ABSTRACT

IDENTIFYING THE PROSPECTS OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN UNDERGRADUATE ESL CLASSROOM AT AMU: A STUDY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

0.0 Background and Rationale

In the last couple of decades, language testing has witnessed remarkable development in the area of English Language (ELT). There was a time when testing occupied the backbench and was perceived as something to be conducted at the end of an academic year for evaluating the learners’ level of learning. Even the modes, methods and techniques remained static for quite some time under the influence of traditional and structural approaches to teaching. It is only with the emergence of communicative language testing that such terms as ‘testing’, ‘evaluation’ and ‘assessment’ were defined and distinguished in order to make the teaching and learning process more effective. These developments in the last couple of decades have been more dynamic and meaningful, wherein testing and evaluation have been considered and made very much a part and parcel of the everyday teaching and learning process. Various concepts and techniques emerged over a period of time, some of which are provided below as a background to the present study on Formative Assessment.

In recent years, educators have encouraged learners to take more responsibility for their own learning, redressing the gap between what has been and what may be learned. In addition, with training, learners may be well situated to both self-assess and to recognize gaps in their own learning through such practices of formative assessment as including self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher feedback, conferencing, and other ongoing, learner-empowering pedagogical methods.

Moreover, several studies have cited formative assessment as the essential element responsible for enhanced classroom learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998a, 1998b; Harlen & Winter, 2004; Van de Watering & Van der Rijt, 2006).

Most recently, formative assessment practices have been refined into a dynamic and reflective approach called Assessment for Learning (AFL), an interactive, learning-focused pedagogy. AFL asks learners to be actively involved in their own learning, to appropriate the goals of assessment, and to carry out self and peer assessments. AFL also asks teachers to encourage learners’ involvement in assessment, to guide them in understanding assessment goals, to provide feedback useful in learner development, and to adapt lesson planning in consequence of assessment outcomes (Black &
The AFL has been shown to empower learners of mathematics and science with greater learner autonomy, to establish a more positive approach and increase achievement, and to help teachers better identify what learners know and need to learn (Harlen & Winter, 2004; Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000; Weeden & Winter, 1999). With some exceptions, however, formative assessment and the AFL have scarcely been researched in L2 classrooms (Rea-Dickins, 2004).

Likewise, authentic assessment is another overarching concept that generally refers to a more meaningful, worthwhile, or significant form of evaluation (Wiggins, 1999). Researchers such as Goodrich-Andrade (2000) and Hart (2004) suggest that assessment is authentic when it enables students to communicate their academic strengths, as well as their educational needs. It has also been argued that this type of assessment enables students to move away from passive or simple responses to the active construction of meaning and it mirrors good classroom instruction as students are now being asked to demonstrate, in a significant and personal way, what they know and are able to do rather than merely measuring specific or isolated skills (Montgomery, 2002). Moreover, it gives students ongoing feedback that enables them to reflect on their learning accomplishments, identify future learning needs, and develop goals and strategies to achieve them.

As a result, this type of assessment may not only empower students to become self-directed or autonomous learners, but it may also allow teachers to use classroom assessment information for future instructional improvement.

Many educators have come to recognize yet another concept, Alternative assessment, as an important means of gaining a dynamic picture of students’ academic and linguistic development. “Alternative assessment refers to procedures and techniques which can be used within the context of instruction and can be easily incorporated into the daily activities of the school or classroom”(Hamayan, 1995, p. 213). It is particularly useful for second language students because it employs strategies that ask students to show what they can do. In contrast to traditional testing, “students are evaluated on what they integrate and produce rather than on what they are able to recall and reproduce”(Huerta-Macias, 1995, p. 9).

There are two common ways to carry out an assessment, either during the life of the course (formative) or at the end of the course (summative) to provide information about students’ learning (Chisga-Negril, 2011, p. 735). According, to Crooks (2002
cited in Ali 2011, p. 11) summative assessment provides a well-founded, clear and up-to-date picture of the students’ current capabilities and progress over time and enhancing their development. However, formative assessment deals with how the quality of student responses can be used to improve students’ competence (Sadler, 1989). Furthermore, formative assessment is used to identify what students have learned, what they have not learned and where they are having difficulty, and this can support the teaching-learning process (Gipps and Murphy, 1994 as cited in Buhagiar 2007).

The above discussion shows that the world of ELT today is encouraging and experiencing new trends in the name of AFL, Authentic Assessment or Formative Assessment, which have some common trends in the sense that they are all learner-centered, and are conducted during actual teaching and learning in the classroom. Besides, the fact that these concepts are still in its infancy in the ESL/EFL contexts, very limited research has been done to identify their prospects in developing countries like India and others. In addition, most of researches, so far, with regard to assessment in these countries have been related to the principles and processes of evaluation and testing, which is now often termed as Summative Assessment. Even today the policy makers, educational administrators and institutions look at assessment as a means to judge the learners’ achievements in their course.

In the light of the above, the present study intends to identify the prospects of applying Formative Assessment techniques to undergraduate ESL courses at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).

0.1 Aims and Objectives

The present study aims to:

i. understand and discuss the origin definition, and aspects of Formative Assessment;

ii. discuss theoretical premise of Formative Assessment;

iii. identify the practice of Formative Assessment techniques at AMU;

iv. figure out the need for Formative Assessment in ESL classroom;

v. identify the scope and prospects of Formative Assessment in ESL classroom.

0.2 Research Questions:

Through this study, an attempt will be made to answer the following research questions:
i. What is Formative Assessment? What are its characteristic features? How is it different from the Traditional Pen and Paper Method of assessment?

ii. To what extent theoretical constructs relating to learning, teaching and assessment can be made effective in the Undergraduate ESL classroom at AMU?

iii. To what extent are the aspects of Formative Assessment being practised in the Undergraduate ESL classroom?

iv. To what extent the Formative Assessment techniques are needed in the Undergraduate ESL classroom?

v. To what extent the curriculum of the Undergraduate ESL classroom can be enriched/adapted through prospects of Formative Assessment?

0.3 Division of Chapters

This thesis is divided into five chapters in order to make it more meaningful and comprehensive as:

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.

0.4 Research Methodology

The Research Methodology adopted in the present thesis can be explained as follows under two heads: Pilot Survey and Main Study.

0.4.1 Pilot Survey

The main purpose of a pilot survey is to diagnose the effectiveness and the weakness of the tools and techniques adopted to collect information for the main study from respondents. Once, these are identified, the researcher attempts to remove the gaps in
terms of ambiguity of the tools, overall language use, comprehensibility, sequencing of questions and other aspects.

0.4.1.1 The Instrument

Here, the instrument two sets of questionnaires, one for students and one for teachers that was designed for the main study was put to pilot survey. These two sets of questionnaires were adapted from Colby-Kelly & Turner (2007).

Student’s Questionnaire

The student’s questionnaire consisted of the following five divisions:

Section I: This section sought personal details like, student's name (optional), gender, class, semester/year, subject and medium of instruction (last class).

Section II: This section contained five questions (1-5) relating their perception about English language and the prescribed course. In the first question, the students rate their overall proficiency in the English language on a 4 point scale with 4 as ‘excellent’ 3 ‘good’ 2 ‘average’ 1 as ‘weak’. Questions 2 to 5 extract information regarding the mode how the students found the teaching English in their Compulsory classroom on a ‘yes/no’ scale.

Section III: This section having queries 6 and 7 was designed to evaluate the practice of formative assessment techniques in the ESL classroom at AMU. While question 6 has sub-questions from ‘a to l’ (12 sub-questions) on a ‘yes/no’ scale, question 7 consists of 11 techniques of formative assessment from ‘a to k’ on a 5 point scale where 5 is ‘very often’, 4 ‘often’ 3 ‘average’ 2 ‘not often’ and 1 ‘never’.

Section IV: This section (with only one item (8)) is conducted on a five point Likert scale ordered from ‘SA= strongly agree to SD=strongly disagree’ with values 5-1 assigned to each alternative. The question illustrates seven (7) statements to seek information on the learners’ needs for the use of formative assessment techniques in Compulsory English courses at AMU.

Section V: There is only one question 9 in this section that attempts to represent the prospects/importance of applying formative assessment techniques in the ESL classroom at AMU. The query here uses a five point scale rating from ‘1-5’, where 1 is ‘the most’ and 5 ‘the least’.

Teacher’s Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire is the same as the students’ with a change in mode of interaction only. The main purpose is to identify whether teachers vary from students in their approach, assessment, perception and responses on questions and issues
pertaining to the use and need for formative assessment techniques at AMU for compulsory English course.

Like students, even this one is designed in five sections. The first section consists of personal and personnel information like name (optional), gender, qualification, teaching experience (year), name of department and /faculty/college. Section II is also same; except that for questions 2 and 3 where teachers need to provide reasons for their negative response. The third, fourth and fifth sections are similar to the students’ questionnaire.

0.4.1.2 The Participants

Students
A total of 100 boys and girls belonging to Arts, Commerce, Social Science and Science streams, studying Compulsory English course at first semester during the academic session 2014-2015 participated for the pilot study.

Teachers
Five teachers out of a total of 25 teaching Compulsory English at AMU opted for the pilot survey.

0.4.1.3 Procedure of Conducting Pilot Survey

The pilot survey questionnaire was distributed randomly among above-mentioned participants- teachers and students. The time given to complete the questionnaire was 30 minutes. The researcher explained it to the students and collected the questionnaire.

The researcher noted down all doubts and queries that students and teachers raised while responding to the questionnaire. Even teachers’ advice and suggestions were paid attention.

0.4.1.4 Suggestions and Modifications on Pilot Survey

After collecting the data, the questionnaire was enriched with useful and helpful suggestions from teachers. Even, students’ feedbacks were used to bring some modifications to the content of the two sets of questionnaires.

For instance, instructions to Question 9 in the students’ questionnaire was modified because students, in general, faced problems rating the items from 1-5 scales where 1 means ‘the most’ and 5 ‘the least’. This question was changed to rate the items in descending order, i.e., from 5-1, where 5 means ‘the most important’ and 1 ‘the least
important’. To make the question comprehensible to students, the word ‘important’ is included.

In question no. 7 scales like ‘average’ and ‘not often’ were replaced by ‘sometimes’ and ‘rarely’, respectively. These changes were made in the teacher questionnaire too.

One question was added to the teacher questionnaire as question no. 4 (Do you think student strength in class affects your teaching? Yes □ No □ If ‘YES’, how (please list a few reasons)) in the second section and asked for the number of students in each class. It was suggested to indicate the teacher-student ratio in the language classroom. Here, teachers’ explanations were queried according to the selection of the positive alternative. Their comments qualitatively are discussed later at length. Therefore, the total number of questions becomes 10 in teacher’s questionnaire.

Though, there were more suggestions, only the relevant ones were admitted in the questionnaires to make them clear and more effective. Hence, these modified questionnaires were applied for the main study.

**0.4.1.5 Importance of the Pilot Survey**

To identify students’ behaviors regarding their level of competence linguistically and find out learner’s requirements through piloting the survey makes the procedure of collecting data more valid and strong. Similarly, the teachers’ suggestions and feedback authenticate the subject and provide comprehensive modification. However, the researcher’s observation towards the attitude of these two groups clarifies her insights of formative assessment in Compulsory English.

This enabled the researcher to justify the validity of the questions included in the questionnaire, and also helped to further consolidate the representative sample and to refine the methodology for data collection. This enables us to understand the validity of the topic, the level of students, and the appropriateness of the procedure for carrying out the research.

**0.4.2 Main Study**

This section of the chapter deals with the main study / survey, using the modified questionnaires based on the pilot survey.
0.4.2.1 The Instrument

After implementing the modifications based on the pilot survey, the final version of the questionnaires (Appendix 1&2) of the present study was prepared and distributed.

The final versions were as follows:

Students’ questionnaire was set of close-ended questions. It contains five sections, as explained earlier, to identify the students’ perception regarding practices, needs and prospects of Formative Assessment techniques at AMU. Eleven techniques of Formative Assessment were included in the questionnaire to speculate on whether the students were conversant with these techniques, how far these items were implemented in Compulsory English classes and to what extent they needed these items in promoting their English Language proficiency. Likewise, teachers’ perceptions and views were also gathered to identify the practices, needs and prospects of Formative Assessment. The main purpose of using parallel questionnaire for teachers and students- as instruments- is to reach at findings of the present study by identifying, comparing and analyzing the two sets of responses on common issues.

Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test on subscale of the TQ & SQ appeared to have good internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$) for the present study.

0.4.2.2 The Participants

Students

Eight hundred (800) undergraduate students of first, third and fifth semesters of Compulsory English program of academic session 2014-2015 participated in this study. These students represented four faculties and 25 courses of study. The researcher randomly selected 200 students from each faculty, namely Arts, Commerce, Science, and Social Science, with equal number of males and females from the University and its Women’s College.

Teachers

Twenty five out of forty five teachers from Department of English and Women’s College responded to the questionnaire. Teachers involved in this study had a PhD, MPhil, & MA degree either in English Literature or English Language Teaching and have been appointed as Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, or as
Guest Faculties at A.M.U. The years of their teaching experience varied from 1-28 years.

**0.4.2.3 Collection of Data**

For the purpose of collecting data through questionnaire, the researcher ensured the respondents of the confidentiality of their responses. The current survey was conducted in the academic session 2014-2015. Two sets of questionnaire were distributed randomly among respondents. A brief explanation was given orally regarding filling up the questionnaire. 25 teachers filled out the questionnaire. 923 questionnaires were served to the students, out of which 867 questionnaires were filled out and returned. 67 questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete responses. Finally, an adequate size of 800 questionnaires submitted by students (400 male and 400 female) was retained.

**0.4.2.4 Data Analysis**

All information about the current survey was coded for statistical analyses and fed into a computer database. Statistical Package for SPSS 19.00 version was utilized for analyzing the data. The statistical analysis was performed to get descriptive statistics on the various items by the respondents. The statistical procedures used in this study were descriptive statistics: frequency, percentage, crosstabs and reliability through Cronbach’s Alpha Method. In order to identify the variation of responses on the different items of the respondents, the scores were computed in terms of percentages. All the results thus are presented in percentages. Cross-tab is applied to compare responses of two respondent groups (teachers and students) so as to get whether there is any significant distinction between the responses of some selective items which both groups opted formatively. Moreover, Crosstabs are used to compare within faculty groups to recognize significant contrasts among them. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability is used to determine the internal consistency of items in questionnaires to measure its reliability.

**0.4.2.5 Results and Their Interpretation**

The results of the study are organized, presented and discussed under the five heads of the two questionnaires for teachers and students, with the main focus on practice, needs and prospects of Formative Assessment at A.M.U. Since the implantation of Formative Assessment and its techniques depends mainly on the teachers, the results
of the Teachers’ Questionnaires has been discussed first followed by the results of Students’ Questionnaires in order to cross-check and reach at the reality of the practice, needs and prospects of Formative Assessment at A.M.U. Hence, the results have been arranged in the following sub-sections:

- Analysis and Interpretation of Teacher’s Questionnaire (TQ)
- Comparative Analysis and Interpretation of Students’ Questionnaire (SQ)

0.4.2.6 Findings

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>
<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>

Table 0.1: Practice / Present Status of FA Techniques at AMU
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.
ii. ‘Discussion’ is generally conducted, but needs to be more effectively practised.

![Graph 0.7- Conducting ‘Discussion’](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%Teachers’ Responses</th>
<th>%Students’ Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


![Graph 0.8- Involving Learners’ in ‘Self-assessments’](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%Teachers’ Responses</th>
<th>%Students’ Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graph 0.9 - Adopting 'Peer-assessments' among Learners

Graph 0.10 - Asking Learners to give 'Presentations'

Graph 0.11 - Using 'Visual Representation'
iv. ‘Think-Share-Pair’, ‘Oral Examination’ and ‘Assignments’ are to be implemented effectively.

Graph 0.12 - Adopting Think-Pair-Share

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%Teachers’ Responses</th>
<th>%Students’ Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 0.13 - Giving ‘Oral Examination’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%Teachers’ Responses</th>
<th>%Students’ Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 0.14 - Giving ‘Assignments’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%Teachers’ Responses</th>
<th>%Students’ Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
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.

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>

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>
<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>

Table 0.3: Prospects of FA Techniques for implementation at AMU

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.

ii. 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:
Graph 0.18 - Importance of 'Peer-assessments'

Graph 0.19 - Importance of 'Self-assessments'

Graph 0.20 - Importance of 'Discussion'
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.

0.5 Conclusion of the Study

Following Conclusions of this study can be generated as:

- The actual classroom situation reflects 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.
- Most teachers believe that the strength of students would affect their way of teaching and assessing.
- The practice of some FA techniques such as ‘Questioning’ is a common part of everyday classroom activity, ‘Discussion’ is usually conducted, but needs to be more effectively practised, ‘Self Assessment’, ‘Peer Assessment’, ‘Presentations’ and ‘Visual Representations’ need to be implemented properly, ‘Think-Share-Pair’, ‘Oral Examination’ and ‘Assignments’ are to be implemented effectively and ‘Projects’ and ‘Portfolios’ are not in use, hence they need to be introduced afresh and implemented in the English Classrooms at AMU.
- Generally both teachers and students are receptive enough to the need of Formative Assessment techniques that requires to be implemented at AMU. It means that they are actually not satisfied with the present state of affairs, despite their specific responses in the earlier section.
- FA techniques in terms of Prospects component, Teachers believe that the majority of FA techniques seems to be in ‘Highest Prospects’, only few items that shows to be of ‘Average Prospects’. Besides, teachers considered that almost all FA techniques as higher prospects rather than students. Teachers are very genuine and forceful in their belief.

0.6 Significance / Implications of the Research:

The above findings, identified on the basis of the present investigation, make 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.

0.7 Limitations 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.
0.8 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.


Bourke, R., Mentis, M., & Todd, L. (2011). Visibly learning: Teachers’ assessment practices for students with high and very high needs. *International Journal of*


