

EFL Teachers' Formative Assessment Practice: Does Teachers' Level of Agency Matter?

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ABSTRACT

Although there has been ample research on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' formative assessment practice (FAP) and their agency separately, scant attention has been paid to the possible influence of teachers' level of agency on their FAP. Accordingly, this study investigated EFL teachers' FAP in the light of teachers' agency. The initial participants, selected based on convenience sampling, comprised 180 male and female Iranian EFL teachers within the age range of 22 to 45. Their teaching experience fell between a few months to 21 years. The initial 180 teachers were given a Teacher Agency Questionnaire (TAQ) to determine teachers with high and low levels of agency. To this aim, 30 teachers who scored the highest and 30 who scored the lowest on the TAQ were selected. The 60 teachers were asked to fill out the Teacher Formative Assessment Practice Scale (TFAPS). Moreover, 15 teachers from each group were asked to take part in semi-structured interviews to explore their perceptions regarding their FAP. The results of parametric independent samples t-test revealed that teachers in the high-agency group scored significantly higher than their counterparts in the low-agency group in terms of both teacher-directed ($p = .00 < .001$, effect size = 3.32) and student-directed FAP ($p = .00 < .001$, effect size = 3.44). The descriptive and qualitative comparison of the thematic analysis between teachers in the high agency and low agency groups demonstrated marked differences both in the total number of themes and theme mentions as well as the theme contents between the two groups. Based on the findings, teacher educators are encouraged to enhance EFL teachers' level of agency to improve their FAP.

1. Introduction

Formative Assessment (FA) is a pivotal component of teaching and learning (Leenknecht et al., 2021). It is a type of assessment used throughout the learning process to “determine the status of students and foster their development.” (Gün-Tosik et al., 2023, p. 299). FA provides teachers with information about their students' learning and identifies any challenges their students may be facing (Chin & Teou, 2009). Moreover, it assists teachers in modifying their instruction to maximize learning outcomes (Chin & Teou, 2009). Formative assessment can be extremely important for enhancing instruction and

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promoting learning—two aspects that summative assessment does not account for (Lee & Falvey, 2014). The main distinction is that, in contrast to summative assessment, formative assessment assists students in determining their areas of strength and weakness as well as the specific areas that require attention (Chemeli, 2019). Research reports that FA enhances students' self-regulation (Xiao & Yang, 2019), academic achievement, attitudes toward the class (Ozan & Kınca, 2018), perceived autonomy, perceived competence, and autonomous motivation (Leenknecht et al., 2021).

A potential factor contributing to formative assessment practice is teacher agency, defined as “the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations” (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015, p. 141). This definition highlights the significant role of agency in empowering educators to navigate challenges and make informed decisions about assessment strategies that meet the unique needs of their students, resulting in more effective formative assessment practices. Indeed, the notion of agency as “agency orientation” is evident in many descriptions of formative assessment, in that they emphasize the necessity for teachers to be aware of the actions they can take and to feel authorized to implement them (Wilson, 2019). As Wilson (2019) argues, “professional accountability,” which promotes “formative assessment processes,” suggests that teachers need the agency—both the ability and authority—to evaluate what constitutes “right” and “appropriate” student performances, enabling them to create more effective learning experiences than those offered by outsourced standardized exams. However, a review of the extant empirical literature reveals that the contribution of EFL teachers' agency level to their FAP has remained underexplored. To address this shortcoming, the present study aims to discover the matches and mismatches between FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency. Moreover, this study uniquely investigates the differences between the teacher-directed and student-directed FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency. Teacher-directed FA deals with the FA strategies that are typically started and carried out by the teacher, including defining and communicating learning objectives and success criteria, managing efficient discussions in the class, questions, and learning activities, and giving feedback that advances learners (Yan & Pastore, 2022). On the other hand, student-directed FA mostly involves strategies that are self- and peer-assessment for formative reasons, comprising empowering students to use one another as resources for learning and to take ownership of their own education.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Formative Assessment

Numerous studies have focused on various types of assessments (e.g., Kargar Behbahani et al., 2024; Khalili et al., 2024; Najjarpour & Salimi, 2024). Among these, formative assessment stands out as a significant type. As a dynamic feedback loop that guides instructional modification and fosters a higher level of student understanding, FA is a fundamental component of effective teaching and learning (Gotwals & Cisterna, 2022). Many academics have defined FA in different ways. Pryor and Crossouard (2008) defined it as being responsive to student work, whereas Black and Wiliam (1998), whose definition is frequently quoted, defined it as focusing on feedback-driven changes in teaching and learning activities.

This feedback loop empowers educators to: (a) gain insights into student understanding through effective tasks and discussions, where formative assessment (FA) elicits evidence of learning, enabling instructors to assess current learning levels and identify areas requiring further development (Black & Wiliam, 2009); (b) modify instructional practices based on student performance, allowing teachers to refine their methods, ensure targeted support, and maximize learning opportunities (Graham et al., 2015); and (c) provide actionable feedback that guides learners toward deeper understanding and promotes self-directed learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008). Black and Wiliam (2009) propose five basic strategies to maximize FA interventions: clearly defining and sharing goals and standards for learning; designing tasks that reveal students' comprehension of the material; providing actionable feedback with specific advice on how to proceed; incorporating peer learning by using classmates as mutual teaching resources; and fostering student ownership by encouraging learners to take charge of their education and exercise agency.

These strategies, which emphasize the collaborative character of knowledge formation and the significance of social interaction in learning (Bennett, 2011) are in line with sociocultural theory

(Vygotsky, 1978). Building on the established effectiveness of FA, researchers have explored its potential to enhance teacher agency. Verberg et al. (2016) looked at whether a certain formative assessment (FA) approach empowered instructors to take control of their students' learning and pursue educational objectives with confidence. Findings revealed that while instructors experienced a significant sense of agency during the assessment process, this did not always translate into immediate instructional actions. Jiang et al. (2022) explored the ways university professors enact agency in relation to formative assessment, examining the nuanced dynamics between FA practices and teacher agency. Their research highlighted that professional agency emerges from a complex interplay of factors. For instance, teachers' career stages significantly influence their ability to adopt and adapt instructional methods. Additionally, the exercise of agency heavily depends on an individual's knowledge and skills, which collectively shape their overall capacity. Furthermore, a strong conviction in the value of formative assessment substantially motivates the integration of such practices into pedagogical strategies.

2.2. Teachers' Agency

Recent years have seen an increasing emphasis on the concept of teacher agency within the literature (Mansouri et al., 2021; Rich, 2021; Schildkamp et al., 2020; Yan & Pastore, 2022). Agency refers to the willingness and ability to behave in accordance with one's professional principles, beliefs, objectives, and expertise (Toom et al., 2015). It is crucial to apprehending teachers' ability to handle and create their professional environments, manifesting their autonomy, decision-making, and adaptability in intricate educational landscapes (Biesta et al., 2015). This faculty is dynamic, developing all through the course of a teacher's profession in response to continuously changing political, educational, and reform environments (Flores & Ben-Peretz, 2018; Molla & Nolan, 2020). Furthermore, educational changes and professional development are significantly driven and promoted by teacher agency, leading to a balance between individual autonomy and institutional demands (Leijen et al., 2020; Harris & Jones, 2019). It is believed that teacher agency results from the interplay between an individual's capacities and environmental conditions (Priestley et al., 2015b).

To foster effective professional development, educators must be empowered to actively (re)construct their professional identities, competencies, and knowledge. This aligns with the assertion that effective professional development must enable teachers to practice their agency. Priestly et al. (2015b) accentuates that professional learning opportunities should be developed to encourage teacher agency by allowing educators to actively get involved in collaborative practices, deliberate over their experiences, and take ownership of their professional growth. This will have an influence on their classroom practices and eventually lead to their transformation (Billett, 2011; Vahasantanen, 2015). Professional agency, as defined eloquently by Eteläpelto et al. (2013), is the ability of educators and educational communities to exercise influence, make significant decisions, and take positions that influence their work settings.

Agency is the deliberate act of making things happen rather than just allowing them to happen, as opposed to passiveness (Verberg et al., 2016). It all comes down to power and control, which includes how much initiative someone takes to achieve their goals (Day et al., 2007) and how much control they believe they have over their own conduct (Metcalfe & Greene, 2007). Biesta (2015) underscores the significance of understanding agency within the broader context of educational purposes. He assumes that agency should be seen through the lens of democratic education, where teachers play a crucial role in promoting critical thinking and active citizenship among students. This perspective is associated with the conviction that teachers are not just individuals who implement policy but they actively shape educational outcomes. Thus, educators are seen as key players who may enhance educational policy by putting it into reality in the classroom and creating chances for students to study (Ghamoushi et al., 2022).

Consequently, the idea of teacher agency as a critical component of educational development is receiving more and more attention from scholars in the field of education (Li & Ruppap, 2021). Teacher agency refers to the capacity of educators to make choices and take actions that influence their professional practice and the learning experiences of their students (Priestley et al., 2015a). This notion is particularly relevant in the context of contemporary educational reforms, where teachers are often positioned as key change agents within their schools and communities.

Expanding on this foundation, Ukkonen-Mikkola and Varpanen (2020) provide a nuanced distinction between agentic action and simple reactive responses to external stimuli, placing emphasis on the significance of intentionality in educational practice. They assert that agentic action embraces not only the ability to act but also the deliberateness, causal impact, and self-authorship of those actions (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). In this sense, agentic action is marked by a proactive stance where educators actively and thoughtfully interact with their environments, rather than solely reacting to circumstances inflicted upon them. This distinction is crucial, as it underscores that teacher agency is basically rooted in deliberate intentionality.

A growing body of research examined teacher agency from a number of angles, including how it affects teachers' professional development and the standard of education (Lai et al., 2016; Ruan, 2018); how teacher reflection affects teacher agency (Jones & Charteris, 2017; Reichenberg, 2022); how teacher agency and identity commitment interact (Buchanan, 2015; Connolly et al., 2018); and how teacher agency functions in inclusive education (Lyons et al., 2016; Naraian, 2014; Naraian & Schlessinger, 2018; Themane & Thobejane, 2019). Each of these studies highlights the importance of teacher agency in relation to several aspects of educational development.

As Schildkamp et al.'s (2020) systematic review reports, many studies have shown that positive attitudes, a sense of ownership, and perceived control, which are of key elements of agency, enhance teachers' FAP in the classroom. On the other hand, Mansouri et al. (2021) indicated that the limited agency of EFL teachers had a negative impact on their assessment practices. However, scarce research has been conducted to examine the association between teachers' agency and their use of FA (e.g., Verberg et al., 2016). This gap in the literature underscores the need for a deeper exploration of how varying levels of teacher agency—both high and low—affect the implementation of FA practices. When studying FA, distinguishing between teacher-directed and student-directed FA can shed more light on the teachers' FAP. Yan and Pastore (2022) discovered that teachers employed teacher-directed FA more frequently than student-directed FA. They came to the conclusion that teachers continue to take the lead in FAP, but students' active involvement in FA processes is still not well-supported. However, a valuable issue that warrants exploration is the role of teacher agency in the implementation of both teacher-directed and student-directed FAP. Therefore, to further our understanding of the interface between high and low levels of agency on the part of EFL teachers and their teacher-directed and student-directed FA practices, this line of research needs to be pursued. For this purpose, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: Is there any significant difference between the teacher-directed FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency?

RQ2: Is there any significant difference between the student-directed FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency?

RQ3: What are the perceptions of teachers with a high level of agency in regard to their FAP?

RQ4: What are the perceptions of teachers with a low level of agency in regard to their FAP?

RQ5: What are the matches or mismatches between FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency?

3. Method

3.1. Participants and Setting

The initial participants, selected based on convenience sampling, comprised 180 Iranian EFL teachers teaching different proficiency levels at seven language institutes across the country. They were within the age range of 22 to 45 ($M = 32.11$, $SD = 5.95$) and their teaching experience fell within the range of a few months to 21 years ($M = 9.12$, $SD = 5.55$). Both male and female teachers were recruited. As for academic degrees, 108 teachers held BA and 72 had MA degrees. The initial 180 teachers were given the Teacher Agency Questionnaire to determine teachers with high and low levels of agency. To this aim, 30 teachers who scored the highest and 30 teachers who scored the lowest on the TAQ were selected. Among the 30 teachers exhibiting a high level of teacher agency, 17 teachers were male and 13 were female. Additionally, 16 teachers held Bachelor's degrees, while 14 possessed Master's degrees. Moreover, 18 of the teachers in the high agency group possessed a teaching experience of more than three years and 12 had a teaching experience of less than three years. Among the 30 teachers portraying a low level of teacher agency, 15 teachers were male and 15 were female. Furthermore, in this group,

18 teachers had BA and 12 held MA academic degrees. Moreover, 13 of the teachers in the low agency group possessed a teaching experience of more than three years and 17 had a teaching experience of less than three years.

3.2. Instrumentation

3.2.1. Teacher Agency Questionnaire. To measure teacher agency, the teacher agency questionnaire developed and validated by Ghamoushi et al. (2022) was used. The allocated time for responding to the questionnaire was 40 minutes. The questionnaire (Appendix A), containing 33 items, assesses EFL teachers' agency in terms of its iterational (9 items), practical-evaluative (14 items), and projective (10 items) components on a five-point Likert scale running from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The iterational dimension comprises a teacher's life history accompanied by professional biographies (Ghamoushi et al., 2022). The practical-evaluative dimension includes cultural (ideas, values, and beliefs), structural (social structures, roles, and relationships), and material (resources and physical environment) aspects. The projective dimension consists of long-term and short-term activities and goals. Ghamoushi et al. (2022) reported acceptable psychometric properties for the instrument. However, since reliability is sample-dependent, the reliability of the instrument was computed using Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha index turned out to be .84, which is considered acceptable.

3.2.2. Teacher Formative Assessment Practice Scale (TFAPS). Teachers' FAP was measured via administering TFAPS (Appendix B) developed and validated by Yan and Pastore (2022). The scale, consisting of 10 items, taps into teacher-directed FA (6 items) and student-directed FA (4 items) on a six-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*very frequently*). The allocated time for responding to the questionnaire was 15 minutes. Yan and Pastore (2022) reported acceptable psychometric features for this instrument in regard to validity and reliability. To establish the internal consistency of this instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was used and the index turned out to be .83, which is considered desirable.

3.2.3. Semi-structured Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were administered to the teachers with high and low levels of agency to explore their perceptions in regard to their FAP. To develop the interview questions, initially the literature in relation to teachers' perceptions of FA in general and FAP (e.g., Gotwals & Cisterna, 2022; Leenknecht et al., 2021; Sach, 2015; Schildkamp et al., 2020; Yan & Pastore, 2022) in particular was reviewed to place the questions in a rigorous theoretical framework. Next, based on the extant literature nine open-ended questions were developed. Following that, the initial list of questions (N = 9) became subject to evaluation via appeal to expert opinion. In so doing, the initial list of questions was given to two PhD holders and their prospective comments were applied. In so doing, two questions were merged into one due to containing overlapping content and one question was discarded as not being very relevant. Next, this list of questions was piloted on five participants to ensure the readability and clarity of the questions. Finally, revisions were made to the questions and the finalized list consisting of seven questions (Appendix C) was administered to the teachers.

3.3. Procedures

Initially, 180 EFL teachers teaching at different language institutes in Iran were identified by posting an advertisement on Telegram groups for teachers to take part in the study. In the advertisement, brief information regarding the aims of the study was provided. Moreover, teachers were informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any stages of data collection. In addition, they were assured that in reporting the results pseudonyms would be utilized where necessary and the collected data would be used for research purposes only. Following that, the 180 teachers were asked to fill out the teacher agency questionnaire to determine 30 teachers with a high level of teacher agency and another 30 with a low level of teacher agency. Next, the 60 teachers were given the TFAPS to complete. Following that, 15 teachers from each group, selected based on random sampling, were asked to take part in semi-structured interviews to explore their perceptions regarding their FAP. The interviews were conducted in either English or Persian based on participants' choices to obviate the possible role of language obstacles. The interviews were carried out online for teachers' convenience. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and the interviews

were voice-recorded. The interview contents were then transcribed verbatim and subject to thematic analysis.

3.4. Data Analysis

To address the first research question, two independent-samples t-tests were run to probe any significant differences between the teacher-directed and student-directed FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency. In so doing, the normality assumption was checked via reporting the Skewness and Kurtosis ratios. Moreover, the assumption of equality of variances was also inspected in the independent samples t-test tables. Additionally, to determine the strength of the findings across samples, effect sizes were also computed and reported. To address the second and third questions, qualitative thematic analysis was used. As for the fourth research question, both quantitative descriptive analysis and qualitative comparative analysis were integrated to unravel the matches and mismatches between FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency.

As for the reliability of the analysis process, two coders carried out the thematic analysis independently (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). To do so, first the interview contents were extensively read and reviewed several times to gain adequate familiarization with the data by the first coder. In the meantime, initial impressions of the data were made and some notes were taken as well. Next, the data were coded, categorized, and reduced in meaningful ways. Following that, the second coder independently analyzed the data in a similar way. Finally, any discrepancies between the first and second coders were discussed and resolved. Then, the degree of agreement was calculated based on Holsti's (1969) coefficient of reliability. The value turned out to be 0.81, which indicated an acceptable level of consistency in regard to categorization. To add to the credibility of the analysis, member checking was also conducted (Nassaji, 2020) by discussing the results with six of the participants in each group to ensure that the interpretations were done in an appropriate way.

4. Results

4.1. Addressing the First Research Question

To investigate any significant difference between the teacher-directed FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency, an independent-samples t-test was run. Table 1 displays the results of descriptive statistics for the teacher-directed FAP scores of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Teacher-Directed FAP Scores

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | SD | Variance | Skewness | Kurtosis | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------|-----|
| | Statistic | Std. | Std. | |
| | | | | | | | | Error | Error | |
| Teacher Directed Low Agency | 30 | 6.00 | 16.00 | 10.16 | 2.16 | 4.69 | .44 | .42 | .67 | .83 |
| Teacher Directed High Agency | 30 | 13.00 | 32.00 | 24.20 | 5.57 | 31.13 | -.48 | .42 | -.56 | .83 |

As seen in Table 1, the Skewness and Kurtosis ratios fall within the range of +/-1.96, which is an indication of meeting the normality assumption. Accordingly, the application of the parametric test of independent samples t-test is warranted. Table 2 presents the results of the independent samples t-test between the teacher-directed FAP scores of teachers with high and low levels of agency.

Table 2
Independent Samples T-test for Teacher-Directed FAP Scores

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|-------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--|--------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | Df | Sig. (2- tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | Lower | Upper |
| High and Low TD | Equal variances assumed | 21.17 | .00 | -12.84 | 58 | .000 | -14.03 | 1.09 | -16.22 | -11.84 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -12.84 | 37.55 | .000 | -14.03 | 1.09 | -16.24 | -11.82 |

As presented in Table 2, $F(21.17)$, $p = .00 < .001$ indicates that the two groups do not enjoy equal variances; thus, the results with homogeneity of variances not assumed are reported. As indicated in Table 2, with $t(-12.48)$, and $df(37.55)$, the sig value turned out to be .00 which is lower than 0.001. Accordingly, it can be inferred that there is a significant difference between the teacher-directed FAP scores of teachers with high and low levels of agency. Moreover, as noticed in Table 1, the mean for teacher-directed FAP scores for the low and high agency levels are 10.16 and 24.20, respectively. Thus, teachers in the high-agency group have scored significantly higher than their counterparts in the low-agency group in terms of teacher-directed FAP. To determine the strength of such findings, that is, to evaluate the stability of the research findings across samples, effect size was estimated to be 3.32. According to Cohen (1988), a value of 0.8 or above is generally considered a strong effect size. Therefore, this finding can be confidently generalized across various samples.

4.2. Addressing the Second Research Question

To examine any significant difference between the student-directed FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency, an independent-samples t-test was run. Table 3 shows the results of descriptive statistics for the student-directed FAP scores of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Student-Directed FAP Scores

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | SD | Variance | Skewness | Kurtosis | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-------|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. | Std. | Statistic | Error |
| Student Directed Low | 30 | 4.00 | 12.00 | 8.03 | 2.25 | 5.06 | .13 | .42 | -.54 | .83 |
| Student Directed High | 30 | 9.00 | 23.00 | 17.96 | 3.40 | 11.62 | -.57 | .42 | .15 | .83 |

As noticed in Table 3, the Skewness and Kurtosis ratios lie within the range of ± 1.96 , indicating that the normality assumption is not violated. Thus, running independent samples t-test as a parametric test is warranted. Table 4 depicts the results of the independent samples t-test between the student-directed FAP scores of teachers with high and low levels of agency.

Table 4
Independent Samples T-test for Student-Directed FAP Scores

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|-------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | Lower | Upper |
| High and Low SD | Equal variances assumed | 4.43 | .04 | -13.31 | 58 | .00 | -9.93 | .745 | -11.42 | -8.44 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -13.31 | 50.25 | .00 | -9.93 | .745 | -11.43 | -8.43 |

As seen in Table 4, $F(4.43)$, $p = .04 < .05$ is an indication that the assumption of equality of variances for the two groups is not met; thus, the results with homogeneity of variances not assumed are reported. As shown in Table 4, with $t(-13.31)$, and $df(50.25)$, the sig value turned out to be .00 which is lower than 0.001. Thus, it can be inferred that there is a significant difference between the student-directed FAP scores of teachers with high and low levels of agency. Additionally, as presented in Table 3, the mean for student-directed FAP scores for the low and high agency levels are 8.03 and 17.96, respectively. Therefore, teachers in the high-agency group have scored significantly higher than their counterparts in the low-agency group in terms of student-directed FAP. The effect size was computed to be 3.44, which is regarded strong (Cohen, 1988). Accordingly, it can be concluded that the level of EFL teachers' agency has a considerably high impact on their FAP across various samples.

4.3. Addressing the Third Research Question

To examine the perceptions of teachers with a high level of agency in regard to their FAP, thematic analysis was adopted. In so doing, firstly the initial codes were determined. Next, these codes were merged to form the sub-themes and ultimately the main emerging themes were identified and reported. In thematic analysis, codes are characterized as the initial labels assigned to specific pieces of data that capture key ideas. Sub-themes refer to broader categories that emerge from accumulation of related codes. Finally, themes are overarching concepts that aggregate multiple sub-themes. Table 5 presents the codes, sub-themes, and the main themes for the perceptions of teachers with a high level of agency in regard to their FAP.

Table 5
Codes, Sub-themes, and Themes for the Perceptions of Teachers with a High Level of Agency

| Codes | Sub-themes | Main Themes | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Tailored activities, Varied assessment methods, Individualized feedback | Differentiated instruction | Paying attention to learners' needs | 14 | 93.24% |
| Pre-assessment tools, Regular check-ins, Targeted interventions | Identifying learning gaps | | | |
| Project-based assessments, Oral presentations, Written reflections | | | 12 | 79.92% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|--------|
| Written vs. verbal feedback, Peer feedback options, Self-reflection opportunities | Choice in assessment formats Feedback preferences | Incorporating learners' preferences in assessment | | |
| Clearly stated goals, Use of rubrics, Sharing success criteria | Transparent learning objectives Regular goal setting | Clarifying assessment goals for learners | 11 | 73.26% |
| Individual learning plans, Collaborative goal-setting sessions, Progress tracking | | | | |
| Digital portfolios, Assessment logs, Performance tracking sheets | Systematic documentation | Keeping records of learners' performance | 10 | 66% |
| Data-driven decisions, Trend analysis, Feedback loops | Analyzing data for improvement | | | |
| Flexible timelines, Adjusting difficulty levels, Iterative assessments | Responsive assessment strategies | Modifying assessment procedures in line with learners' progress | 8 | 53.28% |
| Using student feedback for changes, Adapting based on performance data, Continuous improvement mindset | Feedback incorporation | | | |
| Self-assessment workshops, Criteria development with students, Reflection journals | Training for self-assessment | Involving learners in self and peer assessment | 7 | 46.62% |
| Peer review guidelines, Group assessment activities, Feedback sessions | Structured peer assessment | | | |
| Reflection prompts, Self-assessment checklists, Goal reflection discussions | Encouraging self-reflection | Promoting learner autonomy in learners' self-assessment | 5 | 33% |
| Choices in learning paths, Opportunities for self-directed projects, Responsibility for learning outcomes | Building decision-making skills | | | |

As indicated in Table 5, the two sub-themes of differentiated instruction and identifying learning gaps have been merged into the main theme of paying attention to learners' needs. The two sub-themes including choice in assessment formats and feedback preferences are aggregated to form the main theme of incorporating learners' preferences in assessment. Clarifying assessment goals for learners have been formed by the two sub-themes comprising transparent learning objectives and regular goal setting. Systematic documentation and analyzing data for improvement are the sub-themes for the overarching theme of keeping records of learners' performance. Responsive assessment strategies and feedback incorporation build into the main theme of modifying assessment procedures in line with learners' progress. The theme of involving learners in self and peer assessment is the main

theme for the two sub-themes constituting training for self-assessment and structured peer assessment. Finally, encouraging self-reflection and building decision-making skills are merged to show the emerging theme of promoting learner autonomy in learners' self-assessment.

With regard to the first theme, *paying attention to learners' needs*, with a frequency of 14 (93.24%), one of the interviewees commented that:

In my formative assessment practice, learners' needs are always important. For example, whether the groups of learners should improve their writing, reading, or other language skills and components. So, I take learners' needs into account whenever it comes to formative assessment.

As for the second theme, *incorporating learners' preferences in assessment*, with a frequency of 12 (79.92%), one of the teachers held that:

Most of the time, in each class, I ask learners about their assessment preferences to see which learner likes to receive which feedback type. Some learners like their writings to be corrected very extensively while others like some general feedback or just grammar feedback. Sometimes some learners want to receive feedback with Microsoft Word while others may prefer traditional handwritten feedback.

Concerning the third theme, *clarifying assessment goals for learners*, with a frequency of 11 (73.26%), one of the interviewees said that:

It is very important for learners to know the assessment objectives. That is why I always tell my learners of the expectations I have for the assessment. I also let them know what expectations they can have from me in return. For instance, when giving feedback on speaking, I always inform them that it is not possible for me to correct each and every mistake while they are speaking. I also tell them that the main point in speaking is communication and helping learners improve their grammar is only a part of the speaking assessment.

With respect to the fourth theme, *keeping records of learners' performance*, with a frequency of 10 (66%), one of the participants mentioned that:

In formative assessment, learners' records are very important. You keep the records and go back to them off and on to see how you can best provide assessment for each learner.

As for the fifth theme, *modifying assessment procedures in line with learners' progress*, with a frequency of 8 (53.28%), one of the teachers thought that:

Learners' progress for me is very important since it is the main goal of assessment. Because of this, I always try to change my assessment when learners' progress. For example, when I give learners a language item, first I go on with teacher assessment but when learners somehow become familiar with that item, I go towards students' self-assessment.

With regard to the sixth theme, *involving learners in self and peer assessment*, with a frequency of 7 (46.62%), one of the participants mentioned that:

Learners themselves have a very important role in their learning and assessment. For this, I always get them to correct their own errors and also assess themselves and peers a lot. I think when learners are given a role in their assessment, they can see their own strengths and this helps them improve. Also, they can have more connection with peers to improve their language in peer assessment.

Concerning the seventh theme, *promoting learner autonomy in learners' self-assessment*, with a frequency of 5 (33%), one of the teachers said that:

When I ask learners to assess themselves, I usually ask them about different ways that they can do this. For example, the use of grammar books, useful technological tools, the number of times they can assess themselves after the first self-assessment to see their improvement, or keeping records of their notes for the future. I think, the more I get learners into self-assessment and the ways to do this, learners will feel more responsible and will later go on with assessing themselves.

In conclusion, paying attention to learners' needs highlights the importance of tailoring assessments to individual student requirements, and fostering a supportive learning environment. Incorporating learners' preferences in assessment reflects a commitment to student-centered approaches, enhancing engagement and ownership. Clarifying assessment goals ensures that students

understand expectations, thereby promoting transparency and focus. Keeping records of learners' performance facilitates informed decision-making and targeted interventions. Modifying assessment procedures in line with learners' progress demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness to evolving educational contexts. Involving learners in self and peer assessment encourages collaboration and critical reflection while promoting learner autonomy in self-assessment and empowers students to take charge of their learning journey. Collectively, these themes illustrate how teachers with agency can create dynamic, responsive formative assessment practices that prioritize student engagement and development.

Overall, accommodating learners' needs helps in improving the kind of assessment carried out since there is an emphasis on catering for each student's needs and creating a conducive atmosphere for learning. Assessment practices that accommodate learners' choices are indicative of a student-centered approach and thereby increase the level of learning and ownership. Insofar as there are goals for assessment, learners have an understanding of what is expected of them and this increased understanding leads to transparency and focus. Recording the performance of learners is instrumental in decision-making and intervention-making. This situation also means that teachers with learners' progress in the areas of assessment are flexible and quick to adapt to new paradigms in education. Encouraging learners' participation in self and peer evaluation fosters learners' cooperation and critical thinking, while self-evaluation helps learners develop a sense of responsibility over their learning. In conclusion, such themes show how teachers' agency can generate responsive and active formative assessments which focus mainly on the development and engagement of students.

4.4. Addressing the Fourth Research Question

To unravel the perceptions of teachers with a low level of agency in regard to their FAP, a thematic analysis was carried out. Table 6 demonstrates the codes, sub-themes, and themes for the perceptions of teachers with a low level of agency in regard to their FAP.

Table 6
Codes, Sub-themes, and Themes for the Perceptions of Teachers with a Low Level of Agency

| Codes | Sub-themes | Main Themes | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Adjusting lesson plans based on scores, Focusing on test preparation, Emphasizing high-stakes assessments | Impact on teaching practices | Learners' achievement scores | 13 | 85.80% |
| Providing score-based feedback, Using scores to identify gaps in learning, Limited feedback beyond numerical scores | Feedback mechanisms | | | |
| Insufficient time for assessment design, Rushed assessment implementation, Competing priorities (curriculum, meetings) | Planning and preparation | Time constraints | 10 | 66% |
| Quick grading methods used, Delayed feedback to students, Minimal time for one-on-one discussions | Grading and feedback | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--------|
| Lack of interactive assessments, Limited connection to real-world applications, Few opportunities for student choice Low motivation levels observed, Resistance to participation in assessments, Negative attitudes towards testing | Engagement strategies Classroom dynamics | Learners' disinterest | 7 | 46.62% |
| Ambiguous assessment criteria, Inconsistent messaging about goals, Insufficient pre-assessment discussions Misalignment between goals and student perceptions, Need for clearer instructions, Lack of student ownership in the assessment process | Communication of expectations Student understanding | Clarifying assessment goals for learners | 4 | 26.64% |

As presented in Table 6, the two sub-themes of impact on teaching practices and feedback mechanisms have been merged into the main theme of learners' achievement scores. The two sub-themes including planning and preparation and grading and feedback have been used to portray the time constraints as a main theme. Moreover, engagement strategies and classroom dynamics are aggregated to form the main theme of learners' disinterest. Finally, communication of expectations and student understanding build into the main theme of clarifying assessment goals for learners.

With respect to the first theme, *learners' achievement scores*, with a frequency of 13 (85.80%), one of the interviewees commented that:

I think the best way you can see the assessment results is the final achievement scores. When you work with learners, the final scores can tell us if the teacher has used the right assessment methods during the class. I usually assess learners every class but their final test scores really show their performance.

As for the second theme, *time constraints*, with a frequency of 10 (66%), one of the teachers held that:

Formative assessment needs a lot of time and I think it is nearly impossible to adopt this assessment method. You have to check the learners' performance every day and tell learners about their weak and strong points. I think teachers should focus on presenting the content well and this can help learners learn the best way.

Concerning the third theme, *learners' disinterest*, with a frequency of 7 (46.62%), one of the interviewees said that:

Learners are not usually interested in being assessed continuously and they like to practice the language most of time. Sometimes when I ask them about different ways that I can assess them I can feel that they do not like it a lot. Because of this, I usually get them involved in practice and give them feedback in a traditional way myself.

As for the fourth theme, *clarifying assessment goals for learners*, with a frequency of 4 (26.64%), one of the teachers thought that:

I think it is important for learners to see how the assessment methods work and the most important thing in assessment is that learners should know the assessment goals very well. So, I always describe my assessment methods and tell the learners whether the goal of assessment is for example improving fluency or grammar.

The first theme identifies the tendency to focus on students' achievement scores and assume some quantifiable approach which can disregard the holistic view of the learners' development. Chronic shortages of time also appear as a hindering factor since it prohibits most of the teachers from properly carrying out formative assessment as well as tailoring assessment to each learner. Similarly, learners' disinterest suggests a gap between the way assessment is designed and how it is received, and

consequently how learners act, culminating in the loss of motivation. Lastly, the issues such as the articulation of the assessment goals for the learners itself denotes the difficulty of conveying the learning intentions which the students need for the successful uptake of their learning. In one way or another, these themes exemplify the extremes to which teachers are subjected and explain why it is such a struggle to come up with useful formative assessment, which is rooted in their low level of agency.

4.5. Addressing the Fifth Research Question

The fifth research question sought to explore the matches and mismatches between FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency. Table 7 illustrates the total number of themes, total theme mentions, and respective percentages for the teachers with high and low levels of agency.

Table 7

Comparison of Total Number of Themes and Theme Mentions between High-agency and Low-agency Teacher

| | High-agency | Low-agency |
|------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Total number of themes | 7 | 4 |
| Total theme mentions | 67 | 34 |

As indicated in Table 7, based on the results of thematic analysis, teachers with a high level of agency produced 7 themes with 67 theme mentions while teachers with a low level of agency generated 4 themes with 34 theme mentions in relation to FAP. Moreover, the themes emerging out of high-agency teachers' interview contents were more learner-focused and emphasized learners' needs, preferences, keeping learners' records, modification of assessment, involvement of learners in self and peer-assessment, and fostering learner autonomy. On the other hand, the themes for teachers with a low level of agency mainly addressed the challenges of FA and highlighted time constraints and learners' disinterest. Additionally, the low-agency teachers gave credence to achievement scores. The only common theme between the two groups was the clarification of assessment goals for learners, which yielded 11 (73.26%) and 4 (26.64%) theme instances for high- and low-level agency teachers, respectively.

The results of thematic analysis in relation to matches revealed that both the high agency and low agency groups emphasized the importance of clarification of assessment goals or assessment expectations for learners. Additionally, both groups recognize the significance of feedback mechanisms, with high-agency teachers focusing on incorporating feedback preferences and low-agency teachers highlighting feedback's impact on learners' achievement scores. With regard to mismatches, the high-agency teachers demonstrate a proactive approach by emphasizing themes such as modifying assessment procedures based on learners' progress and promoting learner autonomy through self and peer assessment. In contrast, low-agency teachers are more focused on external constraints, such as time limitations and learners' disinterest, which hinder their ability to adapt assessments effectively. While high-agency teachers actively seek to engage students in their learning process, low-agency teachers appear to struggle with implementing strategies that foster student involvement and motivation.

5. Discussion

This study investigated EFL teachers' FAP in the light of teachers' agency. Initially, the first research question explored the difference between the teacher-directed FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency. The results revealed that there was a significant difference between teachers with high and low levels of agency in terms of implementing teacher-directed FAP; in that, high-agency teachers tended to practice teacher-directed FA to a much greater degree than low-agency ones. It suggests that as teachers perceive a high level of power and control over their practice, they adopt more FA strategies such as providing feedback, managing discussions, and determining learning goals and success criteria in the class. Conversely, low-agency teachers do not see in themselves the power to initiate and implement such FA strategies in the classroom. This agrees with Biesta et al. (2015), who argue that the notion of agency is essential for understanding how educators navigate and shape their work environment. The second research question examined any significant difference between the

student-directed FAP of EFL teachers with high and low levels of agency. The findings indicated that high-agentic teachers used student-directed FAP much further than the low-agentic ones, which means that high-agentic teachers largely involved their students in self and peer FA and empowered them to take responsibility for their learning. It implies that teachers with high levels of perceived power and control tend to transfer these characteristics to their students and expect them to take control of their own learning. As Rich (2021) states, student-centered education necessitates that teachers have agency over their classroom instruction because only they know the specific students in their classroom. As the previous studies have found, the more teachers' stance is constructive, such as the essentiality of students' autonomy and ability to learn by themselves, the more they are capable of implementing FA (Birenbaum et al., 2011; Penuel et al., 2007; Rakoczy et al., 2008; & Sach, 2015, as cited in Schildkamp et al., 2020). Altogether, on the one hand, we found that EFL teachers with a high level of agency practiced both teacher-directed and student-directed FA to a great degree. It reinforces the definition of professional agency by Eteläpelto et al. (2013) as the capacity of educators and educational communities to exert influence, make impactful decisions, and adopt stances that affect their work environments. These findings converge with those of Schildkamp et al.'s (2020) systematic review study on the prerequisites for teachers' FAP. According to their report, a large body of studies have found that positive beliefs, sense of ownership, and perceived control, which define agency concepts, boost teachers' FAP in the class. On the other hand, we discovered that low-agentic EFL teachers implemented both teacher-directed and student-directed FAP to a limited extent. In the same vein, a recent study by Mansouri et al. (2021) found that EFL teachers' limited agency negatively affected their assessment practice. Despite the similarities between our findings and those of the aforementioned previous studies, this study uniquely examined the role of teachers' agency in two types of FAP, named teacher-directed and student-directed FAP. Interestingly, we found no evidence in the literature showing the unfavorable effect of high agency or favorable influence of low agency on teachers' assessment process. Therefore, there is no contradictory result to contrast our findings with. This lack of opposite documents not only provides more support for the findings of this study but also highlights the positive role of agency in teachers' assessment practice.

The results of the third and fourth research questions extended our understanding of the high-agentic and low-agentic teachers' FAP, respectively, by revealing their perceptions toward FAP. Regarding the third research question, the results of thematic analysis for high-agentic teachers divulged seven themes including paying attention to learners' needs, incorporating learners' preferences in assessment, clarifying assessment goals for learners, keeping records of learners' performance, modifying assessment procedures in line with learners' progress, involving learners in self and peer assessment, and promoting learner autonomy in learners' self-assessment. As reflected, the high-agentic teachers' FAP centered around improving the learners. These themes indicate that high-agentic teachers prioritize understanding and responding to learners' needs, which is crucial for fostering an effective learning environment. As Molla and Nolan (2020) maintain, agency allows teachers to effectively create and implement learning experiences tailored to the unique abilities of their students. Nevertheless, the findings suggested that high-agentic teachers' practices tended to be more teacher-directed than student-centered. The emphasis on teacher-led strategies could limit students' ability to take ownership of their assessments and learning processes. This indicates a potential area for development, suggesting that incorporating more student agency in the assessment process could further empower learners and enhance their engagement in their own educational journeys. Likewise, Yan and Pastore (2022) found that teacher-directed FA was used more prevalently than student-directed FA by teachers and concluded that teachers continue playing a leading role in FAP; while, students' active participation in FA procedures is still under supported.

Respecting the fourth research question, the thematic analysis for low-agentic teachers gave rise to four themes, comprising learners' achievement scores, time constraints, learners' disinterest, and clarifying assessment goals for learners. As can be deduced, low-agentic teachers largely concentrated on the challenges of FAP and less cared about taking effective FA strategies to enhance the learners. According to Mansouri et al. (2021), the exercise of agency is not limited to teachers alone and it is influenced by a number of stakeholders, including school principals, textbooks, educational policies, and teacher educators. Indeed, teacher agency arises from the interaction between a person's abilities and the environmental conditions (Priestley et al., 2015b). Hence, it is not only the teachers to be blamed

for inefficient FAP, rather, many other contextual factors and individuals contribute to teachers' low agency, and consequently, to their problems in practicing FA. As can be inferred, when educational authorities restrict teachers' agency by imposing educational policies, teachers put their main effort into following these policies and coping with these challenges; therefore, they are kept from paying much attention to students' needs and progress in their FAP.

In the fifth research question, we compared the findings of the third and fourth questions to discover the matches and mismatches between FAP of high-agentic and low-agentic EFL teachers. The descriptive and qualitative comparison of the thematic analysis between the two groups of teachers demonstrated that the total number of themes and theme mentions produced by high-agentic teachers was approximately twice as much as the low-agentic ones. Additionally, the theme contents of these two teacher groups were markedly different. The high-agentic teachers' FAP was learner-focused as they gave priority to learners' needs and progress in their FAP. However, the low-agentic teachers mainly focused on challenges of FAP such as time constraints and learners' disinterest; and they were concerned about learners' scores instead of their needs and actual progress. This divergence in approach underscores the importance of agency in teachers' practice of values, as agency deals with the "willingness and capacity to act according to professional values, beliefs, goals, and knowledge" (Toom et al., 2015, p. 616). High-agentic teachers encompass this concept by aligning their assessment practices with their educational values, driven by a strong belief in their ability to enact these beliefs and foster student growth. In contrast, low-agentic teachers often struggle to implement FAP due to negative attitudes toward it, which may stem from a lack of confidence in their capabilities. As Schildkamp et al. (2020) note, a positive attitude promotes the use of formative assessment, while a negative attitude hinders it.

6. Conclusion

To wrap up, this study shows how teacher agency influences the ways in which EFL teachers use and view formative assessment practices (FAP). The results of statistical analyses revealed that there was a significant difference between high-agentic and low-agentic teachers in terms of practicing both teacher-directed and student-directed FA, with superiority of high-agentic teachers in the amount of FAP. The results of thematic analysis indicated that high-agentic teachers emphasized learners' improvement and responding to learners' needs. However, teachers with low agency had a narrow view and looked at the challenges of FAP, which seemed to hold them back from using it to help students learn better. Moreover, the greater number of themes and theme mentions identified among high-agentic teachers underscores their broader and more reflective engagement with FAP. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering teacher agency to promote both teacher-directed and student-directed FAP in EFL contexts. Future studies could look into ways to help teachers develop more agency, which would make teaching and learning even better.

The findings of this study have significant implications for educational authorities. Given that teachers' agency plays an important role in FAP, the authorities can enhance teachers' implementation of FA, and in turn, learners' learning, by giving them more freedom for educational practices. Moreover, teachers should attempt to improve their perceived agency and stand against the factors that restrict their agency in the educational contexts.

Abbreviations and Their Meaning

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)
Formative Assessment Practice (FAP)
Teacher Agency Questionnaire (TAQ)
Teacher Formative Assessment Practice Scale (TFAPS)

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Appendix A Teacher Agency Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

Please rate the following statements using the criteria: Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neither disagree nor agree = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5.

You may consult the glossary of key terms which appears after the questionnaire if you come across any terms which may require further explanation or clarification.

| No | Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I draw on my prior experience of conducting assessment to manage common challenges of L2 assessment. | | | | | |
| 2 | My personal attitudes, beliefs, and values influence and direct my classroom assessment tasks/practices. | | | | | |
| 3 | My assessment knowledge, expertise, and identity determine the type of assessment that I use in my class. | | | | | |
| 4 | I try to use my past behavioral patterns to cope with emerging dilemmas in my assessment practices. | | | | | |
| 5 | I draw on my past personal and professional experiences to forecast possible challenges in assessing L2 students. | | | | | |
| 6 | I employ my previous personal and professional experiences to identify practical and relevant assessment practices in my class. | | | | | |
| 7 | I make use of my assessment-related experiences to modify my assessment techniques/practices. | | | | | |
| 8 | Teachers with sufficient professional experiences solve their daily assessment problems more efficiently. | | | | | |
| 9 | Teachers with higher academic qualifications have more innovation to improve their assessment. | | | | | |
| 10 | School's policies influence my assessment decisions and practices. | | | | | |
| 11 | I use my prior experiences to respond to the assessment policies of the school where I work. | | | | | |
| 12 | I intend to raise my students' academic performance by taking assessment for learning approaches in my tests. | | | | | |
| 13 | I do my best to involve my students in the classroom assessment processes. | | | | | |
| 14 | I pre-specify short-term goals in my assessment plans to obtain better results. | | | | | |
| 15 | I pre-specify long-term goals in my assessment plans to obtain desired outcomes. | | | | | |
| 16 | Students' engagement and academic success are important to me in assessment. | | | | | |
| 17 | I make efforts to stick to my assessment goals and plans in my class. | | | | | |
| 18 | I am eager to help my students gain better scores in low and high-stakes exams. | | | | | |
| 19 | I would like to use new assessment approaches (e.g., portfolios, dynamic assessment, formative assessment) to increase the quality of L2 assessment. | | | | | |
| 20 | Teachers' professional context influences their assessment decisions/practices in the class. | | | | | |
| 21 | I solve my assessment problems and setbacks by doing deep self-reflection. | | | | | |
| 22 | I use collaborative reflections with my colleagues to improve my assessment skills and practices. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 23 | School principals and managers influence L2 teachers' assessment decisions and practices in the class. | | | | | |
| 24 | School principals and managers influence L2 teachers' assessment knowledge and methods. | | | | | |
| 25 | School leaders should assist L2 teachers set assessment goals that improve students' achievement. | | | | | |
| 26 | School authorities should offer assessment-related courses to L2 teachers to improve their assessment literacy and identity. | | | | | |
| 27 | School managers should include L2 teachers' voice and power into account to generate a principled assessment. | | | | | |
| 28 | There must be an established, friendly, and strong professional discourse in academia to promote teachers' assessment agency in the class. | | | | | |
| 29 | L2 teachers need to connect with the wider professional discourses/communities of language testing and assessment. | | | | | |
| 30 | Teachers' simplistic view of L2 education and assessment prevents them from taking principled actions. | | | | | |
| 31 | Teachers' ways of thinking and understanding of L2 assessment shapes their autonomy and agency in classroom assessment practices. | | | | | |
| 32 | An innovative working environment helps L2 teachers to make sound assessment-related decisions and take principled actions. | | | | | |
| 33 | An academic context that encourages horizontal social relationships instead of hierarchical ones facilitates L2 teachers' assessment innovation. | | | | | |

Glossary of Key Terms for the Teacher Agency Questionnaire

1. Assessment knowledge: The understanding and awareness of various assessment methods, tools, and practices that educators use to evaluate student learning, which can influence their effectiveness in conducting assessments.
2. Behavioral patterns: Recurrent actions or reactions based on past experiences that teachers utilize to navigate new situations, particularly regarding challenges in assessment practices.
3. Emerging dilemmas: New and unforeseen challenges or ethical uncertainties that arise in educational settings, particularly related to assessing Language 2 (L2) learners.
4. Assessment for learning: An approach to assessment that focuses on using assessment as a tool to improve student learning outcomes rather than solely to assign grades.
5. Short-term goals: Specific, immediate objectives in assessment planning designed to achieve measurable outcomes within a limited time frame.
6. Long-term goals: Broader, overarching objectives in assessment planning aimed at achieving significant educational outcomes over an extended period.
7. Engagement and academic success: The involvement and active participation of students in the learning process, which is deemed essential for their overall performance and achievement in academic settings.
8. Innovative assessment approaches: Modern, creative methods of evaluating student performance, such as portfolios, dynamic assessments, and formative assessments, aimed at enhancing the quality of learning.
9. Self-reflection: The process of introspectively examining one's own teaching practices and assessment decisions to identify areas for improvement and develop professional skills.
10. Collaborative reflections: Joint discussions and evaluations among teachers and colleagues to critically analyze and enhance assessment strategies and practices.
11. Professional discourse: Meaningful conversations and exchanges of ideas among educators that foster a supportive environment for sharing insights and improving practices related to assessment.
12. Assessment literacy: The ability of teachers to understand, create, and implement effective assessment strategies and practices, which is crucial for making informed assessment decisions.

13. Horizontal social relationships: Collaborative and egalitarian interactions among colleagues and peers within an educational context, emphasizing equal participation and support in decision-making processes and professional development.

14. Hierarchical social relationships: Structured interactions characterized by a clear chain of command and authority, where power dynamics can influence communication and decision-making processes among educators and administrators.

Appendix B

Teacher Formative Assessment Practice Scale

Dear respondent,

Please rate the following statements using the criteria: Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Seldom = 3, Sometimes = 4, Frequently = 5, Very frequently = 6.

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item 1 | I share the learning intention before students start working in class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Item 2 | I clarify what is valued for each assessment task. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Item 3 | I use various assessment activities in the classroom to check students' mastery of course content. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Item 4 | I ensure homework can check students' learning progress. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Item 5 | I point out students' strengths and weaknesses in my feedback. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Item 6 | I provide suggestions for students to improve their performance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Item 7 | I ask students to evaluate peers' work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Item 8 | I ask students to provide feedback to help peers improve. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Item 9 | I ask students to identify strengths and weaknesses in their own work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Item 10 | I ask students to identify strategies that will improve their own work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Appendix (C)

Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. How often do you use formative assessment in your classroom and how do you use it? Please clarify with more examples during a lesson.
2. What considerations do you think about that has a bearing on how you carry out formative assessments? Give an example of how one of these considerations impacted on your practice.
3. What value has formative assessment practice, in your case, enhanced on student learning achievement? Give an example of a case that represents this value.
4. What methods would you say that are regularly employed in your formative assessment practices? For instance, quizzes, assessments done on peers, assessments that are observational, and others. Can you cite an example when you last utilized one of such methods?
5. At what levels do you include your students in the process of formative assessment and how? For example, can you provide one activity or strategy that you used to include them?
6. To what extent do you think your level of agency has an effect on the way you conduct formative assessment? Provide an example of how your agency has influenced the way you assess.
7. What difficulties do you experience in using formative assessments and how do these problems relate to your level of agency? Provide one example.