Chapter 5

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter sums up the entire thesis. In other words it presents an overview of the thesis along with recommendations, suggestions and limitations.

5.1 Background to the Study

Assuming the fact that in ELT, especially in the ESL and EFL contexts, testing has been under-researched, and that whatever advancement testing has undergone is limited mainly to the developed countries and/or to some exceptional institutions in the third world. However, it was also assumed that recent trends in language testing is more popular in the name of Formative Assessment, which has favourably taken shape as a learner-centred exercise in the interest of students, encouraging the best practices pertaining to learning and teaching. The aspects of Formative Assessment got a support from the semester / Choice-based Credit system (CBCS) that most of the universities are adopting today in India. In addition to this, Formative Assessment has also come to be widely acceptable because it facilitates the latest theories of pedagogical strategies and techniques propounded by Bloom’s Taxonomy, Multiple Intelligence, Critical Thinking and such others.

In the light of the above, the researcher initiated a data based case study / research on Formative Assessment at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), which is one of the best Central Universities in India with respectable ‘A’ Grade by National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC) besides occupying high Institutional Ranking, both nationally (India Today-Nielsen) and internationally (Times Higher Education, UK). AMU is also known for its output in the area of research, publication, citation, H-index, etc. Besides AMU has already adopted CBCS and has been practicing Semester System for quite some time.

Ideally the strategies, instruments and techniques of Formative Assessment should already exist in an institution like AMU. In order to investigate this and also to explore the aspects of Formative Assessment, the researcher took up this study,
entitled “Identifying the Prospects of Formative Assessment in Undergraduate ESL Classroom at AMU: A Study in Theory and Practice”.

5.2 The Research

The present research aims mainly addresses to identify the objectives of the study in terms of three components, such as practice, need and prospect of Formative Assessment in ESL undergraduate classroom of the university. In this regard a set of questionnaire one each for both teachers and students of Compulsory English Course were designed and piloted for the investigation on related domain of the study in the session 2015 in the Compulsory English Classrooms at AMU.

Various aspects of this thesis are distributed in the following chapters:

The first chapter, entitled ‘Statement of Intent’ provides an outline and the overall conceptualization of this thesis. In this chapter the researcher has discussed the background and rationale, the methodology, the aims & objectives, the research questions and the proposed chapters of this study. It also highlights the significance of the study.

The second chapter is entitled ‘Literature Survey’. It reviews the literature available till date on assessment in English language pedagogy while furnishing an overview and foregrounding of the relevant literature that emerged as part of the research on testing and assessment over a period of time. The survey is spread over three sections: Testing, Evaluation and Assessment.

The section on testing takes into account the resources on academic testing pertaining to testing ability, knowledge and skills of the learners for the purpose of grading. Testing has been less talked about and researched aspect of language teaching. Only in the decade of 1980s it became a topic of interest of the language experts and researchers. Following decades have witnessed researches and insights that were important to be discussed in this chapter. Many works have come up in these decades and some of the prominent ones are discussed in this section of the chapter.

Likewise the section on evaluation deals with the available material on this aspect. Assessment also is one of the interchangeable terms with testing and evaluation. Assessment needs to be comprehended differently since it has its own crucial
perspective distinct from testing and evaluation. Research insights to assessment in language teaching have come out in the form of publications in recent decades.

The third chapter, ‘Aspects of Formative Assessment’ discusses ‘Assessment’ in general and ‘Formative Assessment’ in particular. However, in order to give a clear perspective to the concept of ‘Assessment/Formative Assessment’, an attempt has been made to first define and discuss the features of other related terms like ‘testing’ and ‘evaluation’, which are often used interchangeably by various stakeholders. In addition, it also provides a discussion on the origin, basic principles, features and aspects of Formative Assessment. In brief, it has been ensured that this chapter presents a clear understanding of Formative Assessment and also establishes a background for the data based case study at AMU to be taken up in the ensuing chapter.

The fourth chapter, entitled ‘Formative Analysis: A Case Study of AMU’ provides a detailed analysis and findings of the data based case study on practice, needs and prospects of Formative Assessment at AMU. In addition to this, it also exhibits introduction and background to the case study, the methodology, the statistical analysis and data representation in tables and graphs, and an in-depth analysis of the responses to questionnaires to reach at the deeper meaning of the claims made by teachers and students.

This is the fifth and final chapter, which presents an overview of the overall study along with its conclusions, recommendations, suggestions and limitations. It also provides the findings of the whole study.

5.3 Conclusion of Study

The conclusion of this study can be highlighted in the following findings listed below in four sections:

Results and findings of the present study are inferred from the analysis of the data (given in the earlier section) provided by 25 teachers and 800 students in response to their respective questionnaires. It is important to mention here that in the earlier section teachers’ data were analysed followed by an analysis of students’ data in comparison to those of teachers. It is done so because it is assumed that the techniques of Formative Assessment are to be primarily implemented by teachers, whereas
students can only express whether these are practised and needed or not. The results and findings are presented in the following four sections:

**Finding I: Actual Classroom Scenario:**

The findings of this section will reflect upon the fact whether the classroom situation, linguistic proficiency of students and the teaching methods, techniques and strategies are suitable for implementation of Formative Assessment. The analysis of the data in this regard leads to the following findings:

i. The overall language proficiency of students, as perceived by both teachers and students themselves, range from ‘Good’ to ‘Average’. That is, they are generally proficient enough in the English Language.
ii. Both teachers and students find the English classes useful.

iii. The majority finds the English Classes interesting and motivating, however, a considerably good number of students appear to be dissatisfied.

iv. Only a few teachers stated that the large number of students do not have any on their teaching, while most of them acknowledged that crowded classrooms affect their methodology and discipline.
v. Approximately half of the students find the classes, lecture-based, while teachers do not think so.

vi. Approximately 25% students negate teachers’ majority claim and say that the classes are not interactive and activity based.

The above findings of the actual classroom situation display a scope for the implementation of Formative Assessment techniques in order to make the classes more interesting, motivating, and interactive and activity based, leading to better learning and teaching at AMU.
Finding II: Practice / Availability of Formative Assessment (FA) at AMU:

In order to identify whether FA is in practice at AMU, two questions were raised in the questionnaires with regard to the eleven FA techniques. Teachers are aware of the FA techniques, their problem of implementation and their benefits too, their responses are undermined in the presence of students’ response. Besides, students are on the receiving end, thus their responses become more relevant in comparison to teachers. Therefore, findings will be inferred from the results of the questions 6 and 7, given in the table below:

Table 5.1: Practice / Present Status of FA Techniques at AMU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Responses to Q6</th>
<th>Responses to Q7</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Generally Practised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Mixed Response</td>
<td>Mixed Response</td>
<td>Generally practised, but needs to be more effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self Assessment</td>
<td>1/3rd students negate</td>
<td>Majority students for ‘sometimes’</td>
<td>Needs to be properly implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Peer Assessment</td>
<td>Majority students Negate</td>
<td>Majority students for ‘sometimes’</td>
<td>Needs to be properly implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Approx. 50% Negate</td>
<td>Majority students for ‘sometimes’</td>
<td>Needs to be properly implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Visual Representation</td>
<td>Majority students Negate</td>
<td>Majority students Negate</td>
<td>Needs Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Think-Share-Pair</td>
<td>Practised</td>
<td>Mixed Response</td>
<td>Needs effective Implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings regarding practice and use of the above listed FA techniques can be stated as follows:

i. ‘Questioning’ is generally practised in the English Classrooms at AMU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oral Examination</th>
<th>Approx. 1/3\textsuperscript{rd} students negate</th>
<th>Mixed Response</th>
<th>Needs Effective Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Approx. 50% Negate</th>
<th>Approx. 50% Negate</th>
<th>Needs Effective Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Majority students Negate</th>
<th>Majority students Negate</th>
<th>Needs to be Introduced &amp; Implemented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Portfolio making</th>
<th>Majority students Negate</th>
<th>Majority students Negate</th>
<th>Needs to be Introduced &amp; Implemented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 5.6- Encouraging Learners to speak and raise Questions

%Teachers’ Responses %Students’ Responses

0 12.9
100 87

No Yes
Conclusion, Implications, Recommendations and Limitations

ii. ‘Discussion’ is generally conducted, but needs to be more effectively practised.

![Graph 5.7- Conducting ‘Discussion’](image)


![Graph 5.8- Involving Learners’ in ‘Self-assessments’](image)
Graph 5.9 - Adopting ‘Peer-assessments’ among Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%Teachers’ Responses</th>
<th>%Students’ Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 5.10 - Asking Learners to give ‘Presentations’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%Teachers’ Responses</th>
<th>%Students’ Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
iv. ‘Think-Share-Pair’, ‘Oral Examination’ and ‘Assignments’ are to be implemented effectively.
Conclusion, Implications, Recommendations and Limitations

Graph 5.13 - Giving 'Oral Examination'

- Teachers' Responses: 96% No, 0% Yes
- Students' Responses: 71.4% No, 28.6% Yes

Graph 5.14 - Giving 'Assignments'

- Teachers' Responses: 80% No, 20% Yes
- Students' Responses: 50.6% No, 49.4% Yes
v. ‘Projects’ and ‘Portfolios’ are not in use, hence they need to be introduced afresh and implemented.

Finding III: Need for the Formative Assessment:

The need for FA techniques at AMU has been rated against a five points scale, such as ‘Strongly Agree’, ‘Agree’, ‘Uncertain’, ‘Disagree’ and ‘Strongly Disagree’. The findings have been inferred on the basis of majority response. For instance, when a clear majority says ‘Strongly Agree’, the inference for
that item is ‘Highly Needed’; if majority says ‘Agree’, it is ‘Needed’ and so on and so forth.

i. Generally both teachers and students have expressed that all the FA techniques are needed to be implemented properly at AMU, which means that they are actually not satisfied with the present state of affairs, despite their specific responses in the earlier section.

ii. Responses reflect the following as displayed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Feedback on my assessment</td>
<td>Highly Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Methods of assessment other than Pen-Paper</td>
<td>Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Different types of assessments like Project, Presentation, Assignment</td>
<td>Highly Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Highly Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Self/Peer Assessment</td>
<td>Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Discussions and Presentations</td>
<td>Highly Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Assignments and Projects</td>
<td>Needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii. There is hardly any item/aspect of Formative assessment, which the respondents do not need / highly need.

**Finding IV: Prospects for the Formative Assessment:**

To reach the findings of the prospects for Formative Assessment at AMU, the respondents were asked to rate the techniques against a five point scale, ranging from 5 – 1, where 5 means ‘the most important’ and 1 ‘the least important’. Like the earlier section, here too, if majority says 5 ‘the most
important’, that item is considered to be of Highest Prospects; if they go for ‘Very Important (4), that item is considered to be of ‘High Prospects; and so on and so forth. In this section, the responses of teachers have been taken into consideration more seriously in comparison to those of students. This is so because teachers are more knowledgeable about these FA techniques vis-a-vis the practical aspects of the campus. Besides students do not understand the implementation part. The findings are displayed in the table below:

Table 5.3:
Prospects of FA Techniques for implementation at AMU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Highest Prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Highest Prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self Assessment</td>
<td>High Prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Peer Assessment</td>
<td>Average Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Highest Prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Visual Representations</td>
<td>Highest Prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Think-Share-Pair</td>
<td>Highest Prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oral Examinations</td>
<td>Highest Prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>High Prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>Average Prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>High Prospects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

i. A closer look at the responses and the findings show that the teachers and students have perhaps responded to these FA techniques in terms of their Prospects keeping in mind the practical aspects or the possibility of implementations at AMU.
i. Majority of items listed in the table above reflect ‘Highest Prospects’. There is only one item, which shows to be of ‘Average Prospects’.

iii. Teachers have provided a very genuine and serious response with regard to the prospects of FA techniques at AMU. While students have given a mixed response, teachers have shown higher prospects for almost all the techniques of FA.

iv. Teachers’ responses are clearer and more forceful in the 3rd and 4th sections of the questionnaire about ‘Needs’ and ‘Prospects’. This shows their serious concern in favour of the implementation of Formative Assessment techniques in the classrooms at AMU. A few graphic representations for some of the FA techniques are provided here as samples to show the teachers’ sharp and forceful response in comparison to students’ mixed responses:
Conclusion, Implications, Recommendations and Limitations

Graph 5.18 - Importance of 'Peer-assessments'

Graph 5.19 - Importance of 'Self-assessments'

%Teachers’ Responses | %Students’ Responses
--- | ---
0 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 13.9 | 24.8 | 18.6
8 | 24.1 | 32.1 | 24.8 | 30.8
16 | 52 | 27.4 | 25.8 | 30.8
24
56

Legend:
1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---

"Teachers" Responses |
"Students" Responses |
In each of the above sample graphic representations, teachers’ responses display more of positivity and clarity about the need and prospects for Formative Assessment techniques in comparison to those of students.

**5.4 Significance / Implications of the Research:**

The above findings, identified on the basis of the present investigation, makes this research significant enough in the following sense:

i. To understand ‘Formative Assessment’ and its various aspects, like definition, features, advantages, and scope as the latest trend of language testing as a mode for language learning and teaching.

ii. To help teachers and academic administrators understand the existing scenario of the use of the techniques of Formative Assessment, like questioning, discussion, providing feedback, assignment, project, portfolio and such others.

iii. To help teachers, learners and administrators understand the need and promotion of the techniques of Formative Assessment at AMU.

iv. To help teachers, learners and administrators understand the prospects and scope for the use of techniques of Formative Assessment at AMU.
v. To assist both teachers as well as learners to facilitate promotion in the teaching-learning process by implementing certain Formative practices on the basis of the findings of this investigation.

vi. To provide students opportunities to practice various modes of Alternative assessments.

vii. To provide students, teachers and researchers guidance and constructive feedback.

viii. To promote and make effective use of Formative Assessment techniques like assignment, project, portfolio and others which are not effectively used in Common English Classrooms at AMU.

ix. To undertake the longitudinal study for the assessment of portfolio in order to bring the continuous assessment in Compulsory English Course.

x. Introducing peer/self-assessment, Project work and think-pair-share activities in such a large class can help the learners to take the responsibility of their own learning and improve their cooperative learning.

xi. To provide students frequent continuous assessment because they should know about their level of understandings while learning.

xii. To help teachers reduce large classes to small manageable size so that teaching may run smoothly or co-teacher system should be offered to such crowded classrooms.

xiii. To group students according to their needs, levels or abilities in English language.

xiv. To inform educators and material developers to become conscious of the need and wants of these strategies in the Compulsory English class.

xv. To provide an input regarding the advantages of Formative Assessment in the overall advancement of ESL/EFL teaching and learning situations.

xvi. To encourage and motivate students to become more interactive and participative.

xvii. To support the Semester / Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) to make it more effective.
xviii. To help those interested individuals in the field of ESL promoting learning by using Formative Assessment activities to get a better comprehension of the development of second language learning.

5.5 Limitation of the Study
The present study explores and investigates ‘Assessment’ in general and ‘Formative Assessment’ in particular. Besides it also tries to identify the practice, needs and prospects of Formative Assessment at AMU. Despite the fact that this study provides above mentioned significance and implications of Formative Assessment, it bears the following limitations too:

i. This study investigates the practice, need and prospect of selected eleven techniques of Formative Assessment in general, while each individual technique has a full fledged scope for investigation and exploration.

ii. The data based case study has been conducted on the teachers and students of Compulsory English Class, while they can also be investigated in other undergraduate and postgraduate classes.

iii. The investigation could have also been studied in the light of the continuous assessment techniques during a semester of the CBCS system.

iv. Statistical procedures are confined descriptive statistics: frequency and percentage, rather than inferential statistics in this research. The available data could have been used for investigating other aspects too, based on the variables of gender, faculties of studies, and others.

5.6 Recommendations / Suggestions of the Study
On the basis of above limitations, one can provide the following recommendations and suggestions:

Further research may be conducted

i. to investigate the use and prospects of each individual technique of Formative Assessment.

ii. on classes other than Compulsory English.

iii. to explore the scope and relationship of formative assessment techniques as tools to Continuous assessment in Semester / CBCS system.
iv. on the actual application and their impacts in teaching and learning situations.

v. to explore the relationship between syllabi, instructional materials and formative assessment.

vi. to assess the impact of formative assessment on achieving objectives of syllabi.

vii. to initiate inquiries into wash-back effect of formative assessment on pedagogy.