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Kurdish EFL Students' Perceptions towards Summative and Formative Assessment at Salahaddin University

A B S T R A C T

Inappropriate choice of assessment type in education may undermine the positive facets of both the teaching and learning process. The assessment system at Salahaddin University-Erbil has remained in an unchanged form over a prolonged duration. The students at Salahaddin University think that the assessment system fails to help them improve their learning process. Hence, the current assessment system should undergo certain changes. This study aims to delve into Kurdish EFL students' perceptions of summative and formative assessment at Salahaddin University and look for ways to refine the existing assessment framework to better address students' needs and contribute to the improvement of their overall learning experience. Additionally, it aims to pinpoint which assessment type yields a more positive impact on both the teaching practices and students' learning. A mixed-methods approach has been adopted to attain the aims of the study. Quantitative data was obtained by administering a survey questionnaire to 542 students majored in English language across three Colleges at Salahaddin University to capture their perceptions about the two forms of assessment. Qualitative data has been gathered through interviewing thirty senior English majors at three colleges within Salahaddin University to quest for solutions to the problems that they encounter with the current assessment system. Results yield promising conclusions by showing that the students at Salahaddin University are not satisfied with the assessment system in use at the present time because they believe that it has a detrimental impact on their academic achievement. According to their beliefs, the assessment system needs to be altered towards a more formative-oriented style since it opens threads for helping them enhance their learning experience and equips them for the demands of the labor market competently. Results prove beneficent as they provide significant information for the board of trustees and faculty staff of Salahaddin University who are in charge of refining the assessment framework, which consequently leads to the improvements of the educational structure and the overall quality of both teaching and learning.

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تصورات طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في كردستان نحو التقييم التكميلي والتكويني في
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الخلاصة:

اختيار نوع التقييم غير المناسب في التعليم قد يضعف الجوانب الإيجابية لكل من عملية التدريس والتعلم. نظام التقييم في جامعة صلاح الدين - أربيل لم يتغير على مدى فترة طويلة. يعتبر الطلاب في جامعة صلاح الدين أن نظام التقييم لا يساعدهم في تحسين عملية تعلمهم. وبالتالي، يجب أن يخضع النظام الحالي لتغييرات معينة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعمق في تصورات طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في كردستان بشأن التقييم الفراغي والتشكيلي في جامعة صلاح الدين والبحث عن وسائل لتحسين الإطار التقييمي الحالي لتلبية احتياجات الطلاب بشكل أفضل والمساهمة في تحسين تجربتهم العامة في التعلم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تهدف إلى تحديد نوع التقييم الذي يحقق تأثيرًا إيجابيًا أكبر على كل من ممارسات التدريس وتعلم الطلاب. تم اعتماد نهج الطرق المختلطة لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة. تم الحصول على البيانات الكمية من خلال إدارة استبيان لـ ٥٤٢ طالبًا متخصصين في اللغة الإنجليزية عبر ثلاث كليات في جامعة صلاح الدين لالتقاط آرائهم حول النوعين من التقييم. تم جمع البيانات الكيفية من خلال مقابلة ثلاثين طالبًا من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في ثلاث كليات ضمن جامعة صلاح الدين للبحث عن حلول للمشكلات التي يواجهونها مع النظام الحالي للتقييم. تظهر النتائج استنتاجات واعدة من خلال إظهار أن الطلاب في جامعة صلاح الدين غير راضين عن نظام التقييم الذي يتم استخدامه حاليًا لأنهم يعتقدون أن له تأثيرًا ضارًا على تحصيلهم الأكاديمي. وفقًا لاعتقاداتهم، يحتاج نظام التقييم إلى التغيير نحو نمط أكثر توجيهًا صياغيًا حيث يفتح خيوطًا لمساعدتهم على تعزيز تجربتهم في التعلم وتجهيزهم بكفاءة لمتطلبات سوق العمل. تثبت النتائج أنها مفيدة حيث تقدم معلومات هامة لمجلس أمناء وهيئة التدريس في جامعة صلاح الدين المسؤولين عن تحسين إطار التقييم، الأمر الذي يؤدي بالتالي إلى تحسين الهيكل التعليمي والجودة العامة لكل من التدريس والتعلم.

الكلمات الرئيسية: تقييم، تقييم تكويني، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في كردستان، تقييم النهائي، تأثير التقييم.

1. Introduction

In the course of learning, assessment is the process of accumulating a thorough appraisal of the students' knowledge of a particular subject (Chapelle and Brindley, 2010; Amua-sekyi, 2016). Widiastuti, et. al. (2020) defines assessment not just as a process of evaluating students' knowledge, it rather has to evaluate students' abilities, learning outcomes, and provide them with feedback. The purpose of an assessment or, more specifically, how the technique is to be applied is an important distinction to keep in mind. The literature frequently

distinguishes between the two roles of the two most salient forms of assessment; formative and summative assessment.

Summative assessment attempts to measure or summarize students' acquired knowledge by the culmination of a semester or a unit of teaching. A summary of a student's learning suggests reflecting on the previous learning experiences and measuring how well they have achieved goals, but it does not always indicate where they should go next. Examples of summative assessment include standardized tests, quizzes, final exams, assignments, and general competency assessments. In simple terms, summative assessment provides a quantitative scoring with a culminating grade (Knight, 2001; Brown, 2004).

Conversely, formative assessment is described by Black and William (1998) as an evaluation method that is consistently conducted by offering feedback to aid students in improving their learning progress by identifying knowledge gaps and to make real-time changes so as to bridge the gaps. Moreover, Green (2013) characterizes formative assessment as the process of aiding a learner's comprehension, skills, or capacities by utilizing the data obtained from an assessment opportunity. According to some theories, everyone (viz. teachers, students, and peers) has a part to play in formative assessment as they all contribute to the learning process.

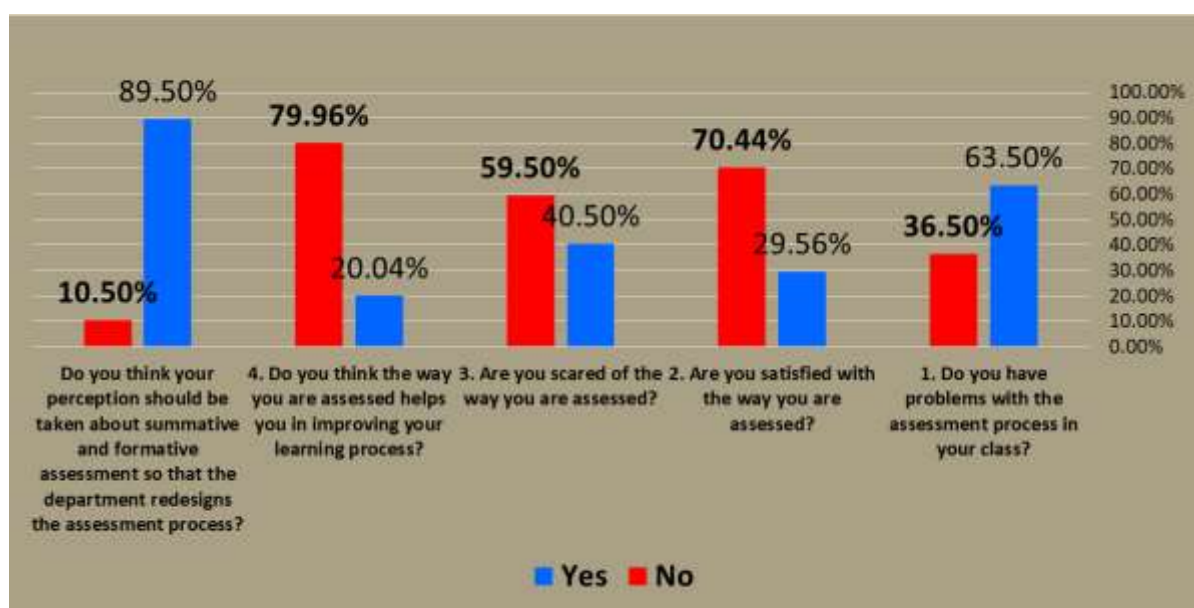
The most salient distinction between summative and formative assessments can be explained in the purpose behind doing them. If the students are merely provided with marks, the final judgement, without convenient feedback (i.e. with minimal feedback) of what they have or have not mastered, it would be Summative. Contrariwise, it is formative assessment when students are provided with feedback that lets students know what they have to do so as to improve their performance. Summative assessment is hence commonly used to measure learning and rarely employed for learning (Glazer, 2014). Thus, teachers should avoid having the mainstream idea of assessment as solely judgement. They rather should encourage and involve students in the learning journey by acquainting students with their previous mistakes and guiding them to steer clear of mistakes in their future learning so as to create a formative impact on developing students' academic performance (Al-Shehri, 2008).

Despite the existence of numerous methods of assessments, many countries, including Iraq, have put forward the use of summative assessment (i.e. standardized tests) because of the misconception that they are fair and reliable (Black, et al., 2003). Kurdistan Region of Iraq has a long standing history in the pass/fail nature of summative assessments in its program of study; that is having mid-term exams and final exams. Like most of the other universities in Kurdistan, summative assessment is used to assess students' academic achievement and learning in Salahaddin University. Problems have arisen in the reliability and validity of summative exams throughout time. To the best of the

researchers' knowledge, no research has yet been conducted to label the problems associated with the assessment system and to showcase the students' perceptions towards the assessment process in the universities of Erbil, how it affects their learning and what kind of assessment they prefer.

To ascertain the problem of the study, 1008 students at 3 Colleges of Salahaddin University (Viz. College of Education, College of Languages, and College of Basic Education) were asked whether they have problems, satisfied or scared with the current assessment system. They were further asked to identify if the current assessment system helps them in improving their learning process and whether their perceptions should be taken for what kind of assessment they prefer so that the colleges redesign the assessment system. As shown in figure 1, 63% of the 1008 students have problems with the way they are assessed. 70% of students are not satisfied and 59% are scared of the way they are assessed (i.e. summative assessment). 79% believe that the assessment does not help them in improving their learning process and about 90% believe that it is important to take their opinion for what kind of assessment they prefer and redesigning assessment system as per this!

Figure 1. Salahaddin University Students' Problems with the Current Assessment System



Results of the afore-mentioned survey were the impetus for the current study and brings into life the significance of the study in hand. To bridge the gap in the literature and appoint the problems students face with how they are assessed, the research questions outlined below are answered in the present study:

1. Do Kurdish EFL students perceive summative or formative assessment as more congruent with planned learning, authentic, transparent, diverse, and consulting students?

2. How do Kurdish EFL students see formative and summative assessment in terms of their washback (i.e. their effect on teaching and learning process)? Does summative assessment have a greater positive impact on learning and teaching process or formative?
3. How do the Kurdish EFL students want the assessment system in Salahaddin University to be improvised and redesigned so as to best suit their needs and enhance their learning process?

2. Washback in Assessment

Washback (or backwash by Hughes, 1993) can be elucidated as the effect of assessment on teaching and learning (McNamara, 2000; Brown, 2004; Cheng and Curtis, 2004; Cheng, 2005; Fulcher and Davidson, 2007). A great washback effect of a particular assessment can be attained when there is congruence between the module learning outcomes and the focus of the assessment. On the contrary, a negative washback can be observed when the teachers and learners narrow the module learning outcomes in favor of the assessment format and there is incongruence between the two (Taylor, 2005).

A high-stake testing result is considered as impacting the students directly since the results are important in deciding about the students' future (Cheng, 2005; Qi, 2005; Dong, 2020). This puts a lot of pressure on the teachers to make sure that students score high in the tests and it further compels the teachers to skip and exclude some of the contents and tasks for the examination and narrow the curriculum (Smith, 1991). High-stake standardized tests lead the teacher to teaching the test and teaching to the test. That is, the teacher provides students with ideas of what the examination questions will be and accordingly the answers are taught to them. This phenomenon doesn't encourage teaching and learning process and it is completely untrustworthy of the teachers and could be regarded as cheating (Sukyadi and Mardiani, 2011).

For a better comprehension of the qualities of assessments, Dorman and Knightly (2006) established a tool named Perceptions of Assessment Tasks Inventory (PATI). The aim of this instrument was to discern students' perceptions of assessment tasks under five categories which are congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation in the assessment process, transparency of the purposes and forms of the assessment, and diversity. Dorman and Knightly's (2006) instrument was relied upon as a theoretical framework to form 'part one' of the questionnaire used in this study (see Tables 2,3,4,5, and 6)

Congruence with planned learning signifies that students view the assessment tasks aligned in harmony with their learning outcomes and activities (i.e.

learning outcomes). Authenticity, in the realm of assessment indicates that the assessment tasks are relevant to the students' daily life occurrences. Student consultation refers to the active involvement and input of students in the assessment process. Transparency denotes that students are well acquainted with the objectives and forms of the assessment. Diversity is when students see that they have flexibility to complete the assessment tasks at a speed comfortable to them (Pan, 2020).

In Hughes' (1993, 2003) trichotomy of the backwash model, test effects are described through the lens of 'participants', 'process(es)', and 'products'. In this model, the participants' interpretation and reaction towards a test influence how they answer and the nature of their answers. This explains that the quality of a test is indispensable to predict the degree of washback test effects. Based on Hughes's trichotomy model, any washback study can be conducted by concentrating on participants (learners, teachers, material and content developers, publishers), process (participants' actions towards learning, for example, syllabus design, the development of materials, and teaching methods), and products (what is learned and the quality of learning). 3Ps, the short form, coined by Saville (2009) denotes these 3 main washback factors (participants, processes, and products).

Based on what a test influences, 15 washback hypotheses were developed by Alderson and Wall (1993): attitudes, teaching, learning, content, degree, sequence, rate, depth, and also the proportion of teachers or learners, in which varied effects that are brought about by tests on teaching and learning are explained. Similar to Hughes' model, Alderson and Wall's (1993) hypotheses report the effect of washback (i.e. consequences) rather than focusing on the other factors, besides a test, lead to these effects. Nonetheless, a number of the hypotheses hint at the possibility of other factors available eliciting more effects from some learners and teachers than they did for others.

Green (2007) set forth the concept of washback variability. He states that participants' perceptions of test stakes, test quality, and test difficulty differs from person to person and thus result in differences in the washback effects experienced by individuals. Based on Green's point of view, students' perceptions, attitudes, and reactions toward the following seven factors may result in various degrees of washback intensity: (a) test demands (content, format, and complexity), (b) purpose of the test, (c) stakes of the test, (d) difficulty of the test, (e) test preparation resources, (f) teaching methods, and (g) learning content. In Green's opinion, in review of the above-mentioned studies, students' perceptions of classroom assessment can be examined from washback perspectives to comprehend how the assessment shapes students in assorted ways.

The above three washback models (viz. Hughe's (1993) washback model, the 15 washback hypotheses by Alderson and Wall (1993), and Green's (2007) concept of washback variability) were used as the theoretical base for designing part two of the questionnaire used as a tool for collecting data in the current study (see Table 7). The questionnaire is adopted from Pan (2020).

3. Previous Related Studies

Despite the availability of numerous researches conducted to explore teachers' perceptions towards assessment (viz. Havnes et al., 2012; Burner, 2016; Saliu-Abdulahi et al., 2017; Palm, 2022), very few are conducted to examine the students' perceptions towards assessment types in different countries/cities in the world.

Anwar and Hameed (2016) carried out a research in which they investigated the MBBS students' perceptions and experiences of their formative and summative assessment that were undertaken during the time their research was being conducted. A quantitative cross-sectional approach was adopted using a structured and pre-validated questionnaire which was distributed on all the 2 to 5 year students. The results showcased that the students are in favor of formative assessment only because feedback is provided in it and the feedback plays a great role in helping them in learning along with preparing for summative assessment. Otherwise, all facets of summative assessment were more satisfactory for the students. Though the current study investigates students' perceptions towards summative and formative assessment, it differs from Anwar and Hameed's (2016) study in that it utilizes a quantitative and qualitative research approach so as to get more valid results.

Panchbhai and Shrivastva (2017), in their study, explored undergraduate students' perceptions about formative assessment. A focus group discussion was used as a qualitative research method on 70 undergraduate students. The findings manifested that the students were in favor of the utility of formative assessment and they stated that feedback mechanism should be structured in formative assessment so that it maximizes the learning. The study in hand differs from this one as it uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches of research and the qualitative method used is a semi-structured interview rather than a focus group discussion.

Pan (2020) conducted a study to explore the students' viewpoints of summative and formative assessment tasks in their English courses. 107 first-year undergraduates at one Taiwan University were enlisted to sit for one summative written exam and two formative assessments after which a questionnaire was used to investigate the students' perceptions. The conclusions that are drawn in

the research are that the students approved the summative assessment owing to the fact that it is congruent with planned learning and transparent. They further acknowledged that they learn more while preparing for the summative assessment. The students had a bright outlook on the cooperative group assessment as a formative one due to its diversity. Preparing for summative assessment evoked a higher degree of test-oriented learning for respective skills, while motivation to learn English for productive skills were elicited by formative assessments. Lastly, based on the students' beliefs, a proper integration of summative and formative assessment tasks is beneficent for their learning. The current study adopted the questionnaire used by Pan (2020) but it differs with it in that the participants who answered the questionnaire in the present study were senior students and they had already experienced both summative and formative assessment, therefore, they were not asked to complete any summative exam or formative assessment for this study particularly. Further, the current study uses a qualitative research method to validate the results of the quantitative part.

Another study, relevant to students' perceptions about assessment, was carried out by Kristiyanti, et. al. in 2021. It aimed to inspect 215 students' perceptions about the implementation of online formative assessment in English learning via a survey and an interview. The survey findings revealed that the students hold a favorable view of the deployment of online formative assessment. The information acquired from the interview supported the result of the survey. Additionally, the students hold the view that the unavailability of feedback in the online formative assessment makes it less effective and causes them to be less interested. Though the current study uses both survey questionnaire and interview, it explores students' perceptions towards a face-to face formative assessment rather than an online one along with summative assessment.

To the fullest extent of the researchers' knowledge, no research has yet been carried out about the Kurdish EFL students' perceptions towards summative and formative assessment in Erbil-Kurdistan. Henceforth, the research in hand bridges this gap and adds the Kurdish EFL students' perceptions about formative and summative assessment to the literature.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Rational for the Choice of Research Methodology

A mixed methods approach was utilized to attain the objectives of the study. A mixed methods approach can be described as the amalgamation of both quantitative and qualitative data analyses in one study. The rationale behind adopting this method is the robustness of the combination of both quantitative and qualitative research which elevates the validity of the research (Dornyei,

2007).

4.2 Hypothesis of the Study

It is hypothesized that Kurdish EFL students see both summative and formative assessment equally important and effective in the learning and teaching process.

4.3 Population and Context

This present study was carried out at three colleges (viz. College of Education, College of Basic Education, and College of Languages) from Salahaddin university that is located in the capital city, Erbil, of Kurdistan Region.

The study participants were 542 senior students who majored in the English language at the three previously mentioned colleges in Salahaddin University. Only all the senior students were opted for as the population of the study due to their exposure to both the types of assessment (i.e. summative and formative) that makes their responses more valid and reliable. Another reason for only choosing the senior students is due to lack of time and financial support.

The researchers collected demographic information of the 542 students (as displayed in Table 1). The participants included students of both genders (169 males and 373 females) and 300 of the participants were from College of Education (Morning and Evening Studies), 113 students from College of Languages, and 129 were from College of Education (Morning and Evening Studies). Their ages were mostly 22 or 21 years and some were older since College of Education and Basic Education enroll older students in their evening studies.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Senior Students Majored in English Language at the Three Colleges in Salahaddin University

No.	Demographic Data	No. of Students	Percentage
1.	Gender		
	Male	169	31%
	Female	373	69 %
2.	Colleges		
	College of Education	300	55%
	College of Languages	113	22%
	College of Basic Education	129	23%
3.	Age		

	21 years	170	32%
	22 years	277	51%
	23 years	54	10%
	24 years	29	5%
	Above 24 years	12	2%
4.	Have you taken/experienced both summative and formative assessment in the four years of your academic life at your college?		
	Both summative and formative	499	92%
	Only summative	43	8%
	Only formative	0	0%

The researchers posed further questions to the participants asking whether they took/experienced either summative and formative assessment or any one of them merely. The number of the students who experienced both summative and formative assessment at their respective colleges was 499. Only 43 of them answered that they had only experienced summative assessment. It is heartening that 92% of the students experienced both types of assessment that would make the results of the current study more accurate, valid, and reliable.

4.4 Research Instruments and Data Collection

As mentioned in 4.1, this study employs a mixed methods approach (i.e. quantitative and qualitative). To collect the quantitative data, a survey questionnaire was distributed to the 542 senior students at the three colleges in Salahaddin University in order to know their perceptions towards summative and formative assessment.

The questionnaire was comprised of two sections. Section one asked for the students' demographic information (see Table 1) and the second section had 28 statements about the students' perceptions towards summative and formative assessment. The statements utilized in the survey questionnaire were adopted from Pan (2020) which he designed them based on three washback models (viz. Hughe's (1993) washback model, the 15 washback hypotheses by Alderson and Wall (1993), and Green's (2007) concept of washback variability).

The second section of the questionnaire was of two parts. The first part was designed to explore the students' perceptions towards summative and formative assessment in terms of Congruence with Planned Learning, Authenticity, Student consultation, Transparency, and Diversity (see Tables 2,3,4,5 and 6). The second part of the second section in the questionnaire was written so as to discover the students' perceptions towards washback of the summative and formative assessment; that is how the assessment affects the learning and

teaching process that precedes it (see Table 7). For both the parts the students were asked to choose either summative or formative.

Later, to get the qualitative data, a semi-structured interview was done with 30 senior students in order to get a deeper understanding of their perceptions towards summative and formative assessment and explore what solutions they suggest for the problems they are suffering from with the current assessment system and how the assessment system can be improvised to meet their needs. 10 of the students were from College of Education, 10 from college of basic education and the remaining 10 from college of languages.

4.5 Data Analysis

To analyze the obtained data, descriptive statistics were conducted using SPSS version 21.0. Descriptive statistics were performed because the research questions can be scrutinized and analyzed via this type of performance. Moreover, to analyze the interview, qualitative part, thematic analysis was carried out.

5. Analysis of Results

5.1 Analysis of Results of the Questionnaire

This section displays the findings of the research in the form of tables and figures for the quantitative part (i.e. the questionnaire). The first part of the questionnaire is concerned with congruence, authenticity, student consultation, transparency, and diversity of assessment. Part two of the questionnaire is centered on the impact of assessment on teaching and learning (i.e. washback).

5.1.1 Congruence with Planned Learning

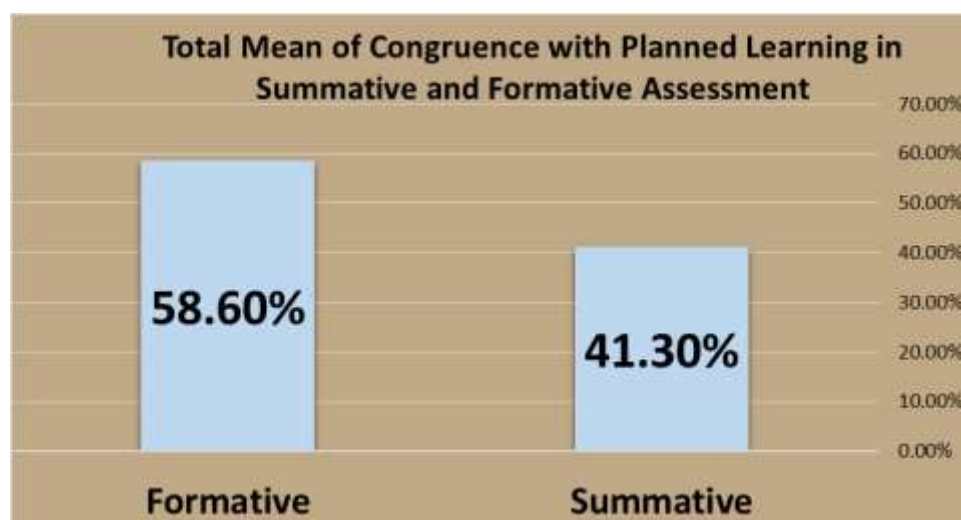
Questions in this part of the questionnaire are related to the congruence or the agreement of the assessment with planned learning or the learning outcomes of the course. The first item asked about whether what and how the students are assessed is in congruent with what is studied in class. The results show that 51% of the students believe summative assessment is more congruent while 49% chose formative. Concerning the second item which asks the students to choose whether what is taught in English class helps them to prepare for summative or formative assessment. 68% of the students believe that what is taught in English class can help them to prepare for the formative assessment. Contrariwise, 31% believe that what is studied in class prepares them for summative assessment.

Table 2. Kurdish EFL Students' Perceptions towards Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of Congruence with Planned Learning

Category	Questionnaire items	Summative Assessment		Formative Assessment	
		No.	%	No.	%
Congruence with Planned Learning	1. How I am assessed and what criteria I am assessed upon correspond to what takes place in the English class.	276	50.9%	266	49.07%
	2. The topics covered in the English class can help me to get prepared for the assessments.	172	31.7%	370	68.2%
Total Mean		224	41.3%	318	58.6%

According to the analysis of the answers as seen in figure 2, 58% of the students believe that formative assessment is in more congruence with what is done and taught in the English class, while 41.3% of the students believe that summative assessment is more congruent with what happens in the English class.

Figure 2. Total Mean of Students' Choice of Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of being more Congruent with Planned Learning



5.1.2 Authenticity

There are three statements related to the authenticity of the two types of assessment. Inquiring whether the current assessment process provides

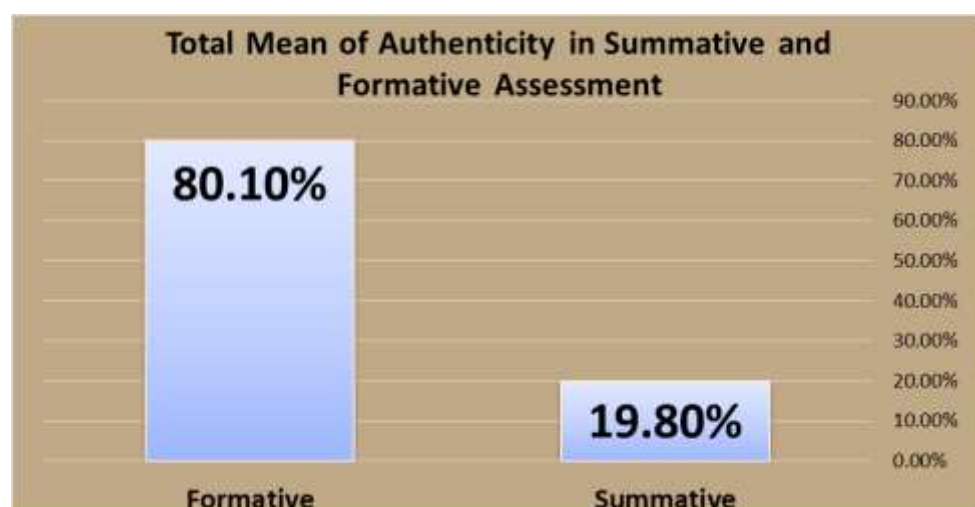
knowledge, whether it is relevant to the real world, or if they find it relevant to the future workplace, as displayed in table 3.

Table 3. Kurdish EFL Students' Perceptions towards Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of Authenticity

Category	Questionnaire items	Summative Assessment		Formative Assessment	
		No.	%	No.	%
Authenticity	1. I have absorbed beneficial knowledge from the assessment.	164	30.2%	378	69.7%
	2. I perceive the English assessment tasks to be pertinent to the real world.	89	16.4%	453	83.5%
	3. I find the English assessment tasks to be pertinent to the future work environment.	69	12.7%	473	87.2%
Total Mean		107.3	19.8%	434.6	80.1%

shown in figure 3, 19.8% of the students believe that summative assessment is more authentic. In contrast, 80.1% of the students believe that formative assessment is more authentic.

Figure 3. Total Mean of Students' Choice of Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of being more Authentic



5.1.3 Student Consultation

As it can be noticed in table 4, there are two statements related to student consultation; inquiring whether the students are aware of how they are assessed and what they are assessed upon, or whether their teacher explained the purpose of each assessment.

Table 4. Kurdish EFL Students' Perceptions towards Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of Student Consultation

Category	Questionnaire items	Summative Assessment		Formative Assessment	
		No.	%	No.	%
Student consultation	1. I am conscious of how I will be assessed and what criteria will be used to assess my performance in the English class.	277	51.1%	265	48.8%
	2. My teacher has provided a thorough explanation about the purpose of each assessment.	247	45.5%	295	54.4%
Total Mean		262	48.3%	280	51.6%

As presented in figure 4, 48.30% of the students believe that they are more aware of summative assessment and that the objectives of summative assessment are clearer. On the other hand, 51.60% of the students disagree, saying that they are more aware of how they are assessed in formative assessment and that the purpose of formative assessment is clearer.

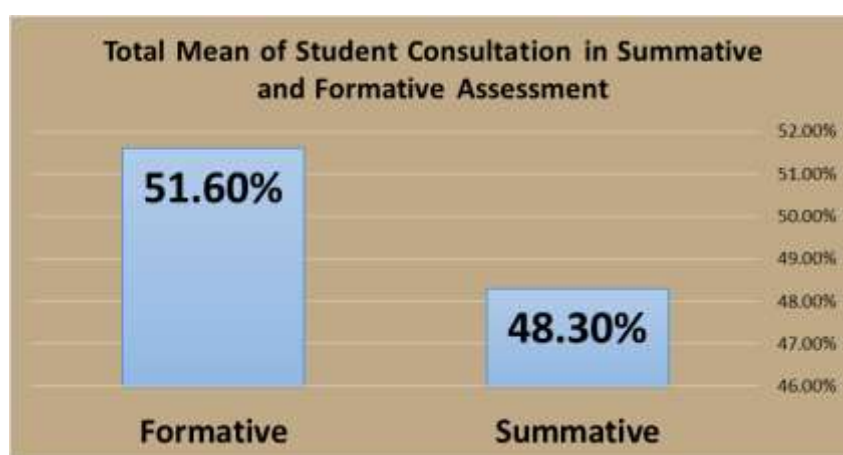


Figure 4. Total mean of Students' Choice of Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of Student Consultation

5.1.4 Transparency

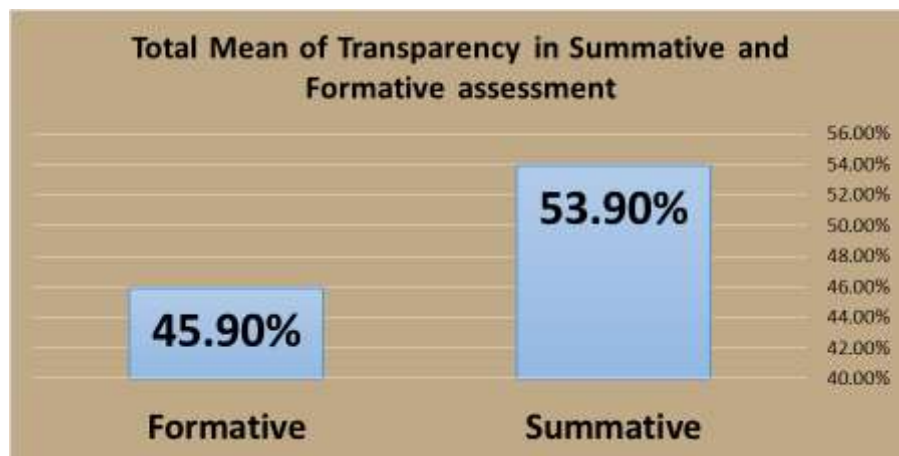
Transparency is related to the clarity of the assessment process. In this part of the questionnaire as displayed in table 5, students are asked whether they understand the marking of the assessment tasks and if they are told in advance about the time of their assessment. They are also asked whether they are aware of the criteria of exceling in the assessment so as to attain high marks.

Table 5. Kurdish EFL Students' Perceptions towards Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of Transparency

Category	Questionnaire items	Summative Assessment		Formative Assessment	
		No.	%	No.	%
Transparency	1. I have a clear understanding of how the English assessment tasks are marked.	298	54.9%	244	45.0%
	2. I am informed ahead of time about when I will be assessed.	293	54.0%	249	45.9%
	3. The criteria that is necessary to successfully complete the English assessment and get high grades is evident to me.	287	52.9%	255	47.0%
Total Mean		292	53.9%	249	45.9%

As shown in figure 5, 45.90% of the students believe that formative assessment is more transparent while 53.90% of the students believe that summative assessment is more transparent.

Figure 5. Total Mean of Students' Choice of Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of Transparency



5.1.5 Diversity

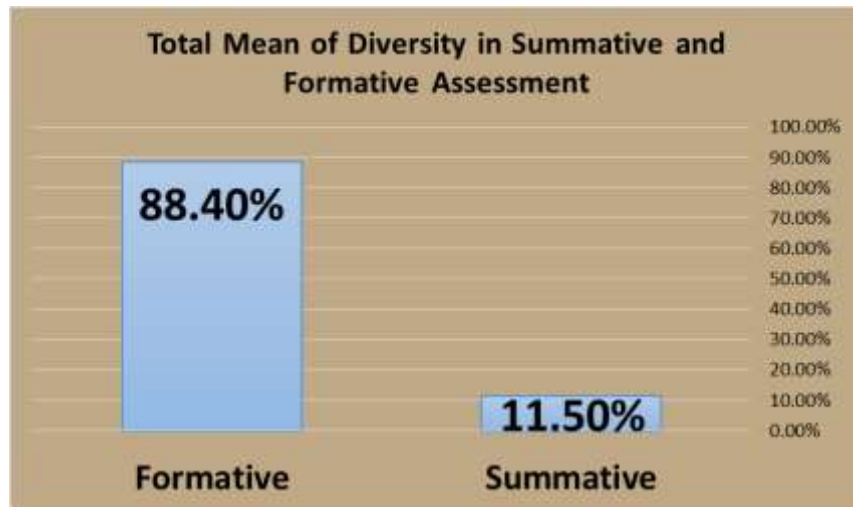
There are two questions related to the diversity of the current assessment process; Inquiring whether the students are given a choice of assessment tasks that suit their abilities or if they are allowed to complete them at their own speed.

Table 6. Kurdish EFL Students' Perceptions towards Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of Diversity

Category	Questionnaire items	Summative Assessment		Formative Assessment	
		No.	%	No.	%
Diversity	1. I am provided with a range of assessment tasks to choose the ones that suit my ability.	61	11.2%	481	88.7%
	2. I have the autonomy to finish assessment tasks at my own pace.	64	11.8%	478	88.1%
Total Mean		62.5	11.5%	479.5	88.4%

As presented in figure 6, 88.40% of the students voted for formative assessment, believing it is more diverse. On the other hand, 11.50% of the students voted for summative assessment, believing that it is more diverse.

Figure 6. Total mean of Students' Choice of Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of Diversity



5.1.6 Washback

Washback means the impact of assessment type on teaching and learning that precedes the assessment. In the questionnaire, the Kurdish students were asked about the washback of both summative and formative assessment to see which one has a greater positive impact on the learning and teaching process via 16 items in the questionnaire as it can be seen in table 7.

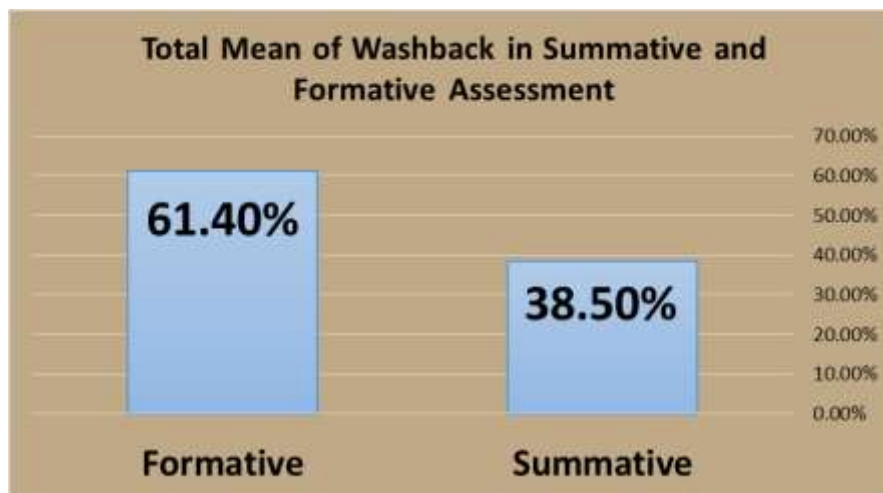
Table 7. Kurdish EFL Students' Perceptions towards Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of Washback

Category	Questionnaire items	Summative Assessment		Formative Assessment	
		No.	%	No.	%
Washback	1. The assessment is important to me.	270	49.8%	272	50.1%
	2. The assessment is easy to me.	151	27.8%	391	72.1
	3. The assessment can measure my proficiency in English.	166	30.6%	376	69.3%
	4. Making preparations for the assessment can boost my motivation to learn English.	86	15.8%	456	84.1%
	5. The preparation for the assessment has expanded my knowledge of grammar and vocabulary reservoir.	271	50%	271	50%
	6. Making preparations for the assessment has improved my listening skills.	45	8.3%	497	91.6%

	7. Making preparations for the assessment has boosted my reading skills.	294	54.2%	248	45.7%
	8. Making preparations for the assessment has improved my oral skills.	70	12.9%	472	87%
	9. The act of preparing for the assessment has improved my writing skills.	312	57.5%	230	42.4%
	10. Making preparations for the assessment has improved my English proficiency levels.	216	39.8%	326	60.1%
	11. I have explored diverse learning methods and activities from the assessment.	162	29.8%	380	70.1%
	12. The act of preparing for the assessment is a meaningful and rewarding experience.	199	36.7%	343	63.2%
	13. I have devoted a considerable amount of time preparing for the assessment.	300	55.3%	242	44.6%
	14. I experience pressure as I prepare for/take the assessment.	388	71.5%	154	28.4%
	15. I am in favor of this assessment.	160	29.5%	382	70.4%
	16. The assessment is fair.	252	46.4%	290	53.5%
Total Mean		208.8	38.5%	333.1	61.4%

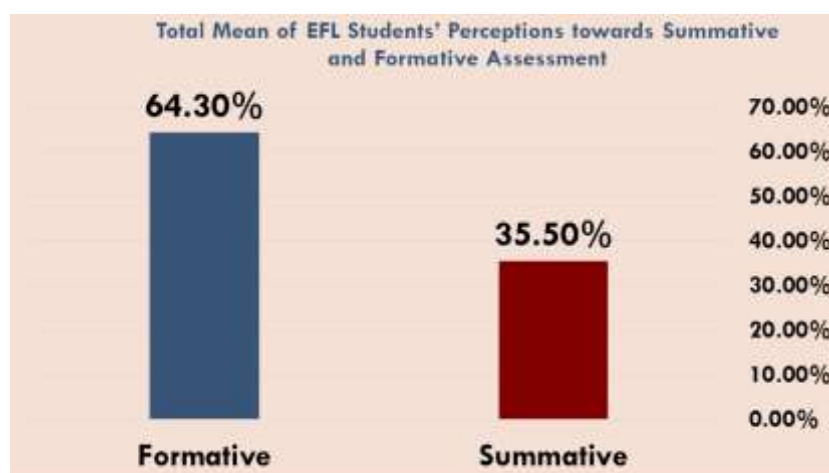
As displayed in figure 7, 61.40% of Kurdish students believe that formative assessment positively influences teaching and learning. Conversely, 38.5% of the students believe that summative assessment positively impacts teaching and learning process.

Figure 7. Total Mean of Students' Choice of Summative and Formative Assessment in terms of Washback



Considering the results of all the parts of the questionnaire seen holistically, 64.30% of the Kurdish EFL students were in favor of formative assessment while only 35.50% were in favor of summative assessment, as seen in figure 8.

Figure 8. Kurdish EFL Students' Perceptions towards Summative and Formative Assessment



5.2 Analysis of Results of the Interview

The interview questions are designed to collect information about whether formative assessment should be used more at Salahaddin University and further ask the 30 students about how the assessment system should be redesigned or improvised so as to meet their needs and enhance their learning process. The

results of the questions that have been asked from the interviewer to the interviewees will be discussed below.

Question 1: Do you think the assessment system at Salahaddin University should be changed? Why?

To the answer of this question, all the students were in consensus that the assessment system in Salahaddin University must be changed because the current summative assessment (i.e. mid-term exams and final exams) produces a generation with low confidence and competence and makes them feel disappointed and hopeless.

To quote one of the student's speech:

*'Interviewee: 'For me as a personal point of view, I became PESSIMESTIC here in Salahaddin university.'***Interviewer:** *because of the assessment?* **Interviewee:** *"because of the assessment only, yeah.. Because my daily participation is out of five! So this is the catastrophe here actually because I was the hyper active one in the class and that was out of nothing! So, yeah out of five is nothing"*

Another reason why they hold the belief that the assessment system should be modified was that the type of assessment that is currently used in the university only allows students to be good at memorization and never understand the subjects. The students don't even try to participate in the few daily activities in class because daily participation is either out of 5 or 10 marks! The students don't bother to participate and they would rather study one day before the mid-term or final exam. They get high marks and they would forget about what they studied after the exam. Summative also lacks day to day feedback given to students to improve themselves or achieve the course's learning outcomes. To quote one of the student's:

"In summative, they just memorize the things so just have to... to pass the exam and after the exam or after the summative process that will end, they forget everything because they do not depend on it and they do not understand it that's the problem. While in the formative they're in the classroom and there is both teacher-student and student-student interaction and collaboration. So, the more the process in the formative dependent on the understanding of the students more."

Question 2: How should the assessment system be changed in Salahaddin University so as to meet your needs and prepare you for the future workplace?

Most of the students agreed on the fact that the assessment needs to change towards a more formative style because it is unfair to have 90% of the marks on mid-term and final exams. The formative assessment should be integrated in the class teaching and learning so that the teachers can even change the teacher-

centered teaching methodologies that they use. Sometimes because the teachers need to make the students prepared for the finals, they are obliged to teach in a more teacher-centered style so that they can prepare the students for the finals. One of the students said:

"I do not blame teachers nowadays because the system is the way as it is. Uh I'm not blaming teachers, although we have good teachers here in our college but uhh.. we have to admit that our way of teaching and assessing the students are totally wrong! And it is the assessment that makes teachers teach in a bad way!"

Question 3: Do you think summative assessment should not be used anymore in Salahaddin University?

The students were in agreement that summative assessment should be used because it has its own benefits and by the culmination of the academic year it allows the students to go through whatever has been studied in classes once again.

Question 4: if you have 100 marks to divide on summative and formative, how many marks would you allocate for the formative and how many for the summative?

Most of the students were in consensus that the formative assessment should be out of 60 marks and the summative should be out of 40 marks. They believed that the formative one must weigh more than the summative one since it allows students to become extroverts, assertive, outgoing and teaches them how to communicate well with the teacher and other classmates; they believe formative is good because it enhances students' communication skill and a good communication is one of the demands of today's labor market no matter what your major is. As one of them said:

"we have I think 60 marks for the final exam and about 30 or 20 for the uh... midterm examinations and it is too much because for example, for a period of time, for example for the final exam is about 2 hours. So, the student just forgets the answer. So that is it. He will just lose the marks so that is it. But this should be changed. Formative should be out of 60. And the summative should be out of 40."

6. Discussion

The Findings suggest that the Kurdish EFL students at Salahaddin University are in favor of formative assessment in terms of congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, diversity and washback. Except for transparency, the students find summative assessment as more transparent than

formative. Hence, the results of the questionnaire reject the null hypothesis stated in this study which stated that Kurdish EFL students see both summative and formative assessment equally effective and important in the learning process.

The current study results differ from the results of the study conducted by Pan in 2020. His results showed that Taiwan University students were in favor of summative assessment because it is congruent with planned learning and transparent and they argued that they learn more while making preparations for the summative assessment.

The results of the present study align with Anwar and Hameed (2016) and Panchbhai and Shrivastva (2017) since both of the studies come to the same conclusions as the current one that the learners prefer formative assessment over summative due to the fact that feedback is provided in it and allows the students to learn better and prepares them for summative assessment.

Moreover, the results of the interview depict that the current assessment system used in Salahaddin University makes the students to be unconfident, desperate and incompetent. It educates them to be good at memorization without understanding the subjects. It produces a generation that knows how to answer final exams and get high marks without being able to deal with what they have to do in their future work place.

Finally, Kurdish EFL students believe that a combination of both summative and formative should be used, but the formative one should weigh more than the summative one as it prepares the students for the summative assessment and provides continuous feedback so that the students enhance their learning process.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of the study at hand yields the following conclusions:

1. Kurdish EFL students at Salahaddin University approved formative assessment over summative assessment owing to the fact that formative assessment is more congruent with planned learning, authentic, student consultation, and diverse.
2. Kurdish EFL students believe that formative assessment has a greater positive washback than summative assessment. They were in consensus that formative assessment positively impacts the learning and teaching process.
3. So as to best suit their needs, Kurdish EFL students believe that summative and formative assessment should be amalgamated and then put into practice in Salahaddin University but the formative one should weigh more marks than the summative one due to the fact that formative assessment provides the students

with continuous feedback during the learning process and gives them chance to enhance their learning and prepares them for the summative assessment.

4. The current assessment system (i.e. summative assessment) in Salahaddin University produces a generation that is unconfident, incompetent and merely knows how to answer the questions at exam halls without having the skills to face the world outside the exam hall and the future work place.

5. Summative assessment teaches students how to be good at memorization and get high marks in the examination, while formative assessment prepares them to face the labor market and allows them to practice diverse skills including a good communication skill that is needed in today's world of work.

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