



## Formative Assessment in Teaching English to Art Students

By

Gulnara Gorgiladze

Batumi Art Teaching University



### Article History

Received: 16/03/2026

Accepted: 28/03/2026

Published: 30/03/2026

Vol –4 Issue – 3

PP: - 34-38

### Abstract

*The article discusses issues of formative assessment of English skills applied to art students. The nature of students specializing in arts is tightly linked with creativity. Unfortunately, the formative assessment of students' language skills does not very much reflect this fact, it is based on drill-type traditional tasks, and insufficient (if any) attention is paid to alternative assessment which would be able to develop students' creativity. The goal of the article was to find out teachers' and students' views on formative assessment tasks motivating students majoring in arts specialties.*

**Keywords:** *formative assessment English language teaching, arts students, traditional assessment, alternative assessment*

### Introduction

Fadijah et al. (2023) mention that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, traditional assessments (such as multiple choice, cloze test, and true false), viewed as objective and, therefore, reliable ways to assess language skills give way to alternative assessments. Language skills in authentic communication are viewed as holistic and complex performance, therefore, alternative assessment is expected to reflect their nature. **The problem** of the current research lies in the fact that, although teachers realize the need to assess students' language skills in a more creative way concerning their critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills, they do not feel confident in using alternative assessment as they find traditional test results easier to assess.

The theoretical framework for using alternative assessment in the classroom, according to Janisch et al., (2007), includes considering learners as constructors of knowledge. Therefore, alternative assessment in foreign/second language teaching has to pay more attention not to the knowledge of vocabulary, for example, but to the ability to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words based on the context. Sometimes, alternative assessment includes students' guesswork of what a so-called nonce-word means, based on the sentence and whole-text context (a nonce-word is a word that does not exist in the language and is 'made up' as a letter/sound combination for some purposes, including the assessment the ability of vocabulary interpretation). Compared to traditional language assessment, students' ability to work out in a team a good plan for an essay or an oral presentation will 'cost' more than the grammatical and vocabulary correction of their product.

In this connection, the role of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, needs to be understood. Contemporary students and even teachers gladly use ChatGPT to prepare their presentations and to write their essays. However, it is very important to understand whether these tools stimulate creative language use by providing good models, scaffolding the topics, sub-topics and vocabulary/terminology needed, as well as looking for useful sources much faster than people can or they block creativity by making language learners cognitively lazy and accepting blindly the suggestions of AI. Meniado (2023) study, for example, aimed to answer the following questions: How can ChatGPT enhance English language learning, teaching, and assessment? and What are the challenges dealing with ChatGPT in terms of language teaching, learning, and assessment? The study in which the author analyzed carefully selected 15 articles on the topic came to conclusions that it is possible to control that students use Chat GPT ethically (do not present work fully done by it as theirs), however, it is difficult to control whether students use it in a way that blocks their creativity and autonomy instead of developing these skills.

The article is trying to cover the gap existing in the research literature: study the attitude of language teachers and arts students towards alternative assessment of language skills. Based on the findings, the researcher hopes to promote the application of alternative assessments of language skills or students majoring in artistic specialties.

The research questions asked in the research are as follows:

1. What is more relevant for the formative assessment of English skills of students from artistic majors, traditional or alternative assessment?



2. What are teachers' and students' attitudes towards alternative assessment of English skills?
3. What activities can be recommended for alternative assessment of English skills of students from artistic majors?

## Literature review

Caines et al. (2023) studied the application of large models (texts) for students' text generation. They came to conclusion that generative AI helps students, especially struggling ones, to make up their texts, however, the quality of language in the texts developed by students later, without AI application, does not significantly increase, the degree of text originality of some students even suffers, as they follow stereotypes too much.

Nowadays, assessment in education should provide information on the ability of students to apply the gained knowledge in skills in their personal and professional lives. Correspondingly, it should measure students' skills and knowledge in realistic, motivating, and authentic situations (Moqbel & Al-Kadi, 2023). This is especially true concerning formative assessment – the assessment done in the process of studies. Formative assessment, besides providing both teacher and his/her student information about their language skills' development should enable to improve these skills. For this purpose, it should be attractive and motivating for students.

Performance-based assessment is both realistic and motivating. It is easy to imagine performance-based language skills' assessment tasks for theatrical or cinematography students: staging a play or making a short video (movie). It is more difficult for, say, painting students, because for them performance is painting, not speaking or writing. However, they sometimes need to write texts for their catalogues, reports from exhibitions, critical reviews for newspapers, etc. Projects as assessment tools can be used (e.g., designing posters, making newspapers, bulletin boards, sketches, and news broadcasts). Discussions on artistic topics can be used for further self- and peer-assessment. Role-play with a painter/sculptor/architect as the host of his/her exhibition and the peer group as visitors of the exhibition can be not only an effective activity but also a way to assess the ability of students of artistic specialties to communicate with colleagues, media and wider public. To use this activity for the assessment of students' language skills, some colleagues (English teachers) can be invited to the "event" and requested to assess how effective the students were during the communication.

The study by Alzubi et al. (2025) aimed to explore students' perspectives on how AI can contribute to creativity in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning context. 546 university students participated in a survey. The study revealed that ChatGPT contributes to enhancing EFL learning. Students recognized the potential of the tool for conversation practice, idea generation, feedback on writing, vocabulary building, and collaborative learning. However, concerns were raised about over-reliance on AI, critical thinking, accuracy, and intellectual property. AI "thinks" instead of the students,

therefore, in the process of assessment it is difficult to differentiate whether the good structure and plan of an essay was the student's or AI's product.

Art appreciation teaching is one of the upcoming teaching techniques that advise students about arts (Zhao et al., 2024). Art appreciation teaching concentrates on aesthetic elements and creates an ability to view art and also find the cultures and history during the developing period. The multimedia-based learning technique is most commonly used in art teaching representations.

Khater (2015) mentions that assessment of English skills of students of artistic specialties should correspond to the creative nature of their specialty. Creative writing is especially valuable for developing and assessing arts students' both creative and communicative skills. To link this type of assessment of language skills and creativity with students' specialty, they may be asked to write a critical review of the seen movie or theatrical performance, a painting or sculpture exhibition, etc. On the other hand, arts students may be asked to illustrate a fiction story or a poem to demonstrate their reading comprehension. Developing a poster for a concert or a musical performance will involve their painting skills as well as their language skills. Instead of often dull descriptions of artistic works students can be asked to imagine that they step in the painting/movie and then describe what happens.

Koekemoer (2025) recommends arts-based assessments for the study of literature as formative assessments that aim to guide students' academic development. Book cover assessment (analyzing how well the cover represents the book) or, vice versa, drawing a cover for a book is a kind of an essay recommended by the researcher as creative, engaging, and related to students' profession, authentic. The addition of a visual element may improve students' reading abilities and their understanding of the plot and other literary elements within a story.

Therefore, to make the formative assessment of arts students' English language skills more attractive and engaging, it has to be linked with the students' future profession. Performance assessment, writing texts for artistic catalogues, journals and newspapers, advertisements and posters for exhibitions, critical reviews, drawing story/book covers/vignettes or comparing the existing covers/posters to the books/performances/exhibitions to their 'originals' (performances, books, exhibitions, etc) can both develop and assess arts students' profession-bound linguistic skills.

## Method

The research applied a qualitative design – teacher and student interviews. Purposive convenience sampling was used: English teachers of arts students and students of different arts specialties were invited to participate. Five teachers and 10 students from three state higher education institutions volunteered. The questions were made up based on the analysis in the Introduction and Literature Review of the current article. They were assessed for validity: clarity of expression, terminology appropriateness, and covering the

topic by three experts in the field. The responses were recorded, transcribed, organized in NVivo software, and then analyzed according to topics and keywords.

### Ethical issues and limitations

The participation in the interview was voluntary, the recording was made upon the interviewees' permission. The transcript was shown to the interviewees to avoid misinterpretations. The recordings were deleted upon transcription, the transcript contains only codified names such as S1U1 (student 1 from the first university), S2 U2, L1 U1 (lecturer 1 from the first university), L2 U1, etc. The recordings (before they were deleted) and the transcript were preserved in the researcher's computer, not available to other people. Therefore, anonymity and confidentiality was observed.

The limitations of the research deal with two aspects: the number of participants and the research method. The limited number of the participants does not enable the researcher to generalize the obtained results – it only provides a basis for a larger-scale research. Qualitative research (interview), depending on the quality of answers, enables to get a deep insight into the topic, however, is subjective in its nature.

### Results

*Q1: Which type of assessment of language skills: traditional (gap-filling, matching, multiple choice, true/false) or alternative (performance-based, real professional situations-based, role play, etc.) is used at your program?*

Both the teachers and the students confirmed that mostly traditional assessment was applied. Most of them have a neutral to positive attitude to it. They would rather do some home tasks with keys to self-assess their vocabulary, grammar, listening and reading-comprehension skills with them, and in class they would rather do some communicative tasks for formative assessment. The attitude to alternative assessment is contradictory, so, it is seldom used. Teachers mention the difficulty of objective assessment even with good rubrics, if provided. They also blame time restrictions. They say they are not trained to use alternative assessment.

*Q2: Would you like to apply alternative assessment more often than now? Why or why not?*

Teachers would like to apply it if trained for it, provided effective rubrics, and relevant activities in the textbooks. Students hesitate, as they have very little experience, but they demonstrated interest towards alternative assessment.

*Q3: Do you think formative assessment of artistic students' English skills should consist only of traditional tasks, only of alternative tasks, or a mixture of tasks?*

Two teachers preferred traditional tasks only, three others a mixture of tasks. Two students mentioned they do not have a clear viewpoint on the issue, three supported a mixture of task types, while the rest were in favour of alternative tasks only.

*Q4: Can AI (e.g., Chat GPT) increase the creativity of language learners?*

Most teachers and students expressed the opinion that ChatGPT helps those students who are struggling with essay-writing, while more successful and creative students prefer to write essays themselves, as ChatGPT is interfering in their creativity.

*Q5 (asked only to teachers): How can teachers control the ethics/academic honesty while using AI (ChatGPT) to assess students' language skills?*

Teachers believe that ChatGPT is helpful to all students on the initial stage of writing skills development, however, lazy and dishonest students abuse it, submitting work completely done by AI as their own. This does not support the development of either language skills or creativity. Anti-plagiarism software helps control students' academic honesty, but time is needed to make them understand that they are cheating first of all themselves while using AI dishonestly.

*Q6: What creative activities/tasks should be used in English classes and for formative assessment?*

Due to the lack of corresponding experience, neither the teachers, not the students could name many activities; they named projects, performances, and portfolios.

Table 1. Content analysis of the interviewees' responses

Q #	Topic	keywords	# of times used	Examples
1	traditional assessment	gap-filling	4	L1U1: Traditional assessment is offered by the textbook, I know how to use it and feel comfortable with it. It doesn't require too much time, which, in conditions of time deficit, is important.  L4U2: Traditional assessment is needed, however, it is uncommunicative and boring, this is why some other types of assessment are also needed. It is important what the graduates will be able to do with their English skills after they graduate. Some of them know vocabulary and grammar, can do comprehension tasks, but can't communicate orally and in written.  S2U1: I don't mind traditional assessment, it helps me memorize the material.  S6U2: I don't think traditional assessment yields the real picture. When I do it, I peep into the book. I do not really
		matching	2	
		multiple choice	3	
		true/false	2	
		ordering the statements	1	
		discussion	2	
		grammar	2	



	vocabulary	5	concentrate. I fulfill the task and forget it forever. S9U3: Traditional assessment is OK in class, but as final assessment it doesn't show the real skills.
	reading comprehension	2	
	listening comprehension	1	
	time-saving	2	
	easy to conduct	2	
	easy to assess	5	
	comfortable	4	
	boring	3	
	effective	6	
	ineffective	12	
	alternative assessment	4	L3U1: Alternative assessment is almost not used. Textbook/teacher's book doesn't offer it.
	discussion/debates	3	S8U2: Performance assessment? Only saw it in foreign movies.
	projects	3	
2	advantages of alternative assessment	11	L2U1: Alternative assessment is engaging and motivating, but difficult for the teacher. Even if I have a good rubric (usually, textbooks do not provide them, so I have to find them on the internet of make them up myself), it is difficult to follow each student individually and to guess what his/her contribution to the product is.
	motivating	12	
	challenging	3	

	alternative assessment	4	L5U2: I'd love it if I had more time. S4U2: I like performance-based activities, projects, teamwork, etc. They are much more motivating. And they are not stressful.	
	lack of training	5		
3	Task types for formative assessment	6	L3U1: I support a mixture of tasks: traditional ones for materials memorization and alternative to increase engagement and motivation. S5U2: I prefer alternative assessment. It's fun and stress-free.	
	stress	3		
	memorization	5		
4	creativity of language learners	4	L5U2: I think, artistic students' creativity is insufficiently reflected in English classes and students' language skills' assessment. Some students have limited grammar and vocabulary, but are very creative, however, their grades are not high due to prevailing traditional assessment.	
	illustrating performances/stories/poems	3		
	planning	2	S1U1: The assessment of our English skills does not at all reflect our creativity. When we write essays with the help of ChatGPT, all essays are alike and standard. I prefer to write essays myself, without any technical aids.	
	vocabulary selection	1		
	finding/selecting materials	4		
5	academic honesty/integrity	3	L1U1: Anti-plagiarism software can assess the cases when students copy+paste something from the internet. L2U1: When the English is "too good" I have doubt and check with anti-plagiarism software. I have no time to check all their essays for academic integrity.	
	anti-plagiarism software	2		
6	alter	perform	2	L3U2: Performance for

native activities	ance		theatrical and cinematography students LAU3: Creative projects, such as developing and presenting posters.
	projects	4	
	portfolios	2	

### Discussion

Our findings are similar to those by Pipia and Gurgenshvili (2025). The results of their study revealed that ChatGPT improved students' writing performance, however, concerns about ethical use and especially over-reliance on AI were noted, emphasizing the need for a balanced integration of technology in language learning and assessment.

### Conclusion

Teachers are not well aware of the possibilities of alternative assessment of English skills. They have an idea that they are more relevant to the future professions of arts students, however, they have limited knowledge and experience of alternative (creative) tasks such as developing posters and brochures on performance/movies/exhibitions that include not only the visual but also the verbal part.

### References

- Alzubi, A. A. F., Nazim, M., & Alyami, N. (2025). Do AI-generative tools kill or nurture creativity in EFL teaching and learning? *Education and Information Technologies*, 30(11), 15147-15184.
- Caines, A., Benedetto, L., Taslimipoor, S., Davis, C., Gao, Y., Andersen, O., Yuan, Z., Elliott, M., Moore, R. ... & Buttery, P. (2023). On the application of large language models for language teaching and assessment technology. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2307.08393*.
- Fadilah, R., Ayudhia, H. Y., Chairani, V. S., & Afni, F. (2023). Assessment of English language teaching for 21st century: Teachers' perspectives on traditional and alternative assessment. *JADEs Journal of Academia in English Education*, 4(1), 108-130.
- Janisch, C., Xiaoming, L., & Amma, A. (2007). Implementing alternative assessment: Opportunities and obstacles. *The Educational Forum*, 71. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ763213.pdf>
- Khater, A. El-Amir. (2015). The impact of art-based learning program on developing English majors' creative writing. *Journal of Arabic Studies in Education and Psychology*, 60(2), 387-442.
- Koekemoer, C.W. (2025). Arts-based assessment for English literary studies. *Journal of Literary Studies*, 41, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.25159/1753-5387/19874>
- Meniado, J. (2023). The impact of ChatGPT on English language teaching, learning, and assessment: A rapid review of literature. *Arab World English Journals (AWEJ)*, 14(4), 3-18. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no4.1>
- Moqbel, M. S. S., & Al-Kadi, A. M. T. (2023). Foreign language learning assessment in the age of ChatGPT: A theoretical account. *Journal of English Studies in Arabia Felix*, 2(1), 71-84. <https://doi.org/10.56540/jesaf.v2i1.62>
- Pipia, E., & Gurgenshvili, T. (2025). The impact of Chatgpt on English as a foreign language learners' writing skills - An experimental study at Georgian universities. *European Scientific Journal*, 21(10), 429-446.
- Zhao, L., Hussam, E., Seong, J. T., Elshenawy, A., Kamal, M., & Alshawarbeh, E. (2024). Revolutionizing art education: Integrating AI and multimedia for enhanced appreciation teaching. *Alexandria Engineering Journal*, 93, 33-43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aej.2024.03.011>