, teachers must be able to adjust the level of difficulty of the questions tested to students because their abilities are different. This is a challenge for teachers because they have to pay attention to many things.

5.2.3. *The lack of facilities*

Based on the research findings, only Teacher B has a challenge in terms of facilities. Teacher B feels challenge in the process of teaching English due to the lack of facilities. Sometimes, Teacher B wants to watch learning videos but the unavailability of LCD, white screen, and speakers, thus hampering the learning process.

Meanwhile, according to Muhroji (2004) learning facilities are all things needed in the teaching and learning process, both movable and immovable in order to achieve educational goals that work smoothly, regularly, effectively, and of course efficiently. Therefore, it can be concluded that the lack of available facilities can challenge the teacher in creating questions.

6. Conclusions and suggestions

Based on the result of data analysis, research findings and discussion in the previous part, then the researcher puts the following conclusions. There are:

- 6.1. The result of this research presents some strategies are used by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar in creating formative test questions, namely: a) The English teacher contacting the other English teachers; b) Discussing with the other English teachers; c) Analyzing the results of the discussion; d) Drawing conclusions; e) Reading or understanding the basic competence of the material; f) Reading a lot of references; g) Creating the questions based on the basic competence; h) Conducting content validity; i) Using students' knowledge; and j) Using level of difficulty.
- 6.2. The result of this research also presents some challenges are encountered by English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar in creating formative test questions, namely: a) The difficulty in selecting of words; b) The difficulty to know the level of students' knowledge and measuring students' ability; and c) The lack of facilities.

Through this research, other teachers can know what the strategies used and the challenges encountered by English teacher in creating formative test questions. In this research will certainly help other teachers in creating the same category questions, therefore this research refers to theory and practice.

Declaration of conflicting interest

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