The Power of Feedback: Perspectives of University Lecturers on Formative Feedback in EFL Classes

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ABSTRACT

This study tried to provide a comprehensive understanding of formative feedback as one of the essential elements in language teaching and learning. In relation to this, the study investigated the perspectives and experiences of English as foreign language (EFL) university teachers regarding the extent of implementing formative feedback in their teaching practices and its role in promoting students' language learning proficiency. Furthermore, the study attempted to identify best practices and give practical recommendations that enable lecturers in better choosing and implementing formative feedback techniques in EFL classes. The study used a mixed-method approach, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, for data collection. This research randomly recruited 118 EFL teachers across different universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), including public and private ones. This was followed by the purposive sampling to interview 20 EFL teachers from different universities in KRI. This study also used the thematic analysis approach to analyse qualitative data, which was useful in thoroughly identifying the major themes and patterns within the data. Likewise, the quantitative data was analysed through using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software program. The study revealed that teachers often used formative feedback in their teaching practices through various delivery mechanisms. The study also found that using formative feedback in language instructions significantly promotes learners' language abilities.

KEYWORDS: Formative Feedback, Language Instructions, Implementation, Language Learning, Perspectives.

1. INTRODUCTION

Formative feedback is an essential element of language teaching that is far more important than traditional assessment techniques. Formative feedback can be a fundamental guiding force in forming and refining student learning outcomes. The interplay between formative evaluation and feedback is essential for developing proficient communication skills in language education.

Traditionally, expert teachers have been seen as facilitators who deliver information at the right time and in the most effective way for learning. This was often called the 'transmission model' or the 'old paradigm of feedback' (Winstone and Carless 2019, as cited in Woitt & et al., 2023).

Despite the recognized importance of formative assessment and feedback in language education, there is a surprising dearth of research into an in-depth investigation of the perspectives of students and instructors alike. While most of the studies have shown the effectiveness of formative assessment, this stusy claims that further insights are still needed into how feedback is perceived by those directly involved in the learning process such as; students and teachers.

Although, there is no fixed definition for the term of formative feeback, there is a unanimous agreement that formative feedback is the main tapestry of formative assessment (Morris, Perry & Wardle, 2021). Therefore, gaining knowledge about the complex processes involved in formative assessment and feedback will help educators modify their teaching practices to achieve maximum returns. Students can also learn better, as they will be provided with more guidance and opportunities to develop their language proficiency. This study may impact educational institutions by forming their teaching practices and contributing to the continuous discussions regarding effective language teaching methods. The findings of this study should advance the literature and enrich academic research in the area.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

While theoretically, the literature supports the role of formative feedback in improving language learning, data about how often English teachers apply these techniques in the classroom may be incomplete. Although language learning with formative feedback seems to create more student-centeredness in the learning process, many teachers cannot appropriately tap into these methods. This is probably due to many reasons, such as the scarcity of appropriate training, resources, or institutional systems, as they turned more toward summative assessment than ongoing feedback. Apart from the gap between utilization and practice, a question can be raised about how much realization of the potential benefits of formative feedback will be presented in an authentic classroom setting. While formative feedback is recognized globally for its potential advantages in enhancing student engagement, improving language acquisition, and promoting better learning, there has not been enough research into how far this will impact learners in improving language learning ability. The educators might not be fully aware of the appropriate use of formative feedback to improve language abilities and boost student outcomes.

3. AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims to add valuable insights into using formative feedback in EFL classrooms and its effectiveness in enhancing language learning. More precisely, it depicts how well and frequently English teachers use formative feedback techniques in their teaching practices. Additionally, this study will explore the effect of formative feedback on students' language learning ability in terms of how it would enhance their speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills. By addressing these aspects, this study aims to identify best practices and give practical recommendations that will support teachers in better implementing formative feedback techniques for the benefit of their students. More precisely, this study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do EFL university teachers implement formative feedback techniques in their teaching practices?

2. To what extent can formative feedback promote learners' language learning abilities?

4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Formative assessment in language education

According to Husam AlMofti (2020), assessment is vital in EFL classes, enabling teachers to modify, refine, and observe learning processes to achieve learning objectives. Presumably, formative feedback is considered a key component of the learning process and, therefore, it is advisable to consistently provide learners with formative feedback regarding their learning strengths and weaknesses. In language education, formative feedback plays a crucial role in promoting learners' language proficiency and communication skills. This is basically because it involves ongoing, constructive feedback that helps learners discern their strengths and areas for improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

According to Widiastuti & Saukha (2017), formative assessment aims to help teachers implement more appropriate teaching and learning activities to enhance students' learning outcomes. This is the primary objective of formative assessment, which takes place during teaching and learning activities. In this case, it might be determined that formative assessment plays two important roles: (a) determining and modifying learning activities, and (b) choosing the most effective strategies to improve students' learning outcomes.

Taking product-based writing in traditional methods, which only emphasizes the final product of writing, may hinder students by denying them the chance to incorporate their ideas and thoughts. As a result, students cannot use strategies for writing independently and eventually grow disinterested in writing. Therefore, teachers should be trained to use feedback as part of formative assessment to gain productive learning outcomes and improve their teaching methods as well (Ho, 2006, as cited in Johansson and Nilsson, 2017). Compared to writing, students will be more motivated to learn when they receive direct feedback from the teacher. This continues with the informal formative assessment process, in which students can reply to the teacher's responses and the teacher directly answers their questions. Furthermore, formative assessment acts as a monitoring and feedback tool for teachers and students, and Formative assessment can help with curriculum development and learning. How feedback is delivered can alter students' goal orientation, which is not set in stone (Dweck, 2017, as cited in Ningsih et al., 2024).

4. 2 Feedback in Lanaguage Learning

Feedback, an essential component of formative assessment, is a dynamic force influencing student learning outcomes. Learners play a crucial role in adopting any learning and teaching strategies across various educational levels (Malo, 2021), and feedback is vital in adopting those strategies. Effective feedback is characterized by specificity, timeliness, and clarity. Within the context of language education, feedback serves not only as a tool for error correction but also as a means to stimulate motivation and engagement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Formative feedback is more successful when students are motivated, have the chance to get it quickly, and can use it. Moreover, feedback is more beneficial for learning when it is informative, relevant, and acknowledged by the learner (Lipnevich et al., 2016; Shute, 2008, as cited in Kyaruzi et al., 2019).

The two essential constituents of feedback are self-assessment and peer. Having said this, self-assessment encourages autonomy and metacognitive awareness among students through actively processing their work. It develops students' ability to monitor and regulate their learning progress by taking responsibility for learning, setting goals, and reflecting upon areas of strengths and weaknesses. Peer evaluation encourages a cooperative and dynamic learning environment by having students comment on each other's work. This method fosters learners' critical thinking and analytical abilities while providing various viewpoints on writing excellence (Chen, 2023).

4.3 The Power of Feedback

The efficacy of feedback lies in its capacity to bridge the gap between current understanding and desired goals. Feedback can be classified into four different levels. First, task-level feedback assesses whether a task or commitment is suitable and frequently offers guidance on how to find more accurate information. Process-level feedback focuses on the techniques used to produce or finish a work. It also addresses the processing of information and learning processes. Third, self-regulation feedback aims to improve students' abilities to evaluate themselves and have confidence in themselves, impacting their self-efficacy and capacity to do tasks more successfully (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Constructive feedback not only rectifies errors but also enhances self-regulation, contributing to the overall development of language proficiency.

Feedback is mainly seen as a transmission of information emanating unidirectionally by stressing teachers' role in ensuring feedback quality. Still, the effectiveness of feedback is similarly bound up with the degree of students' active engagement in the process, which allows the reconceptualization of learner-centered feedback. Information transmission feedback frameworks and learner-centered feedback theories usually attribute the effectiveness of feedback to both the sender and the receiver of feedback. There is increasing evidence from research that shows the development of relationships between participants concerned with the feedback process is also crucial to the effectiveness of feedback, bringing to light a concept known as 'relational feedback (Dai et al., 2024).

4.4 Previous Studies

Elmahdi et al. (2018) investigated how a technology-based continuous assessment strategy impacted Bahrain Teachers College students' learning. According to their findings, continuous assessment promoted fair participation opportunities, raised student interest, and helped to create a fun and engaging learning environment.

Morris et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of the role of feedback and formative assessment in higher education. The researchers reviewed 188 research studies systematically based on factual categories. The findings showed that peer and tutor feedback presented promising outcomes, though their success largely depends on how they are implemented. In contrast, the evidence for praise, grading, and technology-mediated feedback was inconsistent.

Wijaya (2022) researched Indonesian teachers' views on the effectiveness of formative assessment in EFL writing classes. The researcher used five open-ended written narrative inquiry questions to collect data. The findings revealed that formative feedback improved the quality of their writing products.

Pramesti, I. (2024) researched the advantages of formative assessment as an evaluation technique. The researcher used the library method. The findings highlight formative assessment techniques such as exit tickets, quizzes, peer evaluations, and classroom observations. The study emphasizes the benefits of formative assessment, noting that it helps teachers identify students' needs, provides meaningful feedback, and encourages learners to take responsibility for their learning.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used mixed methods, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Throughout this study, the elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied at different times based on the nature and objectives of the study. Using mixed-methods approach was effective in this study as it allowed the researchers to triangulate the data. However, using one data collection tool might not be enough to meet the research objectives or answer the research questions completely. This has been confirmed by Kumar, who stated that using mixed methods allows one method to compensate for the weaknesses of the other method (2014, P. 196). More specifically, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used in this study as data collection tools to compensate for the weaknesses of the methods and, perhaps more importantly, produce rich data.

In this study, the questionnaire was employed as a data collection method and was particularly useful in gathering standardized responses consistently (Denscombe, 2007). The questionnaire consists of two

parts. The first part aimed at gaining the participants' demographic information, such as gender, age, major, and years of experience. However, their anonymity was ensured, and their identity was kept confidential. The second part included 22 items in the form of five-point likert scales, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items tried to find out how university teachers use formative feedback techniques in teaching classes and how these techniques can facilitate the learners' language ability. This study also used a semi-structured interview to collect data, and further follow-up questions were asked based on the participants' responses. The purpose of this study was explained to the participants, and consent was sought as required by the research before commencing the interviews; their identities were also protected, and interviews were conducted at convenient times to make them comfortable enough to talk and reveal maximum information (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007). All the interviews were subsequently conducted in English and then transcribed for the purpose of data analysis.

6. PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

In the present study, 118 EFL teachers were randomly invited from public and private universities in the KRI to express their opinions about the extent of using formative feedback techniques in their teaching classes through the questionnaire and their effectiveness on the learners' language abilities. The participants were heterogeneous, including teachers who differed in ages ranging between 20 to above 49, sex with 53 female and 66 male , speciality, and years of experience. Having said that, the probability technique was useful in taking representative sampling from a much larger population. This was followed by the purposive sampling to interview 20 EFL teachers from different universities in KRI.

7. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY

One of the steps taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the study was the evaluation and development of the research instruments through feedback from various stakeholders, including relevant experts and researchers. Before administering the final version of the study instruments for collecting data, they were piloted with a selection of research participants to ensure that the components were comprehensible and reflected the specified content. This was an essential procedure, necessary in highlighting any areas of confusion in the research tools and making amendments where necessary. This would therefore best serve the purpose of the study. In addition to this, the process of data collection was carried out at a place and time convenient to the research participants in order to enable

them feel at ease and willing to provide as many details as possible (Golafshani, 2003).

It souns worthy to mention that consent form was gained from all the particants and their vouluntirly participation in the study was ensured. However, their confidentiality and anonymity were kept, as their real names and private information did not appear in anywhere in this study.

Additionally, Conbach's Alpha was measured for the dimensions of the questionnaire to verify its reliability. As shown intable one, it is clear that the value of Conbach's Alpha for both dimensions of the questionnaire is above 0.8 which indicates a good internal reliability and consistency among the items of the questionnaire (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Table 1
Reliability Statistics

No.	Dimension	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Teacher Feedback Practices	13	0.887
2	The influence of Formative Feedback	9	0.834

8. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

8.1 Results of the questionnaire

This section will present the questionnaire and interview results separately to ensure the results' simplicity and clarity. In other words, this can be beneficial in presenting the study results more effectively and presenting a comprehensive picture. This study surveyed the perspectives of 119 EFL instructors from different public and private universities across Iraqi Kurdistan concerning the extent of using formative feedback in their teaching practices and its role in promoting learners' language abilities. However, it is worth stating that the answers were tabulated as SD, which refers to strongly disagree, D is disagree, N stands for neutral, A is agree, and SA means Strongly disagree. Additionally, the table (1) shows the mean and standard deviation of the research dimensions, and second table represents the means and standard deviation of each item in the questionnaire. Moreover, the researchers used Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to analyse the data.

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation of the whole
Questionnaire

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The use of formative feedback	118	3.8294	0.91886
Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Role of formative in language learning	118	4.0301	0.72473

According to the dataset in Table one, the teachers reported that they had incorporated formative feedback into their teaching practices to a reasonable extent. In this sense, the mean value of the research theme is 3.8294, which shows that the importance of implementing formative by EFL teachers falls between moderate and high degree. Referring to the other specific dimension of the questionnaire, the teachers believed that formative feedback can positively promote learners' language abilities with a weighted mean value of 4.0301. Furthermore, the standard deviations of the categories are low, confirming the consistency between the participants' choices and the accuracy of the results.

Table 3
Mean and Standard Deviation of the Questionnaire
Items

No.	Items	No	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I give students guidance and assistance in their language learning.	118	3.3644	0.82343
2	I discuss with my students how to utilize their strengths to improve on their assignment	118	4.1864	0.69120
3	After an assessment, I inform my students on how to improve their weak points	118	4.1356	0.82602
4	Together with my students, I consider ways on how to improve their weak points	118	4.1017	0.77779
5	I discuss with my students the progress they have made in learning English	118	4.0169	0.83700
6	I encourage students on their strong points concerning language learning	118	4.2203	0.77499
7	After a test, I discuss the answers given with each student.	118	3.5847	1.11191
8	I dedicate specific class time to giving formative feedback to students on their language skills	118	3.7881	0.87561
9	I use written comments to deliver formative feedback.	118	3.6186	0.88597
10	I use university electronic platforms to deliver feedback to students	118	3.0932	0.91509
11	I encourage students to actively engage with and reflect upon the feedback they receive.	118	3.8814	0.83890
12	I use rubrics to deliver formative feedback.	118	3.5763	0.90965
13	I spend part of my class time giving students directions and advising them on how to improve their language on their own.	118	3.9576	
14	I use portfolios to deliver formative feedback.	118	3.0847	0.82061
15	I provide opportunities for students to apply formative feedback in revising and improving their work.	118	4.0000	0.93896
16	Providing formative feedback during language classes can help students identify areas for improvement	118	4.2119	0.66667
17	I believe that incorporating formative feedback into classroom learning can encourage students to appreciate their learning better.	118	4.0847	0.71434
18	Incorporating university electronic platforms into feedback delivery practices can promote better engagement with learning materials.	118	4.0847	0.73469
19	I believe that students' self-assessment and reflection can be enhanced through the use of formative feedback.	118	3.7203	0.76108
20	I believe that formative feedback contributes to a supportive and inclusive classroom environment	118	3.7712	0.74433
21	I think integrating formative feedback into teaching practices can promote independent learning.	118	4.0339	0.59818
22	Giving students formative feedback is essential for the success of language learning.	118	4.3729	0.83509

8.2 Results of the interviews

After using thematic analysis approach for the purpose of analysing qualitative interview data, inter-rater reliability was adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of the themes and coding process, and perhaps to address subjective

bias in the process of producing themes. To consider the participants' confidentiality, furthermore, psydunms were used in presenting the results instead of real the participants' real names.

The qualitative interviews revealed that English teachers implement formative feedback in their teaching practices in various ways. Having said this, the results showed that they use multiple techniques, such as written comments, verbal feedback, and peer assessments to help and guide the learners throughout their learning process. However, the extent of utilizing these techniques varies from instructor to instructor due to the nature of the subject and teacher's style of teaching. In presenting these results, examples of the participants' perspectives and experiences will be shared.

8.2.1 Theme One: Consistent Use of Formative Feedback

When the teachers were questioned about the extent of using formative feedback during their teaching practices, th most of them reported that they regularly implement it in their teaching process. According to the data set, the teachers use formative feedback in their classrooms to a good extent to help and guide students throughout their learning process, not only in the classroom but also beyond the classroom. Adam said, "I apply formative feedback strategies most frequently during the teaching process." This means that teachers use formative feedback for specific purposes and consider it a permanent or integral part of the learning process. In that sense, Layla claimed that "I incorporate formative feedback almost in all my classes. I regularly provide students with constructive feedback during class participation by highlighting common mistakes and misconceptions, during presentations, and after each quiz, assignment, and report". This indicates that the teachers often adopted formative feedback during their teaching practices to help students identify their weaknesses and strengths to achieve their learning outcomes successfully. Simon and Ali believe that formative feedback is a continuous process and should be provided throughout the learning process rather than at the end of the term to effectively guide learners to learn without the pressure of grades.

8.2.2 Theme Two: Feedback Delivery Methods

As a result of data analysis, the teachers seemed to have used different forms of formative feedback in their teaching practices. According to the examples of teachers' excerpts, there is a diversity in the feedback delivery methods utilized among teachers based on the learners' needs and the desired learning outcome. Similarly, there is good flexibility in implementing feedback tools to support and contribute to the learners' learning process. The participants claimed that they use various methods for providing feedback based on the specific learning activity or purpose, such as oral, written, and peer feedback and guided questions. Concerning this, Michael shared his experience as follows;

I use various types of formative feedback during any class session. Selecting a suitable type usually draws on the nature of the activity and the mistakes students make. Regarding daily oral activities, I mostly start with Elicitation Strategy to encourage self-correction by asking students to rephrase the statement differently. I resort to peer and/or scaffolding feedback if it does not work. However, I mostly provide immediate feedback in the case of time limitations. I always provide students with written feedback regarding evaluation and the assessment of reports, homework, quizzes, and assignments.

According to this interview response, teachers use a variety of feedback strategies based on the learning situation, including oral, written, instant, peer, and guided feedback. This flexibility enables them to tailor feedback to the students' learning needs and, perhaps more importantly, encourage students to make timely modifications, reflect, collaborate, and engage in independent problem-solving throughout their learning process. This feedback delivery method truly reflects a learner-centered approach where the feedback is used to promote the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Thus, this diversity of feedback strategies demonstrates that instructors want to improve student learning by choosing the best kind of feedback for each specific situation.

Furthermore, David claimed, "I usually follow class discussions and call on individuals to elaborate on their answers so that they can reconsider their perspectives and find their weaknesses and strengths." This means the teacher actively engages with students throughout class discussions, encouraging them to elaborate on their responses. To him, this technique helps students think more deeply about their responses, allowing them to recognize their strengths and areas for improvement. This implies that the instructor considers feedback not only as a correcting tool but also as a means of encouraging critical thinking and self-awareness in students. Another similar example is Layla, who stated, "I often ask my students to write essays in groups in the class. For these activities, I give them instant oral feedback. I sometimes also use peer review as a form of formative feedback". This highlights that the teacher employs group essay writing in class, with immediate oral feedback to guide students as they work. Furthermore, the teacher occasionally uses peer review, which allows students to provide feedback on each other's work. To her, this method creates a collaborative learning environment where students learn from each other's feedback.

8.3 Formative Feedback Promotes Students' Language Abilities

Throughout the qualitative interviews, the teachers were questioned to share their experiences and beliefs about how they feel about the impact of formative feedback in promoting students' English language abilities. During the interviews, almost all teachers referred to the helpful role of formative feedback in facilitating learners' language abilities in English as a foreign language context. As a result of data analysis, two main themes have emerged. In reporting these results, instances of the teachers' beliefs and experiences will be provided. In the upcoming sections, these themes will be discussed and justified in detail by giving real instances of what the teachers thought and practiced during their teaching practices.

8.3.1 Theme Three: Formative Feedback Enhances Learners' Language Competencies

The qualitative analysis of the teachers' responses shows that formative feedback helps learners improve their language skills by offering timely and helpful insights during the learning process. To the teachers, this form of feedback is an effective instrument that enhances the teaching and learning experience and helps learners significantly increase their language skills. For teachers, formative feedback enables continuous assessment of educational performance. By evaluating learners' responses in actual time, teachers can tailor their teaching methods to meet their students' needs better. This adaptability guarantees that educational approaches are effective and personalized, resulting in a more supportive learning environment. The participants further claimed that students' language proficiency gradually improves as a result of providing regular formative feedback, which enables them to make modifications and corrections in the actual moment or time. They ensured that this feedback is essential for advancing language proficiency among students. In the sense of that, Ali expressed his thoughts as below;

Formative feedback is highly effective in language learning because it supports continuous and ongoing improvement and helps students understand their current proficiency level, identify specific areas for improvement, and receive encouragement. It also plays a crucial role in building student confidence. When a teacher gives students timely and constructive feedback, they are more likely to engage with the material, practice more, and take risks with new language structures, knowing they have the support needed to improve.

The answer to this interview question highlights how crucial formative feedback is in language acquisition, outlining that through this, there is promotion of continued growth and helps students evaluate their abilities. For him, this kind of feedback allows the students to observe points that need attention and encouragement to improve learning and confidence. This means that the teacher is in a position to create a motivating setting for the students by ensuring good and constructive feedback so the students are inspired to engage more with the topic themselves, practice regularly, and then come up with new language structure expressions. The support will help students take risks confidently, knowing they can progress continuously with feedback.

Ahmed mentioned another similar example: "Formative feedback helps students to develop their language competence gradually because the repetitive mistakes by students and the repetitive feedback from the instructors help students to get familiar with their mistakes and avoid them during the use of language." Similarly, Sonia claimed that formative feedback boosts learners' motivation and makes them take risks in the learning L2 process. Further, to her, students will be more active and willingly involved in learning through providing formative feedback. Thus, the above data underlines the importance of formative feedback in building learners' language ability. It promotes ongoing improvement by assisting students in understanding their skill levels, identifying areas for growth, and receiving encouragement. This positive feedback enhances students' confidence, encouraging them to participate more actively, practice more frequently, and experiment with new language structures. Teachers build a supportive learning environment that promotes skill development and language competency by providing constant coaching.

8.3.2 Theme Four: Formative Feedback Promotes Learners' Self-reflection and Self-regulation

The collected data revealed that formative feedback enables students to identify their learning strengths and areas for improvement. More importantly, it encourages learners to reflect on their learning, promoting students' self-regulation and lifelong learning skills. The teachers believed that offering regular feedback would enable students to take greater responsibility for learning by monitoring, managing, and setting learning goals. In that sense, Anna stated, " Formative feedback helps students understand their current level of proficiency and identifies areas where they need improvement. When students receive regular feedback, they can make suitable changes and set their learning goals, which leads to steady progress over time". During the process of the interview, likewise, David shared his thoughts below;

Through formative feedback, students can identify areas for growth, knowledge gaps, and learning strategies to modify or adapt to accomplish course objectives. Students might not be aware of their misconceptions if they do not receive formative feedback. Additionally, it

allows students to monitor and improve their learning strategies.

This interview excerpt highlights the significant role of formative feedback in assisting students in identifying knowledge gaps, areas for progress, and learning strategies that need to be adjusted. Apart from that, without formative feedback, learners might remain oblivious to their learning misconceptions. Besides, this allows them to re-evaluate and readjust their learning strategy for even more immense success. Indeed, Suzn has affirmed that learners can instantly know their strengths and weaknesses through formative feedback. Through such activities, students can continuously improve their strengths and work out their weaknesses, leading to continued development during the learning process. Therefore, the dataset means that formative feedback is critical in allowing and guiding the students to understand their strengths and weaknesses in learning appropriately. That may encourage continuous improvement and self-realization throughout a learner's progress.

9. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

These findings show the role of formative feedback within English language teaching and its implications for teaching and learning. As can be gathered from the results, English language instructors in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq are often integrating formative feedback techniques within their classrooms, with a mean score equal to 3.8294. The findings align with previous literature, which has repeatedly emphasized the significant role of formative feedback in helping learners acquire a target language and motivating student participation (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kyaruzi et al., 2019). It follows that, in a general sense, teachers appreciate formative feedback for its positive impact on learners' language competence, and enhancing students' writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills. The teachers hold that formative feedback helps students map out their weak and strong points and will eventually encourage them to work out their continuous development. The finding shared an affinity with the results of Elmahdi et al. (2018) in formative feedback that promotes student participation in active learning in the class.

In addition, the teachers in this study used several feedback strategies, including oral comments, written comments, and self and peer assessments. These methods allowed the instructors to give feedback that targeted the students' particular needs. Flexibility in the methods of delivering feedback is what Shute in 2008 underlined: "Feedback is effective if given promptly, is specific in nature, and can be adjusted to the particular learning situation." Indeed, the teachers use different methods so

that their students receive feedback, enabling them to develop their learning progress, self-regulation, and critical thinking. Besides, the qualitative information testified that with formative feedback, serious improvement in self-reflection and self-regulation by oneself could be observed.

Teachers indicated that regular feedback encourages students to reflect on their learning processes, identify areas for improvement, and set individual learning goals. This agrees with other studies indicating the role of formative feedback in promoting metacognitive awareness and self-directed learning (Ho, 2006, as cited in Johansson & Nilsson, 2017). This study confirms that formative feedback plays a significant role in developing students' language proficiency and autonomy while learning English.

10. CONCLUSION

The focus of the investigation was on the power of formative feedback, thus representing how university teachers believe in employing formative feedback while engaging with the processes involved in teaching the English subject.

This study tried to bring in a comprehensive understanding of formative feedback as one of the essential elements in language teaching and learning. The study also adopted different data gathering and sampling methods to achieve comprehensive insights from university instructors across the Kurdistan Region. The data analysis procedures of this study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Under the quantitative analysis, SPSS was utilized to present statistical data concerning numerical data. Meanwhile, qualitative descriptive data were analyzed using thematic analysis, adding more depth to understand the teachers' perceptions and experiences concerning formative feedback within EFL settings. This combination became very advantageous for comprehensive and full-rounded results. This means the research study has identified that the university teachers of English in the Kurdistan Region maintain a positive attitude towards incorporating formative feedback in teaching practices. The teachers view formative feedback as something that could develop students' learning and are willing to use this approach with the students at every possible time while providing instructions.

This optimistic approach towards formative feedback might eventually result in greater independence among the individuals and increase their capacity to manage their learning more efficiently. Another crucial result of this study is that, in the teaching process, the teachers continuously reported using the formative feedback approach on a routine basis. The teachers involved in this study showed that they use various techniques of

providing feedback, including oral comments, written comments, and peer feedback. By using various forms of feedback, teachers can better address the learning needs of the students and offer both short-term and long-term support. The research also found that the students who received formative feedback showed the development of language ability. If learners receive continuous and critical feedback, they will better understand their current level of language competence and the aspects that need improvement. This feedback-driven process significantly reinforces the students' confidence in their abilities concerning language and encourages independent practice of the structures of language learning.

Conclusively, it is indicated that formative feedback enables students to perform far more concomitantly in increasing peculiar sets of language skills that increase the general levels of language proficiency. A good emphasis on the heightened responsibility and high accountability involved in the process, as pointed out by self-regulation, was obtained from the study: encouraging students' self-reflection. The results deduced that formative assessment forms are based on the fact that students can reflect in-depth on their learning, monitor defects that need correction and omissions occurring in their learning procedures regarding previous targets, and set different achievement target goals. This reflection behavior is essential in helping learners take responsibility for their learning because it aids them in keeping track of their progress and adjusting where necessary. Formative feedback can also help students become more independent learners by encouraging self-regulation and adequately preparing them to control their learning journey. This study claims that learning can be more meaningful and productive as long as formative feedback is strongly concerned in language teaching. Consequently, learners may transfer the classroom learning to the other aspects of their lives and improve their lifelong learning skills.

11. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research paper features limitations that might affect the scope and depth of the results. However, for each limitation, corresponding recommendations are provided to address these concerns and promote the quality of future studies. To begin with, one limitation of this research could be the lack of direct classroom observations as a data collection instrument. While the study used teacher interviews and questionnaires, these data collection methods are probably subjective and may not adequately capture the real practices of formative feedback in the classroom. English instructors may present their feedback practices more favorably, resulting in inconsistencies between what is said and what is done in classroom instructions. To overcome this limitation,

future studies should include classroom observation to know how teachers employ formative feedback in real contexts and provide a more realistic view of the feedback process and how it works in real contexts.

Another limitation could be the sampling procedures, as only teachers' perspectives and experiences were taken; therefore, the study lacks insights into how learners receive and perceive formative feedback. This means that instructors may give typical and idealised images of their practices and methods, and, therefore, without learners' responses, it might not be easy to determine the real impact of formative feedback on language learning outcomes. Further research should also expand the sample to include learners, who are considered the primary receivers of formative feedback. In doing so, the researchers can understand how students interpret the concept of formative feedback and how it can promote learners' self-reflection, self-regulation, and language proficiency.

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