

**EXPLORING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT
PRACTICES IN TEACHING READING
COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH AT
ELEMENTARY LEVEL**

**BY
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**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES
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By

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ABSTRACT

Title: Exploring Formative Assessment Practices in the Teaching of English Reading Comprehension at Elementary Level

The present study explores formative assessment practices in teaching English reading comprehension at the elementary level across private and public schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad Federal Board (Punjab). In modern educational frameworks, formative assessment is recognized as crucial for enhancing student learning and engagement. However, its practical implementation in Pakistan's elementary classrooms, particularly for reading comprehension, remains unexplored. This study examines how teachers use formative assessment to improve reading comprehension, utilizing Ruiz-Primo's (2007) four-phase FA model: setting learning goals, collecting information, interpreting information, and acting on the information collected. Additionally, this research explores teachers' formative feedback practices and how perceptions of effectiveness differ between private and public elementary schools. The researcher used a qualitative design, including classroom observations and semi-structured interviews from selected private and public elementary schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad Federal Board (Punjab). The qualitative data addresses all three questions regarding teachers' FA practices, formative feedback, and perceptions. The researcher applied frequency distribution to analyze practices and generated themes inductively from data on ESL teachers' perceptions and feedback. Findings reveal that teachers across both sectors perceive formative assessment as integral to regular ESL teaching. However, factors including large class sizes, lack of resources, and varied learner linguistic backgrounds hinder effective FA implementation for reading comprehension, especially in the public sector. Private schools employ more organized ongoing assessment practices to improve students' English reading skills. The findings underline the necessity for policymakers and administrators to address these challenges. Future researchers can also use this study's findings to explore other English language skills and offer a more comprehensive understanding of formative assessment's impact on English proficiency.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FA:	Formative Assessment
ESL:	English as a Second Language
ESRU:	Eliciting Information, Student Response, Recognition of Response, Use of Gained Information
NUML:	National University of Modern Languages
FPSC:	Federal Public Service Commission
CSS:	Central Superior Services
ML:	Machine Learning
SBA:	School-based Assessment
TBLT:	Task-based Language Teaching
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
FDE:	Federal Directorate of Education
GTM:	Grammar Translation Method
PD:	Professional Development

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DEDICATION

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) education, proficiency in reading comprehension holds significant value for learners to excel in other academic subjects taught in English. However, the efficiency of the process involves a myriad set of cognitive and metacognitive skills, including decoding text and interpretation, analysis and synthesizing information, vocabulary knowledge, syntactic awareness, and contextual understanding. According to Cain et al. (2004), the reader's background knowledge and context are vital for interpretation, as comprehension links new information from the text to the reader's prior knowledge. Hence, given the complex nature of the comprehension mechanism, there is a critical need for ESL learners to have adequate exposure to the target language in various contexts, interactive teaching and assessment methods, focused instruction on pronunciation and grammar, and constructive classroom strategies to enhance students' understanding of written English language (Rafiq et al., 2024).

Emerging between the periods of the late nineteenth and early twentieth, formative assessment has gained traction across education institutions and as an effective approach in the context of language teaching. The concept is characterized by ongoing, interactive evaluations of student understanding and learning needs. Unlike summative practices of assessment examining student outcomes at the end of an instructional period, formative assessment is integrated into teaching as part of regular learning to support learning. Critical to teaching reading comprehension, the approach expands ways for both teachers to adapt instructional adjustments and learners to actively engage in reading comprehension activities and self-assess their understanding with the provision of constructive feedback in the classroom. In addition, the basis of the formative assessment approach is rooted in constructive learning theories, emphasizing the student as an active agent in constructing knowledge through experience and reflection.

The success and significance of implementing formative assessment practices in ESL teaching are depicted in the works of Sonmex and Cetinkaya (2022), Ahmadi et al. (2023), and Mama (2023). However, in Pakistan, assessing students'

comprehension skills to fulfill the purpose of improvement and conceptualizing assessment as an effective component of daily teaching and learning is a challenge for stakeholders, directly impacting students' comprehension skills in English. Students struggle to identify their strengths and weaknesses without regular, meaningful feedback to improve their comprehension abilities. Moreover, the absence of ongoing assessment deprives teachers of in-depth analysis of individual student progress and adjustment of instructions to meet individual needs.

1.1 Background to the Study

In Pakistan, students' academic and professional success relies considerably on their proficiency in English as it is used as a medium of instruction in higher education institutions (Gul et al., 2022). Moreover, English is widely used in multiple domains of Pakistan, such as business, administration, bureaucracy, judiciary affairs, and military, media, and government offices (Shemmeem, 1993). Hence, learners' proficiency in reading comprehension is fundamental, forming the basis of effective learning and academic success. Comprehension is the process through which students construct meaning, which is the purpose of reading in language (Haas & Flower, 1988). However, ineffective teaching and assessment strategies in the classroom result in difficulty for students in understanding English texts in their context and conceptualizing novel ideas in Pakistan. Most schools and colleges still adhere to the practice of reading aloud regularly while neglecting the value of silent reading as the true essence of processing language. Moreover, students are not encouraged to think and rethink the written language and clarify their queries while processing the meaning of the text.

Having been involved in higher education and teaching ESL learners at secondary and higher secondary levels across different areas of Pakistan for more than four years, the researcher observed significantly low performance of students in English literacy in general and reading comprehension in particular. Furthermore, reviewing previous literature (Muhammad, 2011, 2013; Sultana, 2007), Conference of National Education of Pakistan, FPSC (Report, 2016, Dr. Akbar Ali, Nasim Gul, Yonus & Khan, 2017), (the details of which will be presented in the next chapter) supported the concern that inefficiency of teaching and assessment practices in ESL classrooms are significantly linked to the learners' lack of comprehension skills. Likewise, the report on the Conference of National Education of Pakistan (2016)

presented one piece of evidence, indicating the years' CSS examination and students' worst performance in English essay and composition subjects. The factors of the issue, as highlighted by the experts, were candidates' poor comprehension and expression levels. Moreover, the reported gaps opined by the expert educationists were in teaching and assessment practices in the school system, emphasizing the need for the development of learners' reading skills in schools.

Since the period the conference was held, the researcher identified in the review of literature in the area a considerable gap in exploring the assessment process, specifically with regard to teaching reading comprehension in English in ESL classrooms. Furthermore, the prevailing lack of comprehension skills among students, as observed and analyzed in the literature, prompted the researcher to explore the subject in the light of effective and interactive assessment strategies. Given its global eminence, *formative assessment* approaches have been incorporated in most education institutions around the world to support both learners' progress and teachers' instruction to teaching, particularly second language teaching. At the international level, FA is highly supported in academic literature to fill out the gaps in learners' learning and teachers' instructions (Black & Wiliam, 1998). However, its impact on teaching reading comprehension in English in Pakistan is yet an unexplored area. Scrutinizing the facts from previous literature, a qualitative study was needed to explore the nature of formative assessment practices used to teach and assess English reading comprehension of ESL learners at the elementary level. Dariagan and Laureto (2022) state that the level of elementary students is developing, and they are proficient readers in pronunciation and fluency. Moreover, examining the teacher's perception and knowledge regarding the value and effectiveness of formative assessment for reading English reading comprehension is one of the crucial objectives of this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The increasing emphasis on learner-centered instruction and the shift from traditional assessment to formative practices have highlighted the need to investigate how formative assessment can be effectively integrated into ESL reading instruction. Despite global research advocating its value, there remains limited localized understanding of how these practices are implemented, particularly in developing contexts like Pakistan. This study addresses that gap by exploring how formative assessment strategies influence reading comprehension in ESL settings, offering

insights for improved instructional planning, teacher training, and policy development.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What types of formative assessment practices are employed by ESL teachers to support students' reading comprehension at both linguistic and content levels in public and private elementary school settings?
2. How do ESL teachers provide and use feedback as part of formative assessment to support students' reading comprehension?
3. What are ESL teachers' view on how different types of formative assessment (planned, spontaneous, or embedded) support students' reading comprehension?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To investigate Pakistani ESL teachers' assessment practices with regard to Ruiz-Primo's ESRU model for developing learners' reading comprehension (at linguistic level and Content level) in English across private and public elementary schools.
2. To explore the ESL teachers' feedback practices in the light of Ruiz-Primo's model for assessing their learners' comprehension skills in English across both private and public schools.
3. To examine ESL teachers' perspectives about the role of formative assessment in improving students' reading comprehension in English.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Reading is one of the most crucial components of language skills for those students learning English as a second or foreign language, as well as for success in school and the workplace (Dorkchandra, 2010). Grade eight or elementary level learners are conscious and proficient at the same time to have skills in vocabulary and fluency (Dariagan & Laureto, 2022). Moreover, these learners are at the "developing" stage to achieve skills and be active in constructive activities in the classroom, able to think critically and connect their experience and social factors with the current knowledge of the text to get the meaning of written language. This research is

significant for several reasons. Firstly, it contributes to the limited body of research on formative assessment for English reading comprehension in Pakistani elementary education. By highlighting the gaps and challenges in current practices, the study aims to assist policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in the field of Applied Linguistics to take heed to employing effective formative assessment activities in syllabi for teachers' guidance to support students' reading comprehension in English. Secondly, the findings of this research may have the potential to guide future researchers to explore teaching practices in the ESL context further, and it assists ESL teachers teaching English in countries like Pakistan to build their classroom practices by enhancing the quality of formative assessment to enhance reading comprehension skills of students in English. Finally, the findings of this research will be a valuable guidance for policy development bodies such as curriculum development boards, educational research institutions, and teacher training institutes to formulate frameworks and policies that facilitate formative assessment implementation.

1.6 Delimitation

The current research is delimited due to several factors. Firstly, it focused particularly on formative assessment practices in teaching English reading comprehension, targeting eighth-grade students from a selected area of Pakistan. The targeted sample population is taken considering the facts that grade-eight students are proficient readers; they are in the developing stage of reading comprehension and, hence possess the skill in vocabulary and fluency (Dariagan, A.B.D, 2022). Concerning formative assessment, elementary-grade students represent a critical stage in language acquisition and reading development as an ideal population for exploring formative assessment practices in ESL classrooms. At this stage, learners are not only developing foundational literacy skills but also forming essential habits related to comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and critical thinking. Early exposure to formative assessment strategies—such as feedback, questioning, and scaffolded instruction—can significantly shape students' reading comprehension trajectories by promoting active engagement and metacognitive awareness (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Harvey, 2007). Moreover, elementary classrooms often provide more flexibility in teaching methods that allows close observation of teacher-student interactions and the real-time impact of formative feedback. By focusing on this developmental phase, the study aims to highlight how early interventions and instructional feedback can foster

stronger comprehension outcomes and set a lasting foundation for ESL learners' academic success.

The study did not consider other English language skills, such as writing and listening, which may limit the comprehensiveness of the findings. Moreover, the research was confined to observing data from selected teachers over a limited period of six months. This time constraint is a potential impediment to a thorough understanding of the long-term impacts of formative assessment on ESL student's comprehension skills. In addition, the study did not include data collection from administrators, policymakers, or other stakeholders, which could have provided a more holistic view of the approach's effectiveness and potential areas for improvement in the context of ESL teaching. Additionally, the current research was conducted from ESL teachers across the selected private and public elementary-level schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad (Punjab). Concerning the chosen location for the study, a number of rationales were taken into consideration including the proximity of it to the researcher which made the data collection accessible. Secondly, the chosen location contains the capital of Pakistan and one of the major cities adjacent to it; which the standard of education for other local regions.

1.7 Write-Up Distribution

This section introduces the chapter-wise organization of the present paper. The current thesis is composed of five chapters. The major content of each chapter is explained below:

Chapter one presents the introduction and background to the study. It covers the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, research objectives, research questions, study limitations, and thesis write-up distribution. This chapter also calls attention to why the researcher has chosen the topic.

Chapter two is a literature review of the relevant literature of a similar research area. It started with the historical background and evolution of formative assessment in education theory. It goes to the development of formative assessment components and their application in education and second language teaching. It elaborated on the major theoretical underpinnings of formative assessment pioneers such as Black, William, and Looney, who contributed to the theory of formative assessment. Furthermore, it connected the FA approach with ESL teaching and

reading comprehension. It cited the works of other researchers in recent years about FA implementation and influence in ESL classrooms and in other language contexts.

Chapter three of the research states the research methodology of the study. The content and material of the chapter include a description of the selected theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, the population and sampling technique used for the data gathering, research design and so on. The section highlights the details of theoretical support to the present study and it elaborates on how the research has been done.

Chapter four indicates the data collection procedure and data analysis of the study. This section shows a connection with chapter three, which is the main body of the thesis. The section sheds light on the data collection procedures based on the data collected and presents an analysis of the data to answer the research questions. The major content includes the application of selected research design, using two research instruments, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews to elicit the data. The section highlights the steps that the researcher has taken.

Chapter five presents the conclusion of the thesis. It provides the major summary of the findings of the research work by taking into account the research questions. It has objectively stated the study's limitations and has offered some recommendations for future researchers in the area.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter, the researcher presented an overview of formative assessment to contextualize the study. In this section, the literature review discusses studies related to students' English reading comprehension issues, the international implementation of formative assessment in second language teaching, and teachers' perceptions and practices of regular formative assessment in classroom teaching in the context of Pakistan. Furthermore, gaps in existing literature are also highlighted.

2.1 Early Development of Formative Assessment in Education Theory

Formative assessment, with its multifaceted nature, such as informal formal assessment, assessment for learning, and ongoing assessment, gained traction in the theory of education between the late 19th and early 21st centuries. Multiple researchers and philosophers have evaluated and discussed the models to support the entire learning and teaching process in education through the “formative” function of assessment to improve “student learning.” The subsequent literature is an overview of theory and its evolution across periods by many researchers in the field.

2.1.1 Historical Background of Formative Assessment

In the late 19th and early 21st centuries, notable scholars such as Dewey's *Experience and Education* (1938) and Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1956) advocated for the concept of "ongoing assessment" within educational philosophies. Their support aimed to facilitate learning and provide guidance for instructional practices in the field of education. Taking into account the role of instruction, Dewey initially put the idea of "progressive learning" and ongoing evaluation to contribute to the development of formative assessment.

Building upon this, Benjamin Bloom further structured the methodologies in his taxonomy of educational objectives in 1956, emphasizing the need for assessing learners' progress at multiple cognitive levels. Moreover, they considered FA a tool to improve the teaching-learning process for pupils and to provide feedback. Teachers should use specific strategies to implement FA as part of regular classroom instruction to improve student learning and help teachers adjust instruction (Bloom, 1971).

In addition, Michael Scriven's (1967) work embodied the difference between formative assessment and summative evaluation. They deemed formative evaluation as a tool to assess the usefulness of curriculum to guide instructors' choices and how to improve it. He further elaborated that the role of the terms 'formative' and 'summative' evaluation is to qualify evaluation in academic goals." (1997, p.43).

In the opinions of both Scriven and Bloom, assessment is only considered "formative" if it assists in the alteration of subsequent educational decisions. However, Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam (1998) showed a degree of criticism over the limited ideas of both by proposing a broader definition and utility of the term. In a nutshell, formative practice in the classroom involves not only collecting but interpreting and applying evidence about student achievement to improve future instruction decisions. They believe that the teachers, learners, and peers are coordinately responsible for eliciting the information for organizing the next steps of instruction in teaching and learning to achieve success. Weak evidence, on the other hand, lacks the quality of instructions and learning outcomes.

2.1.2 Cultural and Pedagogical Influences on Formative Assessment

Despite the constant effort of scholars to develop formative assessment, there is a lack of an exact statement across literature, which influences its implementation across societies. As stated, the definition of formative assessment cannot be delimited to a single area of work (Black & Wiliam, 2006). Various cultural and societal factors, including societal norms, educational approaches, and classroom practices, can considerably influence the application of formative assessment.

By examining the correspondence between formative assessment practices and growth mindset in predicting reading achievement across Eastern and Western students, Yan et al. (2021) in their study found cross-cultural variability in terms of formative assessment impact on reading achievement, but a positive indicator was "instructional adjustment." The researchers identified a positive relationship between a growth mindset and reading achievement only in the West but not in the East. For instance, collectivist cultures prioritize peer feedback over individual achievement, shaping the way formative assessment integration is done. Similarly, Constructivist approaches, as developed by Piaget (1952), and Vygotsky's (1978) social

constructivism, underpin the active learning and feedback cycles found in formative assessment.

In spite of varying concepts and approaches influencing the implementation across cultures, formative assessment practices rely on some core principles that are followed in the current study and for the researcher to gather the data in the context of Pakistan.

2.1.3 Continual Evolution of Formative Assessment Practices

In the past, formative assessment practices were based on traditional quizzes and classroom observations to recognize the other effective methods and tools. However, technological advancements and emerging needs and differences of individual learners have shifted assessment approaches to more interactive response systems. Hence, many researchers have begun focusing on using technology-integrated formative assessment to teach a second or foreign language (Vassiliou et al., 2023). Moreover, innovative technologies such as machine learning (ML) are increasingly involved in science assessments, emphasizing the need for understanding their implementation and effects on assessments for stakeholders (Zhai, 2021). Formative assessment has ample space (Heritage, M. 2010) to evolve with the emerging tools and technologies of the era and novel practices as per the requirement of the current learning setting and learners' needs. Therefore, the approach is advancing at an evolving pace and will continue to do so to achieve the objective of "improving" learning.

2.2 Evolving Concepts and Theories of Formative Assessment

Since the introduction of the term "formative" by Michael Scriven, the concept of formative assessment has evolved through the contributions of various scholars. However, Czech et al. (2019) argue that inconsistencies and limitations still persist in these evolving conceptualizations. Formative assessment involves collecting evidence of student learning to help teachers adjust instruction and guide students in understanding their strengths and areas for improvement. Moreover, researchers such as Black and Wiliam (1998) and Heritage (2010) have expanded the definition of formative assessment to include interactive feedback loops and active student participation in the learning process.

2.2.1 Diverse Perspectives on the Concept and Definitions of Formative Assessment

The literature presents a wide range of formative assessment definitions, with no universally accepted concept, reflecting its diverse application across global educational contexts. According to Taras (2009), Taras (2009) highlights the increasing emphasis on using assessment practices that support both instructional development and student learning. However, the ideas of Black and Wiliam (1998) and Trumbull and Lush (2013) support the formative function of assessment to facilitate learners.

For instance, Black and Wiliam (1998a, 1998b) describe:

According to Black and Wiliam (1998a, 1998b), “formative assessment is one of the most effective techniques for promoting student learning.

Similarly, formative assessment is a process that aims to yield information about student learning as the core of learning programs and that teachers can use to design instructions to meet the student’s needs and improve learning (Trumbull & Lash, 2013).

Adams and Porter (2014) illustrate that, formative assessment is a significant part of the learning process, guiding student learning and preparing them for summative assessment.

Both Ainsworth and Viegut (2006) and Looney (2005) emphasize the role of formative assessment in helping teachers adapt instruction based on learners’ needs through continuous feedback and observation.

Looney, J. (2005) adds: Formative assessment is about a frequent interactive assessment of learners’ progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately.

Correspondingly, Ainsworth and Viegut (2006) define formative assessment is an approach that assists teachers in identifying learners’ current knowledge and skills, utilizing information to change instruction for students’ success, creating appropriate lessons, activities, and groupings, and informing students about their progress level to help them set goals.

Defining Formative assessment, Iriana et al. (2022) define formative assessment as a process aimed at identifying students' learning needs and monitoring their progress consistently to support and motivate learning. Zhorova et al. (2022) identify the components of formative assessment as peer assessment, self-assessment, goal development, observation, and feedback.

Gregory (2019), supported by Cizek et al. (2019), distinguishes formative from summative assessment, defining it as a process that informs teachers' instructional decisions while enabling students to evaluate their own or peers' learning.

Collectively, these definitions illustrate the dual role of formative assessment: providing learners with insights into their progress and enabling teachers to tailor instruction. Central to this approach is the concept of "effective feedback," which facilitates reflective learning and instructional adjustment (Black & Wiliam, 2006, p. 46).

Furthermore, learning contexts, learners' backgrounds, and education needs vary across cultures, leading instructors to modify its implementation in education contexts. Nonetheless, scholars advocating formative assessment have established key principles and objectives to support educators in understanding and applying the approach effectively. Subsequent literature reviews highlight the components of formative assessment and their role in instructional effectiveness. Formative assessment holds considerable potential to enhance learning outcomes, particularly when the learner is positioned at the center of the instructional process (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Its other benefits are that it offers information on learners, identifies learning gaps, and designs and employs strategies to fill those gaps and improve learning in the process of teaching. The teacher or instructor holds the critical responsibility to attain these purposes. As Looney (2005) put it, the concept of formative assessment often resonates with teachers. Thus, their understanding of the value of formative assessment and their skills to utilize it effectively in teaching are of utmost significance in achieving success. The formative function of assessment has a reciprocal role that facilitates teachers adjusting teaching methods and learners learning about their weaknesses.

2.2.2 Evolving Notions of Formative Assessment

In 1967, Scriven introduced the term “formative” in the context of curriculum evaluation, which is distinguished from summative evaluation. Since then, numerous scholars have expanded on the theoretical foundations of formative assessment, including Sadler (1989), Torrance (1993), and Torrance and Pryor (1998). Among the most influential contributions are the works of Black and Wiliam and the UK-based Assessment Reform Group (ARG), who in 2002 defined *Assessment for Learning* as “the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there” (ARG, 2002, pp. 44–46).

2.2.2.1 *Assessment for Learning*

As for as student learning is concerned, Black and Wiliam (1998) highlighted formative assessment as a crucial mechanism for improving instruction which offers the broader framework of “assessment for learning.” Expanding on this foundation, Sadler (1989) argued that formative assessment should help students understand learning goals, develop evaluative judgment, and close the gap between their current performance and desired outcomes. However, the theory and practice of formative assessment have also received criticism from several scholars and organizations, including Bennett (2011), Klenowski (2009), Hargreaves (2013), Swaffield (2011), and the OECD (2013), who raise concerns about its conceptual clarity and implementation in diverse educational contexts.

Pointing out weaknesses in the theory, Nakamura (2016), in his article “*The possibilities and limitations of assessment for learning*,” critiqued how assessment practices often deviate from their intended formative purpose. In addition to his observations, several scholars—including Bennett (2011), Klenowski (2009), Hargreaves (2013), Swaffield (2011), and the OECD (2013)—have warned that formative assessment may take the form of “convergent assessment,” leading to practices focused on compliance with predefined criteria rather than authentic student learning. Nakamura maintains that in its evolved form, assessment has become more concerned with achieving targets than fostering meaningful educational progress.

Emphasizing the dominance of a performance-driven culture, Watling et al. (2019) highlight the importance of instructors generating meaningful feedback to

support accurate judgments about learner competence. Watling and Ginsburg (2019) further argue that effectively blending assessment with feedback requires clarity of purpose, structured learner support, and a strong institutional commitment to fostering a culture of improvement instead of merely promoting performance outcomes.

Despite being criticized for its limited scope, assessment for learning version of formative assessment offers the benefit to the learner. Learners have an autonomous role to identify their level, skills and expertise to use that information for improvement. Teachers, on the other hand, hold the responsibility to let learners actively participate in understanding goals and make an effort to achieve them by implementing strategies such as communicating clear assessment criteria before teaching lessons. (William, 2006; Birenbaum et al., 2009; Magno & Lizada, 2015).

2.2.2.2 Feedback Loop Model or the Theory of Formative Feedback

Proponents of formative assessment regard feedback as a central process in learning. Numerous models, including those by Black and Wiliam (1998) and Hattie (2009), emphasize its role in improving student outcomes. Bloom (1968) was among the earliest to promote formative feedback as a means to adjust teaching and close achievement gaps. Later models, such as those by Winne (1995) and Kluger & DeNisi (1996), introduced cognitive perspectives which illustrated how learners process feedback through internal mechanisms like attention, memory, and metacognition.

Cognitivist theorists assert that learners actively interpret feedback to refine mental schemas. Similarly, constructivist thinkers like Piaget and Vygotsky argue that feedback enables learners to build new knowledge upon prior understanding—especially when supported by teacher scaffolding. Panadero et al. (2018) reposition feedback from behaviorist correction to a tool for metacognitive reflection and self-regulation. Contemporary feedback models (Andrade, 2018; Winstone et al., 2017) now treat students as active agents capable of interpreting, generating, and acting on feedback to construct meaning—aligned with constructivist learning goals.

In this study, feedback is examined as a process that supports ESL learners in constructing comprehension skills through teacher cues, comments, and reflective activities. However, contexts like Pakistan reveal limited implementation of such

models in language classrooms, thus requiring investigation into how feedback actually contributes to reading comprehension development.

2.2.2.3 Ruiz Primo's (2010) Model of Formative Assessment

Ruiz Primo's (2010) model of formative assessment, explicitly enhancing the role of teachers in FA practice, is subject to six assessment pedagogies for an effective formative assessment implementation. The first implies that the teachers must understand the "content," including learning goals, student misconceptions, and competence development. The second is the various assessment tools to assess learners' knowledge; the third is the timing and method of implementing the assessment. Fourth, it emphasizes the teacher's need to analyze the information collected. Fifth, illustrates that teachers must know the activities used, such as feedback and additional instructional practices, after collecting information. Finally, teachers must understand the value of FA practices in improving learners' learning.

The researchers of formative assessment describe it as a cycle with different stages Mkhwanazi, N. (2014), each describing it slightly differently. Likewise, Ruiz Primo's model of the assessment cycle is based on four phases/ s including clarifying learning goals, gathering information, interpreting the information collected, and acting on the information, with feedback being the central component.

Concerning the current study and the assumptions of formative assessment researchers, the teacher has a significant role in meeting the sequential criteria of assessment with formative function in regular teaching. Exploring their understanding and implementation of the formative approach and its impact is one of the core objectives of the current study. Ruiz Primo's model is a comprehensive plan for teachers to organize assessment sessions, equipment, strategies, and methods in stages; thus, the model is used as a guiding framework for the data gathering for the current study.

2.3 Components/ Practices of Formative Assessments

The existing literature on formative assessment presents substantial works of authors and its evolving concepts to support teachers experiencing effective learning outcomes. However, it would have been critical for the instructors to narrow down the concepts to practice formative assessment without a breakdown of their key aspects.

In order to bridge this gap, formative researchers agree on some common core elements of formative assessments that they assume are fundamental.

For instance, Looney, (2005) in her endeavor to collect international literature of case study classrooms on formative assessment practice states: "When teachers regularly draw upon the core elements of formative assessment, they create a new framework of teaching and learning". The collected elements from her study encompass:

- Creating a classroom culture that promotes interaction and use of assessment tools.
- Establishment of learning goals, and tracking of individual student progress toward those goals.
- Use of varied instruction methods and strategies to meet diverse learner needs.
- Use of varied approaches to assessing student understanding.
- Feedback on student performance and adaptation of instruction to meet identified needs.
- Active involvement of students in the learning process.

Furthermore, Williams, D. (2013) have reported in his work the key strategies:

Learning intentions - For teachers to clarify and share learning goals to students.

Eliciting evidence - Activities and tasks that elicit learning evidence/information.

Feedback - Feedback must be helpful for learners to move on in learning and improving skills.

Students as learning resources for one another - Emphasizing peer tutoring and collaborative learning where peers can assess each other's work.

Students owning their own learning - Teachers should activate learners as owners of their learning and responsible for their learning improvement.

Building upon Williams' presentation, Kathy Dyer, (2016) also stressed the importance of ongoing assessment to transform students into active learners and

responsible for their own learning. She also believes in a planned and structured regular assessment in language classroom. Her modified version of Williams' ideas contains six key strategies to formative success in classroom:

1 - Choice: The researcher is of the view that teachers must be offered choice to decide strategies used to help them initiate assessment.

2 - Flexibility - Teachers must be encouraged to modify strategies relevant to their context.

3 - small steps - Teachers must be supported with time, resources and coaching to bring educational change.

4 - Responsiveness - Teachers should collect data and use it to make an action plan. Similar to the idea that Wiliam calls "evidence of learning" where both teachers and students are responsive to use the information to make improvement.

5 - Collegial support - Peer collaboration, peer support and comments are significantly beneficial for both teachers and students.

6 - Supportive answerability - Teachers are accountable for their work to achieve meaningful outcomes but with the support and encouragement of their leaders.

Although the ideas of Wiliams and Looney collaborate in terms of collecting learners' information and feedback provision as significant aspects of formative assessment, Carless, in addition, enhances the idea of formative components by involving school leadership and government policies that must be adaptable with the principles of formative assessment for its successful implementation. No matter what, the researchers' offering a sequential arrangement of FA shows an intricate relationship between formative assessment approach and classroom teaching and especially language teaching. Furthermore, successful implementation of these ongoing assessments involves each participant including learners, teachers, school leadership, and curriculum development and assessment policymakers to support language teaching as per the principles of formative assessment. As far as assessment practices of schools in Pakistan are concerned, there is a significant diversity regarding assessment activities and use stated in the curriculum of public and private schooling systems (Huma & Akhtar, 2021). Also, evidenced by Mehmood et al.

(2023) in their study, the Total Quality Management (TQM) practices differed significantly across public and private schools.

Carless (2010), highlights four factors of successful implementation of formative assessment:

- 1: Teachers embrace formative assessment principles and practice
- 2: Students are proactive in understanding and actively involving themselves in formative learning activities such as peer assessment and self-evaluation
- 3: School leadership and assessment policies are supportive of the implementation of formative assessment practices
- 4: Government policies, curriculum goals, and examination systems are compatible with the ideas of formative assessment.

These components have built up a common understanding of the formative function of assessment for contemporary researchers, instructors, and practitioners in the field of teaching and learning, and specifically for a successful classroom teaching. As far as this study is concerned, these components are inferred as FA practices including all activities that the teacher and learner engage with in class. Furthermore, the written and verbal feedback provided by the teacher, regular discussion and comments, and regular activities that the teacher performs in class to support reading comprehension skills of students in English.

2.4 Formative Assessment in Second Language Teaching

An increasing number of empirical studies have proved positive outcomes of utilizing formative assessment as part of the learning process specially in ESL language teaching. At the same time, considerable challenges are reported by the teachers in practicing FA in daily teaching. (Gang & Leung, 2019) necessitating the teachers' proficiency and skills for successful implementation of FA practice.

2.4.1 Formative Assessment Integration in Second Language Teaching

Language teaching and language assessment are intricately related since they provide information on students' gradual achievement and ability in learning a second language. (Syafrizal & Pahamzah, 2020). Ongoing assessment is considered not only as an evaluative tool but also as an integral part of the learning process. Researchers

view it as a means for students to actively construct their knowledge through continuous practice and engagement with new skills (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1952). In line with constructivist theory, regularly practicing and constructing knowledge is essential for second language acquisition (Gan & Leung, 2020). According to cognitivist theories, language learning occurs as learners internalize information and apply cognitive strategies to process language input (Anderson, 1982). These theories highlight the importance of regular, interactive feedback for reinforcing cognitive development in language learning.

Regular monitoring and assessment help teachers gauge learners' current language proficiency levels and identify the areas in need of improvement. Since the coining of the term "formative assessment" by Michael Scriven, teaching and pedagogical practices related to formative assessment have evolved significantly in their various roles within education. Consequently, formative assessment has become a well-established practice in educational theory, particularly in language pedagogy. The literature is replete with studies emphasizing the potential benefits of formative assessment for enhancing student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). However, teachers often face challenges when implementing formative assessment in daily language classes, especially in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts (Gan & Leung, 2020).

A qualitative study conducted by Rehman et al. (2021) explored the issues related to the formative assessment implementation model, namely the School-Based Assessment (SBA) at the secondary level in Bangladesh.

The findings of the study revealed some dismal conditions of FA implementation school-based assessment (SBA) in Bangladesh. Several distinct challenges appeared in practicing formative assessment, such as teachers' inadequate orientation towards SBA, teachers' negative attitudes towards SBA, large class size, teachers' heavy workloads, significant syllabus content, no reflection of the marks of SBA in public examinations, lack of fairness and honesty in teachers, lack of reliability and validity of SBA as an assessment tool, poor socio-economic conditions of teachers, and absence of monitoring supervision by authorities concerned.

2.4.2 Stated Challenges of Implementing Formative Assessment Across Educational Contexts

Despite its potential advantages in education, the existing literature on formative assessment cites significant challenges to its practice across educational institutions. Some of the common challenges highlighted in the studies are the need for a standard definition of formative assessment, the lack of FA theory, insufficient classroom practices of formative assessment, and the lack of required resources and a grade-oriented mindset (Mkhwanazi, 2014; Almahal et al., 2023; Looney, 2005). Challenges in the theory and practice of formative assessment in education institutions are reported worldwide, including in developed countries such as the United States, where FA is well-established. (Carless, 2005) compared to developing countries like Pakistan and underdeveloped (South Africa), where the approach is in the early stages. However, students, as well as teachers, are reported to have difficulty in accepting their altering roles in the dynamic mechanisms of complex interactions in classroom formative assessment. Consequently, researchers of language teaching seem active in molding the principles of formative assessment with several methods, such as task-based language teaching (TBLT), personal practice assessment theories (PPATs), and school-based assessment (SBA) to overcome the challenge of designing, organizing, and implementing formative assessment for a successful language teaching. That means the formative assessment approach has ample space to be molded with other concepts as per the needs of the learning context and learners to fulfill the aim of “improvement.”

Challenges in practicing FA in classrooms are also well observed by Looney (2005) in her review. She found out in her study that secondary school teachers protest many barriers in implementation, such as large classes, slowing the pace of learning through guiding instruction with necessary and extensive curriculum requirements, and using FA with learning, which is more challenging. Nevertheless, they created some interesting solutions by working closely with colleagues and experimenting with various strategies. Moreover, using formative assessment as challenging as they thought earlier turned into an opportunity to help them save time, focus on the needs of weaker students, and find fundamental changes in learners' abilities that altered the teaching and learning itself.

2.4.3 Teachers' Perceptions Influence the Practice of Formative Assessment

Teachers' perceptions and knowledge significantly determine their practice of formative assessment. Hence, it is of utmost value that teachers must be knowledgeable and skilled at understanding and implementing assessments regularly. Formative assessment practices are ineffective because the teacher lacks the knowledge to employ formative assessment in the classroom. (Black & Wiliam, 2006; Brown et al., 2009; Hasim et al., 2018).

“Secondary language teachers' perspectives on formative writing assessments” was a longitudinal qualitative study conducted by Xie, F. (2021) between 2017 and 2019. The research aimed to investigate secondary language teachers' perspectives on the implementation of formative assessment to support students' writing achievement. Gathering data through Zoom interviews with ten teachers, the researcher found positive perspectives of teachers regarding the use of formative assessment. However, the four themes were on display: the perceived professional development, collaboration, time, and resources that they needed to progress in learning and teaching.

Similarly, Wijaya, K, F. (2022) in his study identified two key themes related to the use of formative assessment in writing when exploring the EFL teachers' perspectives. Importantly, formative assessment can intensively guide learners to improve their quality of writing and it can promote more holistic writing learning ventures for all learners.

The successful implementation of formative assessment in language teaching revolves around the teacher's adequate understanding and knowledge of formative assessment, as emphasized in the works of formative assessment researchers. However, the question arises of how teachers can be prepared and informed on the effective utilization of FA in the classroom to have a fruitful impact on those regular practices. “Teacher's professional development” has been highly recommended and worked on to compensate for this gap.

2.4.4 The Teacher's Professional Development and its Impact

Recognized as an innovative approach in the theory of education and pedagogy, the implementation of formative assessment significantly needs several factors including the teacher's “professional development” as fundamental. It refers to

the idea that the teachers must acquire the substantial skills and expertise to effectively use FA in the classroom by involving in these programs (Black & Wiliam, 1998; William et al., 2004; Li et al., 2023). However, existing literature fails to meaningfully describe PD and ways of its successful implementation (Sancar et al., 2021).

In their article “A New Framework for Teacher's Professional Development”, the researcher endeavored to introduce a working definition of PD. Sancar et al., (2021) states that PD is attentive to assessment, duration, research scale, context, dissemination, control, collaboration and support. Likewise, educational institutions at international level including the United States at the Federal and Local levels have taken key initiatives for teacher professional development and effects of these especially in the use of formative assessment. However, little work is done regarding teacher’s professional development and training to support and benefit from regular informal assessment in Pakistan. (Shahzad et al., (2022).

Furthermore, Liang et al., (2019) in their effort to observe instructional change following formative instructional practices professional development across three data points of state-wise PD initiatives conducted a two-year study. The results showed significant changes in teachers’ way of providing feedback and encouraging students’ autonomy in learning. In the context of Pakistan, the level of teacher’s professional development and their knowledge regarding formative assessment and its implementation is yet an unexplored area. Therefore, examining their knowledge and perceptions of formative assessment is one of the major goals of the current study.

2.5 Formative Assessment and English Reading Achievement

Implementation of formative assessment strategies in teaching ESL students can significantly contribute to the development of several skills in English for ESL learners (Yasmin et al, 2021). This section sheds light on the impact of formative assessment strategies to improve reading comprehension skills of ESL learners in the light of empirical studies. Moreover, the need for using FA effectively to improve reading comprehension of Pakistani students is also discussed.

2.5.1 The Place of the English Language in Pakistan

Considering its status as the global means of communication and lingua franca worldwide, the English language is at an increasing pace to support exposure to

various domains, specifically the advancing technology and various types of media. According to World Population Review (2019), English gained traction across the globe during the 17th century due to the domination of the British Empire and the United States, making English the leading language of international discourse. Being the language of globalization, many countries around the world, including Pakistan, have English as the official language of many domains ranging from trade to politics and specifically academia, specifying the need for Pakistani students to have proficiency in the language.

However, the majority of students still face difficulties in speaking English and understanding the meaning of English text properly. Ali et al. (2022) in their study reported some significant challenges, including frequent interaction with dictionaries, understanding grammar and vocabulary, and lack of English text reading. Although the teachers and students believe that reading is a significant skill for language learning, the difficulties lead learners to poor results in their performance in various other aspects of education. Importantly, a report published in Dawn News on FPSC on education in 2016 highlighting the issues of English comprehension of Pakistani students pointed towards poor assessment and monitoring systems in schools, leading learners to have difficulty in performing other skills like writing in English. This and other supporting statements used in the conference base the background of the current study so that the researcher can observe the assessment of English reading comprehension in Pakistan.

2.5.2 Reading Comprehension - A Cognitive Function

In addition to Ruiz Primo's (2011) model of formative assessment, the study draws conceptual support from socio-cognitive and constructivist theories to better understand how reading comprehension develops in ESL classrooms. Socio-cognitive theory, particularly as outlined by Bandura (1986), centers upon the role of students' interaction, modeling, and feedback in learning. Such elements align closely with the core components of formative assessment, including real-time feedback, self-regulation, and scaffolding—essential in helping ESL learners refine comprehension strategies.

Simultaneously, constructivist learning theory, particularly Piaget's perspective, supports the view that learners actively construct meaning through

engagement with prior knowledge (schemas), social interaction, and context-based learning. This makes formative assessment techniques such as questioning, peer interaction, and teacher scaffolding deeply relevant. The integration of these theories provides a theoretical basis for interpreting how formative assessment enables teachers to support students' meaning-making processes during reading tasks, particularly through schema activation, vocabulary enhancement, and inferencing. These conceptual lenses help contextualize the study's exploration of how teachers apply formative assessment in reading comprehension.

Researchers in second language acquisition emphasize reading as foundational for mastering other language skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. Reading comprehension involves not just decoding words but also understanding their meanings and grammatical relationships within the text. Chang et al. (2018) define reading as an active cognitive process through which readers interact meaningfully with written language. In line with cognitivist perspectives, Phantarakhphong and Pothita (2014) elaborate that comprehension difficulties often stem from learners' struggle to process linguistic components like vocabulary, syntax, and lexical structures.

Reading, therefore, is more than recognizing words—it involves constructing meaning by integrating multiple elements such as semantics, sentence structure, and discourse cues. As emphasized by Cain et al. (2004) and Coda (2007), comprehension occurs when readers relate new textual information to their existing background knowledge, a view grounded in constructivist theory. Supporting this, Rafiq et al. (2024) suggest that improving comprehension in ESL learners, particularly in Pakistan, requires contextual exposure, interactive teaching, grammar support, and environments that facilitate active construction of understanding.

2.5.3 Formative Assessment: The Teachers' Guide to Upgrade Reading Comprehension

Looney (2005) summarized four essential benefits of using formative assessment for student lifetime learning:

1. FA promotes goals of lifelong learning
2. It raises level of student achievement
3. It holds greater equity of student outcomes

4. Formative assessment improves learning to learn skills

The potential of formative assessment with its various approaches and methods in language teaching is so far discussed through the examples of empirical studies. Considering the complex nature of reading comprehension for ESL learners, it is evidenced from above discussion that the improvement in reading comprehension skills requires effective and interactive teaching methods, focused instruction and ongoing assessment of students' comprehension level that can enhance learners' motivation and self-awareness on their regular progress.

Moreover, the success of reading comprehension in ESL classrooms have been followed by some microteaching strategies as the term suggested by Allen and Ryan (1969). Microteaching refers to the short teaching sessions followed by immediate feedback for educators to reflect and improve learning. However, there are recent adaptations in microteaching applied to literacy instructions. According to Harvey and Goudvis (2007), teachers can improve reading comprehension skills through practices such as making connections, questioning, pre-reading and visual representation, while paraphrasing, and summarizing are the key components of reading comprehension teaching (Duke & Pearson, 2002). On the other hand, Fountas and Pinnell (1996) argue that reading text aloud help students to improve pronunciation and comprehension and listening to reading enhance understanding. Such strategies can be attributed towards the conceptual frameworks of socio-cultural theory that assert that the teacher's informal assessment practices including reading aloud, questioning, and paraphrasing support the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) where learners grow with supported guidance. While making connections, pre-reading, and context-based questioning require students to actively engage in meaning making by using their prior knowledge and experience as a core to constructivist theory.

Harvey & Goudvis' (2007) reading comprehension micro strategies:

Making Connections: text to self, text to text, text to world

Questioning: before, during, and after reading, questioning content, author, events, issues, ideas

Making inferences: drawing conclusions of interpreting information not explicitly stated in the text

Visualizing: creating meaning through mental images

Summarizing and synthesizing information: extracting central ideas, see the bigger picture, conceptual understandings, integrating information

These ideas adequately support the argument in this study that effective implementation of formative assessment practices supported by the principles of teaching comprehension can improve students' reading comprehension skills in English.

The review of the literature of previous studies ahead suggests some significant evidence to strengthen the argument.

2.5.4 Reading Achievement in the Light of Schema Theory of Comprehension

Scholars in the field of second language teaching and learning are more concerned with employing the innovative strategies for reading comprehension in ESL classrooms. Schema theory of comprehension has gained attention of educationists recently as an innovative practice in motivating ESL learners to improve reading and placing teaching in order (Ren, S, 2023). The theory was initially proposed by Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, and then was applied by Frederick Berttlet, a British cognitive psychologist to psychological research. The author defined schema as a reflection of past experience and positive organization of past experience. Moreover, schema is an abstract representation and dynamic structure of knowledge allowing the reader to use the previous knowledge to understand the text and that schema offers context for new learning and interpretation that the reader can amplify by the help of instruction experience. That means, learners of English language by activating these structured knowledge schemas from their memory, can actively “construct” the knowledge regarding the current text and its meaning. Furthermore, teachers are also assisted in terms of optimizing their teaching strategies and methods by understanding the nature and structure of learners’ constructing new knowledge by using their previous experiences.

In the article “The Application of Schema Theory to the Teaching of Reading Comprehension” by Ren, S, (2023), readers’ reading ability can be classified into three types, including “language schema” referring to the learners’ previous basic knowledge such as vocabulary, sentence pattern, and grammar, “content schema” indicating the reader’s knowledge background related to the content of reading text

including the cultural or professional discipline knowledge of the text, and “formal schema” that forms the genre of text. With the help of a teacher's guide, learners can realize that reading is an interactive process between these three kinds of schemas. However, the teacher's role is essential to activate learners’ schemas through effective teaching techniques to improve comprehension. Correspondingly, Jean Piaget’s (1896-1980) theory of constructivism/ theory of learning emphasizes learning is an active cognitive process of thinking and learning is the result of learners’ association of construction between previous experience and current knowledge of the text. Hence, the role of the teacher is to facilitate learning and challenge learners’ thinking rather through innovative strategies.

Considering the ideas of contemporary researchers in ESL teaching and the process of reading achievement, the researcher intends to observe the nature of teachers’ teaching English comprehension and strategies used to improve learners’ vocabulary and text content. Moreover, the researcher has designed interview questions following the two types of schemas including “language schema” and “content schema” to explore teacher’s practices of improving these skills of elementary grade students.

2.6 Previous Studies Conducted on Reading Comprehension Using Formative Assessment

The section will review the previous literature on formative assessment in second language teaching and reading comprehension. The researcher will review the works of formative assessment authors on national and international literature and identify the gaps in previous research.

“The effect of formative assessment on reading comprehension” was a quantitative experimental study conducted by Sonmex and Cetinkaya (2022) in Turkey. The aim of the study was to set forth the effects of formative assessment methods on reading comprehension. The researchers used an unequalised quasi-experimental design with experimental and control groups of 3rd-grade primary school. The reading status of a group of students was assessed with formative assessment methods while another group was evaluated with traditional assessment methods. The data findings of the study displayed significant differences in favor of the experimental group, a positive success of FA methods in reading comprehension.

Similarly, Ahmadi et al. (2023) explored the effect of formative assessment retelling strategy on vocabulary knowledge and understanding passages in a quasi-experimental study in the EFL context in Iran. The sample of students was assigned to two intact groups. The experimental group (EG) implemented a retelling assessment, and a product-oriented summative assessment was employed for the control group (CG). The pre-test and post-test scoring measures were performed. The researchers concluded that the findings favor the retelling technique that helped learners develop vocabulary command and text comprehension in the EG. However, the product-oriented CG showed no significant difference.

Mama (2023) also conducted the study “Measuring the Impact of E-portfolio Assessment on the Moroccan Undergraduate EFL Students’ Reading Skill at the University of Moulay Ismail: A Case Study” to explore the impact of e-portfolios as an FA tool on the reading skills of second-semester EFL students. The study adopted a pre-posttest experimental design with an experimental group undergoing traditional standardized testing. Both groups receive similar reading comprehension instruction.

The reading proficiency test, comprising liberal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension tasks, is administered before and after the experiment. Results show that the experimental group exhibits improved reading comprehension across all three tasks, and the control group yielded enhancement in only the literal comprehension task. The researcher suggested a potential for decision-makers and teachers to advocate for integrating e-portfolios as an FA tool in language teaching and learning.

Yan and Chiu (2023) examined the underlying mechanisms between formative assessment practices and academic performance in an international sample. Their study examined the link between teacher and student reports of teachers' formative assessment strategies, including clarifying learning goals, progress monitoring, offering feedback, and facilitating instructional improvement and students' reading achievement. The data was collected from 151 969 fifteen-year-olds in 5,225 schools in 19 countries in PISA 2018 via multilevel analysis of plausible values.

The study's findings revealed that clarifying learning goals, monitoring learners' progress, and adjusting instructions positively relate to reading achievement skills. However, the provision of feedback alone cannot significantly impact. Moreover, given the multifaceted nature of formative assessment, the study's results

show that different FA practices can impact learning differently. The study also suggests to researchers that the "conduct" of FA and "making FA useful" are not the same things, such as teachers' applying theoretically sound strategies cannot guarantee expected outcomes. Furthermore, the discrepancies between learners' and teachers' views on teachers' instructional improvement seem negatively linked to students' reading achievement skills. Hence, success is only possible if the teacher monitors the effectiveness of their FA practices and revises instructions accordingly to enact the desirable learning outcomes.

An adequate empirical study available on the international level suggests the positive influence of employing formative assessment strategies in teaching to improve reading comprehension of ESL learners. However, the area is yet unexplored by any previous researcher in the context of Pakistan. Furthermore, as evidenced from the above research, the results of the implementation are not the same for all practitioners nor the success is guaranteed until the instructors effectively monitor the usefulness of assessment strategies.

Although several studies have been conducted to examine the perceptions and practice of formative assessment to improve language skills including writing in English from primary school to university level. However, exploring FA practices with regard to teaching English reading comprehension is the topic that needs critical observation.

2.6.1 Existing Literature on Formative Assessment in the Context of Pakistan

Ahmed et al. (2020), in their article "Formative Assessment in Elementary English Classroom: A Case Study of the semi-government Organization of Pakistan," examined the FA implications with practice while answering the research question, what are teachers' experiences with formative assessment? The study used a cognitive sense-making framework as a theoretical framework. For the purpose of data collection, the researchers involved five elementary school teachers of semi-governmental organizations and performed semi-structured interviews to analyze their experiences with FA practice in English subject classrooms.

The generated themes of the study indicated that the participants initially deemed it challenging to answer FA questions, but their understanding of formative assessment developed over time. As they highlighted, some of the barriers to

implementing FA were the need for more time and student behavior. The researchers suggested that participants must be trained in introducing FA and learning goals at the beginning to benefit from the phenomenon.

Likewise, Shahzad et al. (2022), in their article "Analyzing Formative Assessment Practices of English Language Teachers of Pakistan," reported a mixed-method study employing an evaluative research method. The researchers collected the data from two universities in Pakistan, i.e., the National University of Modern Languages and the University of Gujrat. A questionnaire as a data collection tool was constructed, piloted, and administered to 134 teachers of two universities in Pakistan. Moreover, interviews were also conducted to validate the results of the questionnaire. The study comprised all teachers of two universities teaching productive skills in many cities of Pakistan.

The study's findings revealed many inadequacies in teachers' FA practices, such as the teachers' subjective criteria. For example, some teachers responded with presentations and confidence to measure classroom performance; when asked about writing and speaking skills criteria, some highlighted ideas, some just talked about tenses and structure, and some privileged linguistic competence over communicative competence. However, none of them expressed thoughts about the discursual aspects of writing and speaking. Some claimed that they have been using holistic scales, some utilize primary traits scales, and some use analytic scales, lacking the understanding of using these rubrics to score learners' skills. Furthermore, classroom presentations were the primary source of grading learners instead of using any portfolio or diary to record formative assessments.

"Critical Review of Formative Assessment Practices Implemented in English Language Learning Programs in Sindh" was a systematic review conducted by (Hashmi et al., 2021). The review aimed to investigate the merits and demerits of using FA techniques in English language programs in Sindh. A qualitative method was used while conducting formative assessment, and six male and 12 female teachers selected on purposive sampling participated in the focus group. The teachers were interviewed at the end of the session to share their views on the merits and demerits of applying FA techniques to the English Language Learning Program.

As far as the findings of the study, the merits of using the FA technique were helpful in identifying the learning gaps, offering productive feedback, identifying learners' potential and empowering teachers, and creating a stress-free assessment. Meanwhile, the demerits of FA were a time-consuming process, unconventional assessment strategies, and a lack of professional development in adopting new strategies.

Yasmin et al. (2021) carried out a study to observe the impact of formative assessment strategies on student's writing skills at the elementary level. Sixty-four students were involved as the sample population, and the FA technique was applied for three months during English writing classes. The study also applied a summative assessment procedure along with students' surveys later on.

After the completion of the FA intervention, the researchers found positive outcomes of applying formative assessment to learners' writing skills. The results of the study highlighted that when learners remained under continuous assessment and monitoring process, they improved their writing skills. Hence, the recommendations are that teachers should use formative assessment in their classes. They must also provide formative assessment not only to students but also encourage them to self-assess and improve their learning.

As revealed from the above studies, formative assessment is at an early stage in developing countries like Pakistan. In order to get comprehensive results of the practice implementation, there is a need to have adequate resources, time, skills and specifically teacher's knowledge and professional development. On the other hand, the formative assessment approach is well-established within the private sector of the country as compared to public schools (Huma & Akhtar, 2021). Moreover, Maitlo et al. (2023) reported in their study that the private sector's performance regarding ESL learning is better than that of public sector schools. Hence, the researcher's focus in this study is to compare FA practices of both public and private elementary schools that use ongoing assessments to support English reading comprehension. Furthermore, the population of the study is elementary-grade English language teachers and their students from both sectors. According to Dariagan et al. (2022), the reading comprehension level of elementary-grade students is "developing" as they are proficient readers and have skills of vocabulary and fluency in language. Moreover, they can pronounce most words accurately, understand the words of English, and even

be able to give meaning to them. The researcher in this study is of the view that “elementary” level learners of the English language are more in need of proficiency in language with all its skills for their current and future academic and professional success.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present chapter discusses the research procedures and methodologies employed in the study. It elucidates the steps undertaken to gather the data from teacher participants and provides detailed insights into the selection criteria to form the empirical part of research undertaking. Furthermore, it outlines the instruments used for data collection along with their rationale and context of the study. Additionally, the chapter expounds upon the strategies employed for data analysis. Also, the chapter evaluates the credibility and consistency of the data in terms of validity and reliability, highlighting efforts to mitigate potential biases and ensure effective findings.

3.1 Research Design

The current study is qualitative exploratory-descriptive in nature. Exploratory research design is conducted to investigate an unidentified problem or to gain a better understanding of the problem (Olajide & Lawal, 2020; Akhtar, 2016). The researcher intended to observe and describe participants actions in detail through this study, hence, an exploratory study was needed to be conducted.

As Tegan (2021) explains, exploratory research often follows a qualitative approach as it helps researchers to understand the lived experiences of the subjects of the study and not merely to gauge the effect of it in numbers (Brink, 1993). Qualitative researchers are interested in people's beliefs, experiences, and meaning systems which provide them the rationale to choose it as a methodology to go deeper in understanding people's personal experiences with the phenomenon they are investigating. The choice of qualitative methodology serves the purpose of describing and interpreting issues or phenomena systematically from the point of view of the population being studied (Viswambharan & Priya, 2016). Choosing a qualitative approach for this research is guided by the aforementioned factors as the qualitative methods such as classroom observations and semi-structured interviews will help the researcher to get nuanced experiences of the teachers with formative assessment in their natural settings.

In addition, understanding the impact of formative assessment on reading comprehension through qualitative research requires exploration of the phenomena in the designated location with the chosen population. The exploratory component provides a valuable insight into the phenomenon being studied provided that it has not been extensively investigated in the chosen geographical context before. Descriptive approach, on the other hand, allows the researcher to provide rich and detailed accounts of the perspectives, perceptions, practices, and effects of the subjects with formative assessment in the study.

Therefore, the researcher has followed a qualitative exploratory-descriptive approach for the data gathering as qualitative research is the most suitable way to understand and describe participants' actions in great detail (Babbie, 2013; see also Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research was conducted through classroom observation as the primary source of data and semi-structured interviews were also conducted to verify the results of data collected from observation. The most common sources of qualitative data include interviews, observations, and documents (Patton, 2002). The primary data is used to support the understanding of teacher participation's knowledge and perceptions of *formative assessment* in a natural setting without an external or controlled interruption. The qualitative approach assisted the researcher in capturing accurate information and participants' practices of FA (formative assessment) to facilitate *reading comprehension* in English and its effects on learners to read and comprehend the text at elementary level in private and public schools in one of the districts of Pakistan.

The research design of the current study follows the principles outlined in McGraw Hill Education (2009) as guiding principles of English language teaching and ESL classroom research. The principles have been developed considering the pressing need indicated from extensive literature to support the diverse ESL learners and English language research. These principles were the guiding framework for the researcher to understand and observe the ESL classroom teaching and language assessment in this research. The principles for language teaching and development are as follows:

- The teacher provides well-implemented, specialized instruction that is focused on English language acquisition more effectively than the simple exposure to language.

- The teacher's instructions should attend to meaning at all levels: lexical, grammatical, and discourse.
- Learners must be explicitly taught the structural rules of second language and incorporate strategies focused on form as well as meaning.
- Teachers should develop oral language in the context of content area instruction.
- Educators should implement scaffolding strategies that connect language to visual or written information in ways that clarify language.
- Provide learners with abundant strategies to interact using a second language with bilingual and English proficient partners.
- Teachers should create cultural space through implementing linguistically and culturally responsive teaching practices.
- Creating personal connections with student's lives and prior experiences inside and outside of the school for successful English language learning and teaching.
- Schools promote multilingualism to support ESL learners' second language acquisition.

3.2 Research Tools - Methods of Data Collection

The researcher adopted a qualitative approach to explore English language teachers' perceptions and practices of formative assessment and feedback provision in elementary grade schools in Pakistan with semi-structured interviews and classroom observations as the most common tools of qualitative data collection (Patton, 2002). Field notes and checklists are instrumental for maintaining consistency and accuracy while conducting observations and interviews help in mitigating personal bias to the maximum extent. While conducting the observations, Field notes were used by the researcher to keep track of her observations consistently by providing a structured format to record the reflections systematically rather than picking on snaps of data randomly. With their help, the researcher maintained chronological recording of the events and patterns over time which helped her making the comparisons easily. They facilitated maintaining consistency by using a standardized format such as headings like time, location, respondents, context, and key observations etc., which helped

researcher to collect data uniformly across multiple data collection sessions. Therefore, they proved to be a great source of minimizing bias during her observations.

Checklists were also used while collecting the data. They were a great help in ensuring completeness of the data and maintaining consistency and minimizing personal bias. They guided the researcher to ask the same questions or observe the same criteria which ensured uniform data collection across different sets of data collection. While conducting interviews, checklists dictated researcher to ask pre-defined questions in the same manner, reducing leading questions or suggestive phrases.

The researcher conducted a pilot study 6 months prior to the actual data collection for the current study. The researcher visited the surrounding schools at elementary level and requested the teachers teaching English text for observation. The actions and participants behaviors were recorded using a checklist and the results of the pilot study were not used for any other purpose.

From the pilot study, the researcher observed that the teachers did not conduct classes with strategic pre-planning or lesson planning. For them, the purpose of the assessment was to score and grade students' performance. Assessment was used to prepare students for examinations rather than teaching comprehension and improving comprehension. It was difficult for the researcher to record all assessment and teaching comprehension practices on an observation checklist. Hence, the researcher decided to include field notes to record the detailed analysis of participants' actions in classroom observations for the current study.

Classroom observations were conducted to explore the formative assessment practices used in daily teaching, and face-to-face interviews with teacher participants were conducted to enhance the validity and extent of the data and to examine the ESL teachers' planning for teaching reading comprehension and perceptions about the effectiveness of formative assessment on learners' comprehension skills. To analyze the practices of formative assessment, themes were generated deductively following the four phases of the formative assessment model of Ruiz-Primo (2005).

The researcher used both inductive and deductive approaches to analyze the data and formulate themes from the data. The data analysis process for the formative

assessment practices followed four phases of the formative assessment model, namely “clarifying learning goals, collection of information, interpreting information, and acting on the information to formulate themes and categories. The inductive approach was used to generate themes emerging out of data regarding teachers’ perceptions and feedback process.

3.2.1 Classroom Observation

Classroom observations allow the researcher to directly observe the actions of participants and face-to-face interactions with teachers and learners in their natural setting (Patton, 1990). Moreover, observations help researchers discover things that the participants might have missed to talk about in the interview situation and access personal knowledge (Mkhwanazi, 2014).

In this study, the researcher requested the teacher participants to fill out a consent form before conducting classroom observation sessions. The researcher obtained copies of timetables and informed the teachers about the observation schedule. The researcher prepared an observation sheet (annex C) to facilitate the data collection and stay focused. Through the observations, the researcher obtained first-hand information on the teacher’s formative assessment practice for English reading comprehension and their interaction with learners on feedback strategies. Moreover, observations helped the researcher to determine whether the teacher’s perspectives correspond to their practice.

The researcher observed 17 classes from 6 six English language teachers. The data sources were public and private elementary grade schools. The researcher visited three teachers’ English classes from private schools and three teachers from government/public schools. The total periods of classes were nine from public schools and four periods of classes from one private school. Two of the other private schools permitted only four classes for observation due to certain authoritative restrictions.

3.2.1.1 Data Analysis of Classroom Observation

The observation data was categorized according to the main functions/ themes of formative assessment, clarifying learning goals, collecting information, interpreting the information collected, and acting on the information along with feedback provision (Ruiz-Primo, 2010). The researcher used the subcategories of four phases of formative assessment model to analyze the occurrence of those categories/practices of

formative assessment in the classroom. Field notes were transcribed by the researcher for coding and identifying patterns. The researcher counted the occurrence of each practice recorded in the checklist and compared with the themes identified in field notes. A frequency distribution method was used to identify the relative frequency of practices occurrence across private and public schools.

The researcher followed the frequency distribution method for analyzing classroom observation from a qualitative study by Lyster (2010) on "Patterns of Corrective Feedback and Uptake in an Adult ESL Classroom." In their research, Lyster recorded classroom observations to identify the frequency of feedback types uttered by the teacher and the students' responses to the feedback. In the study, the data was coded and categorized by the Model of corrective discourse (Lyster & Ranta, 1997), and error treatment was followed as the central unit of analysis. Teacher participants' utterances were recorded in field notes to capture contextual paralinguistic features, and audio recordings were also produced for subsequent analysis. In their study, Lyster examined the patterns of Error Treatment in ESL classrooms by calculating the percentages of utterances using the frequency distribution method. The research setting of Lyster's (2010) study resembled the setting of the present study's setting in the sense that in an ESL classroom, the teacher's provision of corrective feedback immediately assists learners in error correction, and feedback and informal formative assessment significantly supports the teaching and learning of English as a second language.

In the research on "Patterns of Corrective Feedback and Uptake in an Adult ESL Classroom," the researcher observed 18 hours of classroom interaction during a 9-week course. The researcher in the study used COLT part A and wrote field notes to detail the teacher's gestures and writing on the board. Audio recording was also used with two microphones placed on the walls on two sides to record the teacher's utterances and students' responses. The field notes were transcribed by the researcher. Out of the 18 hours of recorded interactions, 10 hours of interactions were transcribed, which contained one 2-hour lesson from week 6, 3 two-hour lessons from week 7, and one two-hour lesson from week 8. However, in the present study, the researcher followed a manual method of recording participants' actions in field notes, focused on the checklist, and used a verbatim transcription method to edit transcription and convert the recorded data into text. In addition, the classroom

observations were conducted for five months study across private and government schools to examine the practices of formative assessment and the nature of formative feedback offered by the teacher for improving English reading comprehension.

Table 1

Formative Assessment Categories in this Study

Categories	Sub-themes/ Practices
Clarifying learning goals	• The teacher's lesson planning • Clarifying learning goals before the lesson • Active participation in comprehension • Connection between prior and current knowledge
Eliciting information and student response	• Tracking learners' comprehension • Questioning before the lesson • Promoting student response • Activities to challenge thinking
Interpreting information	• Error-correction strategies • Feedback on students' performance • Feedback to improve comprehension • Establishing contextual setting for learners
Acting on information collected	• Comprehension with sociocultural factors

	• Teaching sentence structure • Helping learners in vocabulary building • Feedback to suggest improvement
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3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interview

A consensus of literature on ESL teaching through formative assessment mechanisms suggests that interviews are the most suitable qualitative tool for researching the area. For instance, Fatmawati, Purnawarman, and Sukaydi's (2021) study and Mustaqim, Mustapha, and Lebar's (2014) study also adopted interviews and classroom observations as qualitative research tools.

Considering the exploratory nature of this study, semi-structured interviews were analyzed as the most suitable data collection method, leading to comprehension and insight. Therefore, the researcher used the tool to provide respondent teachers with an opportunity to provide other relevant data related to the study.

The following steps were followed for the conduct of interviews:

The researcher in this study has designed interview questions following the two types of "schemas" from the schema theory of comprehension, namely, "linguistic schema" and "content schema," to facilitate the exploration of teacher's practices in teaching reading comprehension along with the feedback process as the major function of formative assessment. The schema model is the guiding framework for researchers to identify language teacher's practices and learners' level of participation in ESL classrooms (Ren, 2023). Moreover, the researcher conducted interviews and observations in the light of the "constructivist" approach as the basis of formative assessment and schema model framing how learning of language and comprehension takes place in a classroom setting.

- The researcher got a permission letter from the University where she is currently studying, the region's Federal Board of Education (FDE), and the authoritative bodies of private elementary schools to visit private and public schools.

- A draft of interview questions and protocol was made for piloting and pilot study was conducted four months prior to the main steps of data collection.
- The researcher visited the schools to make an appointment with English teachers in advance. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with these teachers by uttering each question aloud and in sequence for the participant. The researcher also made rough notes about the response of the participant on each question.
- The interviews were conducted verbally by recording the voices. However, the participants were allowed to make written responses to the questions for their facility and convenience. Moreover, the interviews were recorded in English and Urdu, as the participants' native language and familiarity with the researcher.
- Questions for the semi-structured interview were developed before the interview to guide the investigation without restriction. The questions were formulated based on existing literature on formative assessment to enhance ESL teaching. However, the key guidance in developing questions have been followed by the major theoretical concepts aligning with formative assessment teaching principles for reading comprehension. These include: Ruiz-primo's (2006 model of formative assessment, conceptualizing the process of "eliciting, interpreting, and using evidence of student learning" to adapt teaching and support comprehension, Anderson's (1984) Schema Theory of comprehension, positing that comprehension involves activating existing mental frameworks (Schemas), Black & Wiliam's (1998) "Assessment for Learning framework", highlighting FA strategies, purpose, and feedback mechanisms are central to AFL, and Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural theory, emphasizing learning and meaning-making is socially constructed through a guided support (teacher's scaffolding). The (table 2) below highlights the major questions designed for interviews along with the keywords to highlight the questioning purpose.
- The interview data was recorded with a voice recorder, and the transcripts were converted into text by the researcher for thematic analysis. All recordings

were saved and ready for verification, and the transcriptions were also saved in Google Docs and in PDF files.

- The researcher involved two professors of the English department from her previous University to participate in data transcription to maintain the accuracy of manual work at high standards.

Interview questions were developed and piloted keeping in view the research objectives, and the purpose of the study. The researcher kept into account mainly three types of questions:

1. Open-ended questions: These types of questions were asked to provide enough room to teachers to share their experiences and insights
2. Probing questions: These questions helped the researcher to explore deeper aspects of their responses in order to get a comprehensive understanding of their experiences with formative assessment practice.
3. Clarifying questions: These questions were asked repetitively in order to avoid misunderstanding and ensure accurate information.

A sample of three teachers were taken who were researcher's colleagues as participants in the pilot study. They were not part of the main study but had good teaching experience. Mock interviews were also conducted to observe how teachers respond to those questions and to identify vague or too broad questions. Their feedback helped the researcher to revise some interview questions for making them clearer and easier to understand. Interview questions conducted the data in terms of teachers' perceptions of FA, their practices of FA to support comprehension at the level of language fluency, structure, and content suggested by the schema theory, and their feedback practices. The table below (Table 2) highlights the major questions followed by the subcategories and keywords:

Table 2

Research Questions and Keywords:

Interview Questions	Keywords
Briefly mention your experience as an English	Demographic information

teacher.	
Your opinion on the significance and use of formative assessment?	Teacher's perceptions
Your teaching and assessment strategies for improving vocabulary and sentence structure?	Linguistic schema
Your classroom activities to help students use their knowledge to understand the present text?	Content schema/ constructive activities
Your way of providing feedback to students on their regular work?	Feedback process

3.2.2.1 Data Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher has summarized the interview data according to the types of schemas and feedback mechanisms by organizing the interview data results. The researcher used verbatim transcription to convert the audio into text. The researcher got the printed data from the interview transcripts, using the large margins to add her personal comments and interpretation. The data sections were divided into segments, and margins were filled with notes to formulate ideas. Excerpts from interview transcriptions are also attached to support the evidence (Annex D). Under each category, the researcher adds the analysis of teachers' perceptions and practices of FA in the classroom. The researcher made a collective conclusion based on the interview

data to address the research questions on what procedures the teachers apply in the classroom to support reading comprehension of English. Considering the diversity of administrative, pedagogical, and resource frameworks across private and public education in Pakistan, a comparative analysis was necessary to identify the similarities and differences of FA implementation for reading comprehension.

Throughout the process of data collection and data analysis, the researcher followed the approach of comparative analysis. It is the side-by-side comparison that systematically compares two or more things to pinpoint similarities and differences (Dovetail team, 2023). Pattern analysis is one of the types of comparative analysis approach that signifies the patterns or recurrences of behaviors across a large data set. In this study, the researcher has used pattern analysis to identify the relative frequency of patterns across both school sectors and the results were presented through a bar chart.

In order to explore the real-time impact of formative assessment on students' reading comprehension skill, the researcher gauged the combination of classroom observation and interviews as the most appropriate source of accessing hands-on experience of the impact of formative assessment practice on students. The combination of classroom observations and interviews enhanced the validity of the data by providing triangulation of the sources which ensured the accuracy of the research.

Classroom observations allowed the researcher to witness real-time implementation of formative assessment, while interviews from teachers provided insights from the respondents about the rationale, strategies, and challenges behind practicing it. The two sources of data helped the researcher to compare what teachers said in interviews with what actually happened in the classroom, hence reducing the risk of relying on a single data source and improving the reliability and accuracy of the collected data.

3.3. Participants

3.3.1 The Population

The population of the present study is English language teachers who have been teaching in Private and Public Elementary schools in Rawalpindi, Punjab and the students of these institutions in Pakistan. As for the ethical considerations of this

research, various aspects were taken into account while approaching the respondents and participants to collect the data from.

First of all, the researcher initiated the data collection process by obtaining the permission letter from the Federal Board of Education Islamabad and the permission from the school principals by taking their consent. Secondly identity of any participant has not been revealed in the write up.

3.3.2 Sampling

The sampling method used in this study is non-probability and convenience sampling, in which samples are selected from the population based on the convenience of their availability to the researcher (Nikolopoulou, 2023). The researcher as an English language teacher in a private school requested the former colleagues and teachers from other institutions for their participation. Moreover, the researcher requested the teachers from public schools on behalf of (FDE) for their valued participation in the research work. Two teachers from each public and Private school were selected and requested to allow classroom observation and interviews were also conducted from the same teachers.

According to Nikopoulou, (2023), the researcher may conduct the following steps to reduce the bias of convenience sampling:

- Describe the way samples were obtained in the methodology section to make the sampling process rational.
- Maintain the sampling size reasonable, as big as the researcher could manage.
- Use multiple data collection tools for the research.
- Use appropriate descriptive analysis methods.

3.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study follows the theoretical framework of the formative assessment ESRU model, (Elicits information, the Student response, the teacher Recognizes student's response, and Use the gained information) rooted in the assumption that language learning is a cognitive-psychological process that takes place in socially rich interactive environment. From its early practitioners including Socrates and Micheal Scriven (1967) to multiple researchers (Benjamin Bloom, 1977; Crooks, 1988;

Sadker, 1989; and Black & Wiliam, 1989), the formative assessment approach has been well-established and evolved till today. Some of the fundamental evidences of the approach offered by these authors include:

- The success of formative assessment highly relies on how teachers use it to adjust teaching and learning practice.
- Active student involvement is essential for effective learning.
- Enhanced feedback is crucial to improve learning outcomes.
- There is a connection between formative assessment and self-regulated learning.
- Assessment integrated knowledge, skills, procedures, and dispositions.

In the process of the theory's evolution, Ruiz-Primo (2011) has made an adequate contribution in scrutinizing the teacher's role in practicing informal formative assessment via classroom conversation and interactive dialogue in ESL/EFL teaching context. Furthermore, formative feedback has been emphasized as interactive dialogue used by the teacher continually to acquire information on a student's linguistic expression level and understanding of the topic. (Ruiz-primo, 2011). Formative assessment centers on feedback loops that assist learning (Black & Wiliam, 2004; Saddler, 1989).

In this study the researcher follows the sequential stages of the model to observe ESL teacher's practices in teaching reading comprehension. As per the implications of the formative assessment approach, the teacher is supposed to design and practice activities to fulfill the function of each phase. However, clarifying learning expectations is a prerequisite to collect other informal formative assessment information. This stage enables teachers to explain the learning objectives and expose the success criteria with students. (Ruiz-primo, 2011), others are described as below:

Eliciting/ collecting information - The initial stage is to trigger student thinking through convergent and divergent questions. Also, the teacher can ask students' conceptions, ideas, opinion, and interpretation.

Student/ learner response - The teacher may encounter individual response, choral response, no response, or answer themselves on the initial process of initiating discussion.

Recognizing/ interpreting student response - This is the teacher strategy to make sense of the student response. The teacher can incorporate activities like repeating, rephrasing, displaying student response and use wait times. Moreover, the teacher may identify student weaknesses including lack of understanding, vocabulary, and inaudible pronunciation to make improvements in teaching in the next phase.

Using/ acting on the information collected - Based on the information gathered, the teacher can use strategies including elaboration, repetition, relation, comparing and contrasting students' ideas, modeling, and debugging (Milawati, 2022). Moreover, the teacher must decide and provide appropriate feedback by considering the information collected to promote student thinking and make improvement in learning.

The researcher followed four phases/stages of the formative assessment model and included the activities in each phase according to the objectives of the current study and concepts from the relevant literature on formative assessment for an ESL classroom. Comprehension is analyzed at the linguistic and text content level as per the schema theory of comprehension. Both the concepts of reading comprehension and the principles of constructivist learning have assisted the researcher in designing each phase of the model for data collection and analysis of the study. However, the categories are included without compromising the purpose of each stage, as suggested by Ruiz-Primo (2010). In addition, all of the teaching activities performed by the participants were assumed to be formative if they met the purpose of formative assessment for reading comprehension according to the phases of the FA model.

Table 3

Formative Assessment Categories and the designed sub-themes in this Study

Categories	Sub-themes/ Practices
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Clarifying learning goals	• The teacher's lesson planning • Clarifying learning goals before the lesson • Active participation in comprehension • Connection between prior and current knowledge
Eliciting information and student response	• Tracking learners' comprehension • Questioning before the lesson • Promoting student response • Activities to challenge thinking
Interpreting information	• Error-correction strategies • Feedback on students' performance • Feedback to improve comprehension • Establishing contextual setting for learners
Acting on information collected	• Comprehension with sociocultural factors • Teaching sentence structure • Helping learners in vocabulary building • Feedback to suggest improvement

Socio-cognitive perspectives of learning emphasize the social and cognitive processes involved in knowledge construction and acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978). According to these perspectives, learning is influenced by social interactions, cultural contexts, and individual cognitive processes.

Constructivists believe that individuals acquire knowledge and form meaning based on their experiences. Similarly, the process of meaning-making out of the text lies in their construction based on previous knowledge, experience, and culture, thus reading is an interactive process between the reader and writer (Jean Piaget, 1896-1980). Learners need to actively participate in constructivist activities and reach the level of critical thinking. Moreover, constructivist and social constructivist approaches in pedagogy promote active learning, authentic assessment, and inquiry-based tasks that resonate with the core principles of formative assessment.

The constructivist approach lies its basis in formative assessment rather than summative assessment. Learners obtain a degree of motivation, feedback, and realize the necessity of learning (self-regulation) which is the purpose of constructivist theory. Rather than grading students, the constructivist approach through formative practices of assessment improve the quality of learning.

Reading development is inherently socio-cognitive in nature, as individuals learn to read through interactions with others and exposure to written language in meaningful contexts (Piaget, 1952). Socio-cognitive theories of reading emphasize the role of social interactions, such as shared reading experiences and discussions, in promoting literacy development.

Formative assessment practices align with socio-cognitive perspectives of learning by providing opportunities for students to engage in reflective thinking, self-assessment, and peer feedback (Black & Wiliam, 1998). By incorporating these strategies into reading instruction, educators can scaffold students' comprehension skills and meta-cognitive abilities (Hattie & Timperely, 2007). For instance, peer feedback activities during reading workshops can encourage collaborative learning and metacognitive reflection among students (Topping, 2009). By engaging in discussions about the texts and providing constructive feedback to their peers, students can deepen their understanding of reading and metacognitive awareness.

Moreover, formative assessment approaches such as think-aloud protocols and reading conferences can provide valuable information about students' reading processes and comprehension strategies (Pressley & Afferbach, 1995). These strategies allow teachers and educators to adapt instruction to meet individual student's needs and promote meaningful engagement with the text.

Ruiz-Primo's (2011) model of formative assessment is a comprehensive guide for English language teachers to develop and adjust language teaching strategies according to the functions of language development. A practical implementation of these practices offers exposure to learners for constructing knowledge and assessing their level and progress. The researcher in this study undertook the model as a guiding framework for observing ESL classroom teaching through the "formative" function of assessment. In comparison, reading comprehension is interpreted as an interactive cognitive process that takes place with learners' exposure and active engagement to different classroom activities that assist them in connecting their previous experience with the current content of the text to make meaning. Moreover, learners develop language comprehension through activating schemas (linguistic and content schema) with the current text.

Ruiz-Primo's (2010) model of formative assessment has addressed the major research questions of the current study. The observation checklist and interview questions addressing the teacher participants' practices were designed according to the stages of the ESRU model. Moreover, the participants' formative feedback processes were analyzed in light of this model.

Chapter four of the current study will explore the ESL teachers' perceptions and practices used in the classroom in teaching reading comprehension, aligning with the practices suggested in the ESRU model for effective teaching of English reading comprehension. All the research questions are also addressed in chapter four, which discusses how to collect and analyze the data practically.

Chapter 4

DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of conducting exploratory research is to address new problems with little or no prior research, and the focus of the design is to collect secondary or primary data in an unstructured format and interpret it using informal procedures (Olawale, 2022). This study identifies the patterns and themes of teachers using formative assessment practices in ESL classrooms for teaching English reading comprehension in Public and Private Elementary Schools in Punjab (Pakistan) and establishes relationships among codes and themes. The thematic analysis of the data followed the four sequential functions of the formative assessment model and feedback process (Ruiz-Primo, 2005). Participants' identities are confidential. Thus, the researcher has applied a coding system throughout the data collection and analysis process to represent the participant and school by assigning a digit. For instance, "T" for teacher, "S" for school, "P" for private, and "G" for government.

To conduct this classroom exploratory research, the researcher collected qualitative data as the common paradigm used in exploratory data collection (Tegan, 2021). The qualitative method of data collection encompassed semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. All the participants for the data were invited on a voluntary basis. The study collected data from the fieldwork of four to five months, from November 2023 to March 2024. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 ESL teachers. The observations were 17 in total from 12 teachers from both private sector and public elementary schools.

Throughout the data collection and analysis, the researcher followed a comparative analysis to compare and contrast the patterns and participants' behaviors across private and public schools in the implementation of formative assessment in teaching English reading comprehension. However, the findings of this study are context-bound and may not be generalized beyond the specific ESL classrooms and educational environment in Pakistan. Cultural, institutional, and linguistic factors unique to this setting have influenced the outcomes.

4.1 Research Tool-Observation Data Collection

Classroom observations were conducted as the primary source of data collection and to seek the most naturalistic data and identify the consistency of formative assessment practices (the major objective of this research) in both sectors. The researcher used field notes to manually record the participant's behaviors, teachers' and students' utterances and interaction levels, teachers' lesson planning strategies, and the nature of feedback provided.

The researcher used field notes during and immediately after each observation session following a structured notebook format. However, these notes were prepared to jot down the observation goals, context, and special behaviors. These included both descriptive accounts of classroom activities such as student-teacher interactions, classroom setting, verbal and non-verbal behaviors and reflective insights including the interpretations. This approach was guided by the ethnographic fieldwork method described by Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (1995). The purpose of the researcher in taking field notes was to enrich the observation data with real-time and context-sensitive descriptions along with capturing not just the words but also the underlying social and pedagogical dynamics relevant to ESL teaching for reading comprehension. Utilizing the field notes helped the researcher with a rich amount of data on teachers' knowledge and implementation of formative assessment practices, their interaction and communication level with students, and learner engagement in supporting reading comprehension skills.

An observation checklist was also followed to stay focused, and that helped in recording the frequency of formative assessment practices supporting four phases of the ESRU Model for reading comprehension. The observation data was recorded and categorized according to the stages of the Ruiz-primo (2010) FA Model. Ruiz-Primo and Furtak (2007) have characterized the informal assessment criteria as consisting of four elements: the teacher exposes clear learning objectives, elicits student information and encourages learner response, interprets information, and uses the information collected. The researcher made the observation herself by using an observation sheet along with the field notes. The researcher observed that the teachers in ESL classrooms were teaching the reading lessons from the text while following the curriculum guide. Their focus in teaching English text was on improving students' language fluency, vocabulary, and meaning of the text. However, the teachers

followed the classroom teaching and assessment practices mainly to help students prepare for their examinations.

This data section presented the frequency distribution of all 17 classes across six Private and public schools regarding the practice of formative assessment. The time period of these classes was 40 minutes. The observation data was collected from elementary-level classrooms where reading comprehension was taught following Elementary level English textbooks authorized by Cambridge University in the private sector. Meanwhile, government school teachers were using textbooks published by the National Book Foundation. Out of all these classes observed, 11 were English reading comprehension classes (Content Schema of Comprehension), and 6 were grammar classes (Linguistic Schema of Comprehension), where the researcher observed the teaching of sentence structure and linguistic chunks. The data recorded in the observation checklist and field notes were coded and tabulated with NVivo Software, and codes were organized according to the stages of the FA model. The researcher first calculated the frequency of each participant teacher's FA practices from one school and then calculated the sum of those occurrences of all three schools from each sector. Table 4 below presents an example of the frequency distribution of practices according to each phase of the model. The researcher represented the frequency of each phase of formative assessment practices through a bar chart.

Table 4

Example Process of Frequency Distribution used in this Study

Participant Teachers from private schools	FA Practice Frequency	Relative Frequency	Total Frequency on practices on “learning goals”
T1-S1-P	6	18.75%	80.5%
T2-S1-P	5	15.62%	
T1-S2-P	4	12.5%	
T2-S2-P	5	15.62%	

T1-S3-P	6	18.75%	
T2-S3-P	5	15.62%	

Table 5

Calculated frequency using tally method of teachers' formative assessment practices following Ruiz-Primo's model across private sector

Teacher participants	Clarification of learning goals	Elicitation of information	Interpreting information	Acting on information collected
TI-S1-P				
T2-S1-P				
T3-S2-P				
T4-S2-P				
T5-S3-P				
T6-S3-P			L	

Table 6

Calculated frequency using tally method of teachers' formative assessment practices following Ruiz-Primo's model across government sector

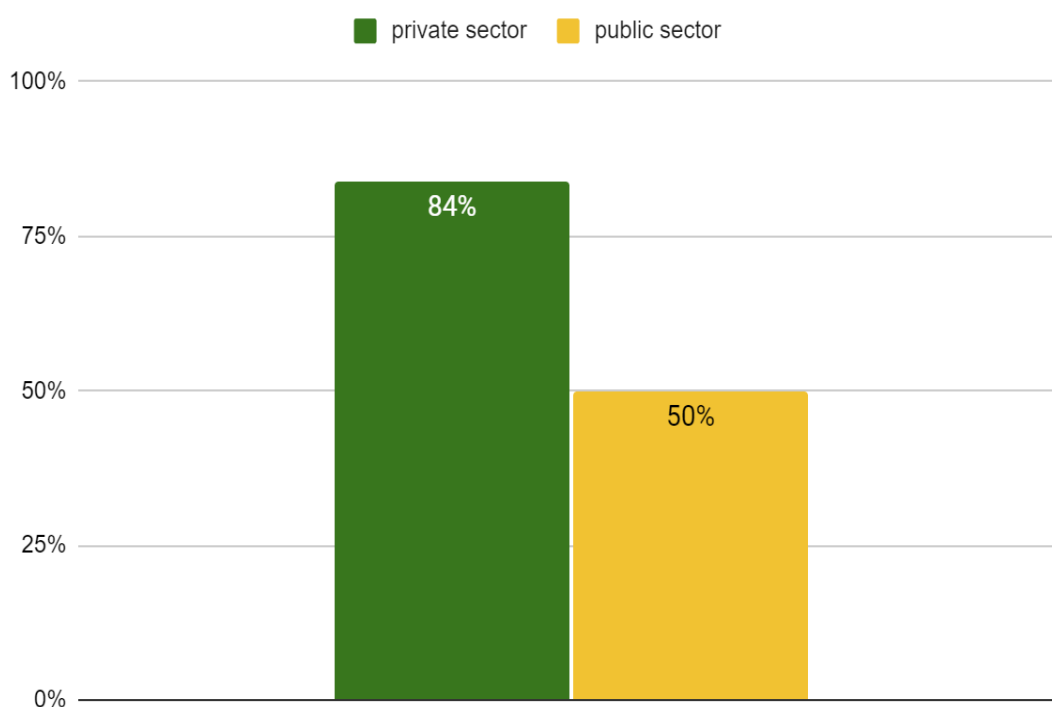
Teacher participants	Clarification of learning goals	Elicitation of information	Interpreting information	Acting on information collected
TI-S1-G			L	
T2-S1-G			L	
T3-S2-G			L	
T4-S2-G			L	
T5-S3-G			L	

T6-S3-G	III	III	LI	IIII
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4.1.2 Analysis of Frequency Distribution of “Learning Goals (1st phase ESRU Model)” across Private and Public Elementary Schools

Figure 1

Frequency distribution of learning goals across private and public elementary schools



Clarifying learning goals is an initiating step in conducting an ESL class following the principles of formative assessment (Furtak & Ruiz-Primo, 2007). The step has to do with teachers explicitly highlighting the learning objectives and success criteria to the students so that they realize the responsibility and motivation to get prepared accordingly. Shih & Reynolds (2017) also suggested goal setting is an effective approach to enhance both reading proficiency and learner motivation than traditional methods.

According to the first stage of the ESRU Model, the teachers must encourage students' active participation in classroom activities and discussions and connect current teaching with the students' previous learning a concept also supported by

Harvey and Goudvis (2007). Moreover, the components in this stage of the formative framework were designed and followed by the researcher as observing “the teacher’s lesson planning strategy, encouraging active participation of learners, clarifying learning objectives before teaching reading comprehension, and implementing strategies to connect learners’ previous knowledge with the current information” to have a successful learning of students’ comprehension skills. However, classroom observations manifested that the practice of learning goals from the Ruiz-Primo (2007) model across both sectors, specifically the government compared to private school teachers did not completely fulfill the purpose of learners’ success criteria as revealed in following excerpts. The table 5 below highlights the difference of frequency occurrences of all formative assessment practices calculated using the tally method.

4.1.2.1 Analysis of data from classroom observations of private sector classes

From the private schools, 5 out of six teachers except (T6-S3-P) were observed to have fulfilled the proper clarification of learning goals strategy across eight reading comprehension and grammar classes. The instructions were provided in the target 2nd language (English) and hence, students also responded similarly, aligning with one of the principles of McGraw Hill Education (2009) ESL classroom teaching and aligning with Ruiz-Primo’s (2010) idea of goal clarification.

In the 1st class (T1-S1-P), the teacher begins the reading session with a casual discussion and engaging students by asking questions. The teacher asked 4 questions consistently to clear some of the text concepts. It was a convergent type of questions through which the teacher helps students know and get prepared for the day’s reading comprehension activity. The teacher’s questioning before the reading not only helps students clarify their understanding of the text ahead but this engagement keeps students active to use their previous knowledge to understand the current learning. From beginning the session with questions, and engaging students actively in the discussions, it seemed a planned strategy was followed to divide the lesson into manageable bits and manage the time. Yet, it was a traditional class where the teacher used resources only the board, marker, and coursebooks for discussion and questioning from the students. Furthermore, the observation excerpt of the class reveals the effective questioning and opening of the reading session.

Teacher: so, students, do you know what we are going to learn today..?

One of the students: teacher, we had to read our lesson “coronavirus” today.

Teacher: eehmm...that’s nice, so let’s discuss something about the pandemic, as you all know somehow the period when it occurred. Do you remember by the way?

Student: yes teacher, it was a huge disaster that took many people’s lives.

Teacher: do you know we have learnt some new concepts during the period...what are they that we still use in our books or you may have heard anywhere on T.V or social media. Ok any one new word related to the pandemic from each student..?

In the 2nd class, the session was initiated with the teacher depicting a visual from a reading passage. The purpose was to get students prepared for the reading ahead. Following the text image, a flow of convergent questions was asked by the teacher that helped learners to get to the idea and meaning of the text. Questioning techniques not only helped students to make connections with the previous knowledge but they got the idea of the day’s task and got prepared accordingly.

In the 3rd class, the teacher began the session randomly without any lesson planning. A flow of questioning techniques were used to engage students on the day’s task. However, not any systemic sequence of classroom practices or resources such as books or other material were used except the traditional display of grammatical concepts on the board. Nevertheless, each student responded rightly to the teacher’s questions and were actively engaged with the discussion. The class ended up with students making notes of teachers’ instructions and concepts written on the board.

In the 4th class, this class was initiated with the teacher using a specialized instruction with tech-support to help students get motivated. Each one of the students was already prepared to learn about the day’s topic and the teacher engaged the students by calling to present about the documentary they were going to watch. The teacher effectively clarifies the learning objectives before the session and gets students’ activity participating in presentations and questioning. It was observed that the teacher used a good degree of varying teaching practices and technology to enhance learners’ motivation and interest to learn. This helped students to get to the comprehension of the text by visualizing the text concepts. After watching the documentary, the teacher followed a flow of questioning techniques that students answered with accuracy.

In the 5th class, the teacher followed an informal questioning technique to engage students while clarifying the day's learning activities. Only two questions were observed but just for the purpose of introducing the day's activity. The questions posed not only helped students get prepared for the reading but clarified their meanings related to the text concepts. The teacher further added to students' participation in the different activities by creating their groups. It was observed that all the strategies and teaching steps followed an effective lesson planning technique.

Teacher: What have you learnt today?

One student: Many things, but a physics class was the best as we learnt about engines!

You like engines!

The teacher: Who else likes engines? Not many students nodded their heads! She smiled and continued a lighter talk with them before bringing their attention to their lesson for today.

Teacher: So, coming to today's lesson, does anybody have any idea what we are going to learn today?

One student: We were doing unit 10! And today is the turn for learning abbreviations and acronyms.

Other student: Are they not the same teacher! Some of the students laughed and exclaimed NO! They are not the same!

Teacher replying to that student: NO beta! They are different things. Kia ksi ko pta hy what are abbreviations?

4.1.2.2 Analysis of data from classroom observations of government sector classes

The total six classes were observed with a proper reading comprehension and sentence structure teaching class from this sector. Whereas, the rest 2 classes were engaged in the examination preparation and classroom test activities. Students got a little exposure to verbal forms of English language as the linguistic background varied, hence, instructions were given in local language. In many of the classes observed, student interaction was missing at the level emphasized by Ruiz-Primo's and other experts of formative assessment approach. Individual assessment practices and proper goal setting was also challenging for teachers due to the large classes and weak foundations of learners' understanding in English as observed in classes of T3-

S2-G, T4-S2-G, and T5-S3-G and further highlighted by these teachers in their interviews.

In the 1st class, the discussion began by the teacher with informal questions related to the text. Before the reading comprehension session, the teacher revealed the day's topic and posed some questions that were relatively answered by a few of the students. Although the teacher kept learners engaged with the text and clarified learning objectives, the questions lacked the quality to encourage students in utilizing their prior knowledge to get to the current text concepts. Moreover, only a few of students responding to teacher's questions could not do justice as the majority of the class participants could not actively participate in the discussion nor did they get prepared for the coming reading session as learning goals were not properly identified.

Teacher: *ok class, today we have a guest observer in our class who will observe us on what activities are we doing in text reading. So make sure you are all attentive and silent.*

Students: *ok mam.*

Teacher: *So today we are going to study about "the secret of long life". Who will tell me how to live long or do you want to a long life?*

Student 1: *yes mam, actually living long means living healthy and happy.*

Student 2: *ehmm..., i think we can live long with eating good food...*

Any other student? So, my child what do you think that how can we spend a long life or if it is necessary that we should live long life?

Student 3: *yes mam, its important to live long life so that we can fulfil all our dreams...*

Class: *hahahahh.....*

Teacher: *sshhshhh... ok now should we start reading now?*

In the 2nd class of the same teacher, the students were eagerly waiting for their teacher to get their assignment appreciated. However, there were a few students in the class with their work done, the rest just nodded their coursebooks. The teacher began the discussion with highlighting some clues of the previous lesson and asked

students to get their work checked. After checking a few copies, the teacher dejected other students by intimidating them with a punishment and moving to the day's activity. It was to discuss the meaning of vocabulary out of the text for students to notify and memorize for the next class. The teacher's emphasis on accountability and task assignment review were significant components to improve comprehension. However, such an assessment approach lacked the identification of diverse students' needs and active participation of each learner. Moreover, the use of punishment as a form of reinforcement may create a negative learning environment.

In the 3rd class, it was a grammar class where the teacher initiated the discussion by assessing their prior knowledge on sentence structure. However, posing questions generally in class limited the scope of understanding for the entire class except a few students who got the chance to respond to the teacher's questions. Though the teacher clarified the concepts related to the day's topic, a superficial discussion and reliance on verbal responses of few learners limited the students' opportunity to get a deeper understanding and active participation as the below except depicts:

Teacher: so have you read the sentence structure at home? Who will tell me the types of sentences?

Student: teacher there are three types, simple, compound and complex sentences

Teacher: right, anyone else.. Who will tell that what is simple sentence with any example as we did it yesterday in the class..

Student: for example I write a letter...

Teacher: ok good, so got it now that what is a simple sentence?

Now we are moving towards complex and compound sentences.

In the 4th class, the reading session began with the teacher allocating students the time to make revisions of previous lessons. Students were encouraged to revise the reading material independently and to review for preparation. However, allocating time hindered the learners' ability to focus and retain information due to the noise and disruptions. The teacher initiated the discussion by telling students about the day's task to make learning objectives clear and students also take time to get prepared for participation in the understanding of the text. However, giving a short time for

revisions instead of implementing other activities to connect text context with learners' prior experiences limited their ability to understand and retain the information for a sustained learning.

In the 5th class, the teacher initiated the session by appreciating a few students' performance with their test results. Later on, it was an informal discussion on the coming examination preparation where the teacher engaged students with questions to analyze their preparation level and addressed students' weaknesses. A reading comprehension activity was conducted by the teacher to help students make meaning out of a paragraph. With this, the teacher made learning goals clear and engaged students with the comprehension task. However, a brief-natured activity may limit the depth of comprehension and analysis while overlooking the opportunity for extended discussions and exploration of textual concepts. Moreover, the students could benefit from their prior knowledge to get to the meaning of the comprehension task but they lacked the motivation to recall their prior knowledge to connect it with the current information.

In the 6th class, the teacher asked students to resume the text reading comprehension left previously. A few of the students participated in the reading meanwhile, the teacher kept making clarifications of meaning and making comments on the text context. A reading-aloud method was followed where the rest of class listened attentively but no questions were raised by the students except the teacher discussing the meaning of a few critical concepts in between. Classroom activities to understand and summarize the text through such reading methods are common, however, interactive sessions are more profitable as per the principles of formative assessment approach. In order to ensure a deep understanding of students related to the text, a more interactive method of reading comprehension may bear fruit where learners get the responsibility of their learning and use their previous knowledge to make meaning in the current context.

4.1.2.3 Analysis and discussion of learning goals and practices

The observations from both of the sectors in goals clarification indicated a varied approach as in private schools; the teachers followed a structured lesson planning strategy to follow a sequential method for improving reading comprehension, as the concept supported by Hattie (2007), Ruiz-Primo & Furtak

(2006). Moreover, the report by National Reading Panel (2000) also, ensure a positive impact on students learning for reading comprehension. In contrast, teachers in government schools, though engaging students with the text through discussion practices, lacked depth and effectiveness, contrasting with the idea of Ruiz-Primo (2006) of open-ended and reflective questions for students to reflect on their learning. Yet, the questioning technique was a common practice as observed in both sectors and is one of the effective tools suggested in the implementation of the formative approach, but the effectiveness varied as the way of planning and resource utilization was different. Assessment strategies such as ineffective questioning in government schools limit the students' ability to get to the idea of what they are going to study and get prepared for the task, which hinders their ability to develop metacognitive skills needed for deeper comprehension as observed in their study (Djudin, 2017). Plus, the inadequacy of clear learning criteria limits the students' motivation to actively participate in comprehending the text's meaning. Moreover, Harvey and Goudvis' (2007) reading comprehension strategies suggest that the teacher encourage "making connections" at three levels such as 'text to self', 'text to text' and 'text to the world'. However, the observed classrooms showed a general practice of informal discussions and questions instead of structured by the teacher to know students' existing knowledge rather than focusing on creating deeper connections to think and rethink at individual level.

Ruiz-Primo (2006) stresses ongoing feedback loops to guide learners about clear learning objectives. Considering the idea, the teachers in the private sector, such as in the first, second, and fifth classes, demonstrated a good deal of engaging students through questions and connecting their prior knowledge to current experience, aligning with Vygotsky's scaffolding theory and Ruiz Primo's feedback loops. Moreover, the principles given by McGraw Hill Education (2009) also highlight that scaffolding must be implemented in the ESL classroom to help learners connect the language to visual or written information. However, the teachers in the government sector relied on a different approach, including the traditional methods of accountability through task reviews along with the negative reinforcement in the form of punishment, creating a negative learning environment that contradicts the formative assessment's emphasis on constructive feedback loops that could foster student engagement. Moreover, such practices contradict the motivational factor

suggested by Sadler (1989) and Shih & Reynolds' (2017) idea of clarifying goals to keep students motivated.

Moreover, the researcher observed in private classes the use of innovative practices of teaching comprehension with clear objectives, tech-enhanced motivation, and diverse teaching strategies, as argued by Black and Wiliam (1998). Shih and Reynolds (2017) further emphasize that visual representation of the text is also one of the key comprehension strategies suggested by Harvey and Goudvis (2007) that help students make meaning through mental images. Moreover, the research by Moya & Tobar (2024) also conceptualized the idea of "digital learning environments" for second language formative assessment to facilitate immediate feedback and diversity of assessment practices that strengthen evaluation. In contrast, the government sector, though employing reading sessions in the classroom, lacked the interactive component and visual representation to improve meaning. These participants focused more on the conventional reading style such as listening to reading, providing learners with limited revision time and brief activities that reduced the effectiveness. Shepard (2000) notes that creating a connection between students' existing knowledge and the new content is critical for comprehension; it was inconsistently applied in these sessions. Furthermore, the teachers were observed to have followed a reading-aloud method as a conventional comprehension strategy supported by the Fountas & Pinnell (1996), yet it could not encourage students' active involvement, a negligence to student-centered approach.

4.1.2.4 Challenges and implications

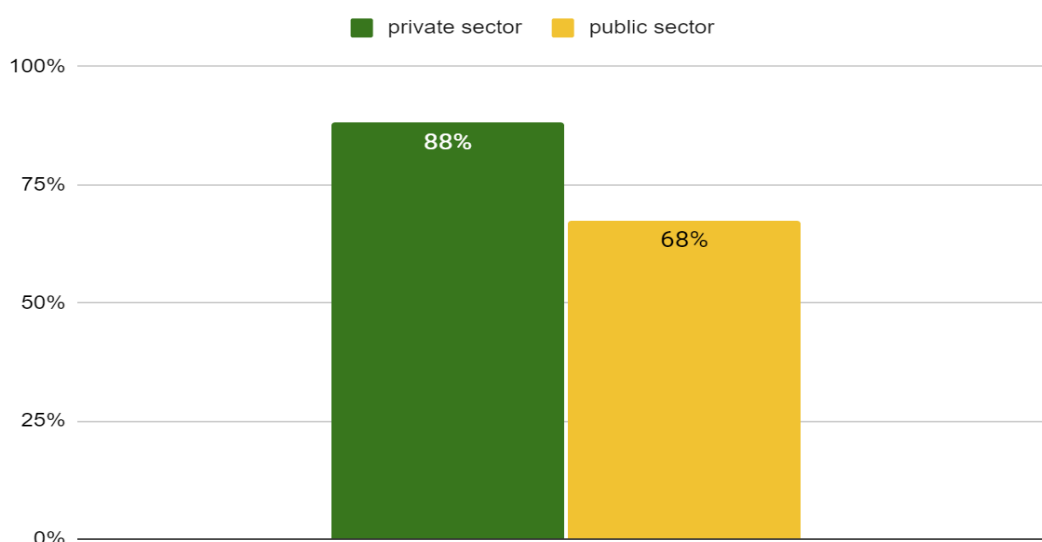
Inside classrooms, the lack of goal-setting in government schools is attributed to traditional teaching methods where learners lack a framework to monitor progress (Ryerse & Vander Ark, 2018). This gap in formative practice reduces student motivation and comprehension. Conversely, some private schools showed partial alignment with formative principles due to the absence of explicit learning criteria and inconsistent resource use. For instance, the third class adopted a tech-based approach but lacked structured planning, which hindered effective goal clarification. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) propose comprehension strategies like interactive read-alouds, re-reading, sticky notes, and response videos, yet such resources were mostly absent, limiting structured comprehension development.

Thus, the findings indicate that while private schools perform better in comprehension through formative assessment such as integrate scaffolding techniques, both sectors require improvements to align assessment tasks with learning goals to ensure deeper understanding and motivation for students to get prepared for the text. Whereas government sector teachers need to incorporate interactive components in teaching and to enhance learner motivation and autonomy in understanding the text's meaning.

4.1.3 Analysis of Frequency Distribution of “Eliciting Information and Student Response (2nd phase of ESRU Model)” across Private and Public Elementary Schools

Figure 2

Frequency distribution of eliciting information and student response across private and public elementary schools



Eliciting information is the second phase of Ruiz-Primo and Furtak (2007) ESRU Cycle, which requires teachers to employ strategies in the classroom, like multiple-choice questions from students regarding reading comprehension, using pauses and wait times to detect student responses and posing challenging questions to gather knowledge on learners' comprehension levels. Multiple-choice questions also inform teachers a lot in terms of students' misconceptions, understanding, or misunderstanding. The teacher's questioning and student's response propose information that can be used diagnostically to feed forward into the betterment of learning and teaching (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

The observation conducted in the classroom in both sectors represented an adequate degree of teacher participation in collecting student information. Asking questions from students was identified as the most common practice of teachers to collect learner information. Varied questioning techniques used by the teacher in the ESL classroom is a common practice in ESL classrooms such as Shehzad et al. (2024) in their research found that there is a positive impact of asking questions from students in improving English reading comprehension skills. Similarly, the majority of teachers from both private and government sectors responded in interviews that they usually ask questions to collect learner information. However, in government schools, student responses were often minimal unless teachers provided hints, and only a few students actively participated. In line with Harvey and Goudvis (2007), effective comprehension instruction involves asking questions before, during, and after reading to deepen engagement with the text. Hence, the observation of elicitation techniques followed the components including the teacher's quality of questions, encouraging students' response, tracking comprehension, and challenging their thinking to improve comprehension skills.

4.1.3.1 Analysis of data from classroom observations of private sector classes

In the 1st class, the teacher follows a flow of convergent questioning techniques related to the text and learning goals as discussed earlier. The nature and quality of questions not only help teachers to understand learners' level of comprehension but help students get to the context of the text by utilizing their prior knowledge. For instance, the discussion about covid-19 pandemic and related terms that were commonly used about the period were discussed to recall learners' memory and understanding of new concepts. Moreover, the majority of the students were encouraged to participate in the questioning session that keeps them active in responding and improving comprehension skills as the observation excerpt shows. However, formative assessment experts rely on the concept of learners' self-assessment and reflection and according to these principles, each student must get an opportunity to assess their comprehension level. The teacher's using questioning-only may limit students to think critically and assess themselves in terms of their comprehension level and skills. More dynamic strategies can yield fruit to collect and appreciate learner response.

Observation excerpt on eliciting student information:

Teacher: do you know we have learnt some new concepts during the period...what are they that we still use in our books or you may have heard anywhere on T.v or Social media. Ok any one new word related to the pandemic from each student..?

Student: pandemic b naya he tha, we didn't know it before..

Teacher: oohhh yeahhh.. That's nice! Any other...? Jese k apne reading me b parha hoga if you have really gone through the passage..

Student: teacher, it was "quarantine" that made people isolated in their homes..

Teacher: exactly! As you all saw it was about condition that made people keep in their homes separate from the environment outside.. Well what were other restrictions that we had to follow..?

Student: there were many like we couldn't go outside, buy meals and other things, and many restrictions were there to keep clean and hygienic.

In the 2nd class, it was a reading comprehension activity that the teacher conducted to involve every student in participation. The students followed the depiction of an image to interpret the text and make meaning. Using a different set of reading passages for each student to interpret their own piece of written material challenged their thinking. However, this class was observed to have less elicitation and comprehension tracking techniques used by the teacher.

In the 3rd class, the teacher followed a conventional teaching strategy for reading comprehension of the text by asking a few questions related to their previous session. The teacher calls one of the students to present the idea of the text in front of class for a general understanding for the entire class. Meanwhile, the teacher kept correcting the pronunciation where the student made errors. Students' presenting their understanding was helpful to elicit their response and in tracking their comprehension level. However, it lacked the opportunity for individual active participation and their response to learning. Moreover, the teacher's guidance and scaffolding only focused on pronunciation correction rather than the deep understanding of the text context and meaning as the excerpts depicts:

So students, we were learning about the smog. Who would explain to the class what we studied in the previous class about smog? She asked the class with a warm smile on her face.

Many students raised their hands, some seemed impatient to answer the question. She picked one and called him to come in front of the class and explain. The student came and read the definition of smog to class and sat back to his seat.

Well done! She cheered. So I hope everyone is now clear on what is smog, right?

Yes teacher!

Shall we proceed further?

Yes teacher!

She picked one student and asked him to read out loud from the portion of the lesson they left in the previous class.

The student stood up on his seat and started reading. She corrected him when he was pronouncing a word wrong and paused him and explained a word which was new to the students.

In the 4th class, the teacher's conducting a visually interactive class by displaying a documentary related to the text character got every student interested in learning. The teacher also initiated the discussion before the session about the day's topic. After the watching session, the teacher also tracked learners' understanding and comprehension by asking questions about the documentary they watched. Making interpretations by once watching a documentary was challenging to students that let them critically analyze and recall the information. However, learners' self-assessment at individual level and reflection on their learning was missing. Moreover, the teacher's conversation before the documentary session lacked the quality of questions that could effectively track their level of comprehension.

In the 5th class, the teacher initiated the day's activity by asking questions to track students' comprehension level so that further instruction should be provided. Meanwhile, learners were encouraged to participate in the discussion by responding to each teacher's question for improving understanding. However, the teacher's teaching approach did not let students critically think or reflect on their prior knowledge and

level of comprehension. Moreover, the quality of teacher's questions showed generality rather than challenging for students as shown in the observation excerpt:

The teacher: Who else likes engines? Not many students nodded their heads! She smiled and continued a lighter talk with them before bringing their attention to their lesson for today.

Teacher: So, coming to today's lesson, does anybody have any idea what we are going to learn today?

One student: We were doing unit 10! And today is the turn for learning abbreviations and acronyms.

Other student: Are they not the same thing teacher! Some of the students laughed at exclaimed NO! They are not the same!

Teacher replying to that student: NO beta! They are different things. Kia ksi ko pta hy what are abbreviations?

One student: jab hm lafz ko chota kr k likhty hen to wo abbreviation hoti hy us lafz ki.

Teacher: He is completely right. Abbreviation is a noun of word "Abbreviate" which means to shorten or cut short. Such as we write "Mon" for Monday, "Fri" for Friday, "Dec" for December etc. Do you know some abbreviations? Lets write them down on your copies, I'll check.

4.1.3.2 Analysis of data from classroom observations of government sector classes

In the 1st class, the teacher used questioning techniques to track students' responses before the reading session. While learners were also encouraged to respond to each question. It was a flow of convergent questions about the text through which the teacher analyzes learners' comprehension level and meanwhile uses scaffolding through error-corrections. However, there was not any interactive activity followed instead of the traditional open-ended questioning that could boost learners' interest. Moreover, individual student reflection or activities that could cater the needs of diverse learners in critical thinking and response tracking was missing as observed in the classroom.

In the 2nd class, this class was also set with a traditional reading-aloud session where the teacher initiates instructions with learners' classwork accountability and assignment checks of only a few students. While work reviews and accountability are commonly used techniques to ensure assessment implementation. However, the

formative assessment approach relies on the ongoing assessment principles within the learning stages. The teacher introduces the day's reading activity without the questioning and discussions and no activities were used to encourage learner participation or critical thinking. Instead, a teacher-centeredness was observed where students followed the instructions regardless of realizing their learning responsibility to pose questions or clarifications.

In the 3rd class, it was observed that the teacher's clarifying learning goals followed by the questions to track learners' understanding about the day's topic. Similarly, the students are also engaged in responding to the teacher's questions. However, the questions posed were of close-ended nature where the teacher simply moves to the next activity. Plus, students' responses were limited to a few students as observed. While the majority of the class as it was a large class full of students, lacked active participation where the teacher could track their comprehension level. No activity was used to activate learners' critical thinking by the teacher to improve comprehension skills or recalling the previous knowledge for improvement as only a collective type of teacher instruction may not bring success for individual learner.

Teacher: So today we will do some tasks on tenses and sentence structure, so who will tell me what is the structure of a simple sentence? And how to make it.

Some hands raised!

Teacher points towards a backseated student: ok you tell me, how do we make a simple sentence?

Student: mam, usually we have a subject, verb or object that makes the sentence.

Teacher: very good! So students, who will tell me what is the subject, verb or object in the sentence?

Another student: mam subject comes at the beginning and verb after that..

Teacher: hmm...and..

No response..

Teacher: ok i am writing on the board a sentence then you will tell me which one is noun, verb and object.

In the 4th class, the teachers' giving students time for revisions of the text silently may be an effective form of interactive reading sessions where students take turns and get focused with the text's meaning. However, there was not the use of activities by the teacher to track learner comprehension level nor students were encouraged to discuss their queries related to text. The teacher turned immediately to the text reading without asking questions or discussing the superficial concepts of the text. Moreover, no any activity was used to encourage learners for critical thinking about the text for improving comprehension except the tradition reading-aloud method was employed as shown in the excerpt below:

Teacher: sshhh.. Be calm, read it silently, don't make noise.

After a few minutes, the teacher asked, ok now stop revision, time's up. Start reading.. Each one member of the group will read their own piece of reading then we will discuss it.. Meanwhile, you will notice lesson questions and exercises that we have to fill later after the reading and I will check your exercise. You can ask any question regarding that.

Student: (reading) a few lines from the text..

Teacher: So the writer in this paragraph shows a connection between health and happiness that it is necessary to live happy for good health. Plus, it is scientifically approved that "laughter" makes our body use 15 calories so it's a good thing for our health improvement.

In the 5th class, it was observed that the teacher initiated the discussion about the day's task by engaging students through questions. It was an open-ended questioning session where learners are responding to the teacher with their level of understanding. Meanwhile, the students' responses help the teacher to track their understanding level to make more improvements. However, the teacher's instant response to students' questions discouraged further inquiry and critical thinking by the students and the instructions lack the depth of concepts understanding. The implementation of more interactive activities could have boosted learners' curiosity in learning and focus on the detailed understanding of the grammatical concepts as the excerpt highlights:

So anybody who knows what a phrase is in a sentence?

Student 1: ehmm.. Maybe we call a phrase a part of a sentence..

Teacher: g g go on.. Anybody else..? No response..

Teacher: Ok, hina is exactly right that a phrase is actually a part of a sentence the same way as we learnt previously about the basic elements of sentences like subject, verb, and object..? Likewise, phrases are also part of a sentence but the difference is that a phrase is bigger than a basic element. Do you know how?

Students: please tell us mam.

Teacher: ok let me write it on the board. For example, if i say “my pen is black” and “the pen is black” so what’s the difference here?

Students: my pen?

Teacher: yes, the word pen is a subject but what the word “my” denotes..

In the 6th class, the teacher placed the instructions using the board and later on, posed a few questions about the day’s topic. By calling one of the students to present the explanation of the topic, this teacher also relied on the collective understanding of the concept rather than prioritizing individual learning by response tracking. Hence, the one-size-fits-all approach used for all students with the same level of instruction lacked the formative type of information elicitation. Instead, a diverse teaching technique to address varying learning needs could bear better outcomes in terms of encouraging students engagement and active participation.

Teacher: So, Did anybody know something about punctuation marks before?

A few hands raised. She asked one student to tell the class about punctuation marks.

Student: punctuation marks are the signs that are used at the end or in the middle of the sentence that shows whether the sentence is a question or a statement.

Teacher: Yes! Correct answer! Now I will tell you about each punctuation mark and make sure I will ask a question about it tomorrow. She started explaining each punctuation mark and wrote a sentence or two to make them understand more about the mark.

As the class was about to end she asked students to note down on their copies their homework about the lesson today.

4.1.3.3 Analysis of findings from government sector on elicitation

Elicitation is the second phase of Ruiz-Primo's (2006) model of formative assessment, which implies encouragement of students' response, error identification,

error correction, and feedback that could enhance critical thinking among learners. The observations indicated that both sectors used a corresponding approach mainly through a mix of formal and informal questions for elicitation. However, the questioning techniques lacked depth, which could challenge students' critical thinking and cater to the objective of elicitation. There was a use of both formal and informal questioning by the teacher to understand the level of the learner, yet the questions did not help students in critical thinking nor teachers to adjust strategies accordingly, posing a crucial contradiction with the Ruiz-Primo's (2006) model that emphasizes on the reflective questions that help students to take the responsibility of their learning. Moreover, the lack of structured questions contradicted with Harvey & Goudvis' (2007) idea of questioning to lead "inferential thinking". Although the teachers used questions to help students connect the text content with their prior experience, the lower-order questioning technique constrained the learners' ability and creativity factor to get to the meaning of the text as a whole. This idea was also supported by Tofade et al. (2014) in their study.

Ruiz-Primo (2006) emphasizes that the diversity of eliciting techniques is helpful in getting a holistic understanding of students' learning, but this diversity is largely absent. Moreover, research by Black & Wiliam 1998 suggests that open-ended tasks and reflective prompts are helpful in promoting deeper learning, but it was underutilized here in the context of both the private and government sectors, contrasting with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development.

The observations also show a considerable shortfall in individual self-assessment opportunities across all classes, a gap in structured comprehension through a planned instruction to address individual student needs (Harvey and Goudvis, 2007). The 3rd class from the private sector is an example where the focus was only on pronunciation correction rather than text meaning, a gap to missing opportunities for comprehension tracking. Furthermore, while the 4th class employed interactive tools like documentaries, the close-ended questions and discussions do not elicit critical or reflective responses. Similarly, across the government sector, the teachers employed questioning techniques for elicitation, but the close-ended nature of questions lacked depth, failing to encourage students' reflective thinking and active involvement, such as in class 1st and 3rd, critically contrasting with Ruiz-Primo's

(2007) idea of effective questioning that should involve "eliciting meaning responses to promote deeper learner understanding."

4.1.3.4 Challenges and implications

The lack of high-order questioning and limited learner response in government schools shows conflicts with the principles outlined in Ruiz-Primo's (2007) model as it advocated for eliciting meaningful responses productive for both learning and teaching. Black and Wiliam (1998) also highlight the use of student responses to inform and improve instructional practices, which was not fully realized in government schools due to the rigid, teacher-controlled questioning approach. In contrast, private school teachers relied using varied questioning techniques and promoting learner reflection, but the questions lacked structure, depth and effectiveness in challenging student thinking.

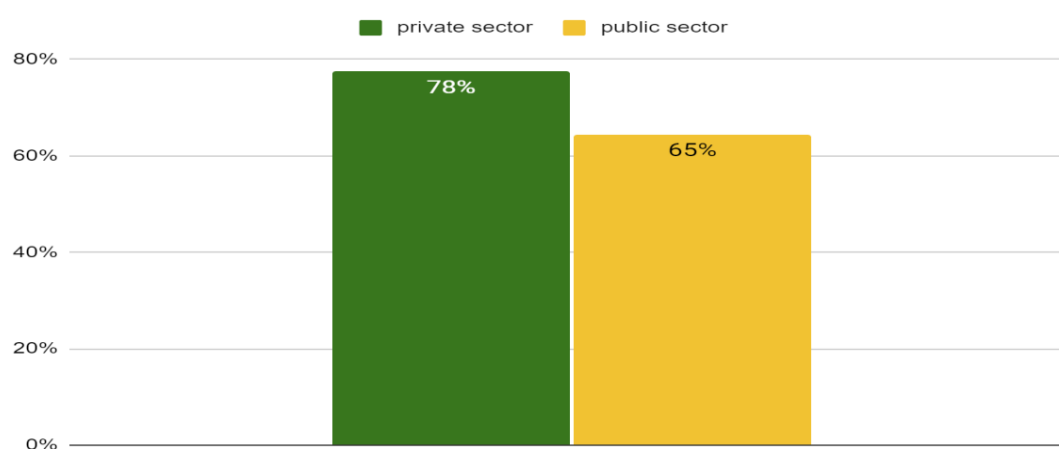
Such gaps in learners' deeper interaction stem from the "dominance of teacher-centered methods," noted by Khan et al. (2023), where the focus remains on content delivery rather than fostering student autonomy and active learning. Harvey and Goudvis' (2007) comprehension framework emphasizes on re-teaching by the teacher after getting feedback and re-reading strategy by the student to enhance deeper meaning. However, the observations showed a lack of teacher knowledge and training to specify instructions for comprehension. Ryerse (2018) discusses, such practices inhibit students' ability to self-assess and take responsibility for their learning, which is a central tenet of formative assessment. Ruiz-Primo (2011) emphasizes the need for varied and interactive elicitation strategies to gather rich insights into student understanding, yet a principle is absent here. The one-size-fits-all approach observed in the 6th class further undermines the individual tracking of student comprehension.

Research highlights that formative assessment is successful in ongoing, dialogic interaction (Black & Wiliam, 1998), a standard these practices fail to meet. To bridge these gaps, teachers need to improve the quality of questioning along with other comprehension strategies like open-ended and structured questioning that can encourage learners' thinking, peer discussions, and opportunities that could challenge students' thinking while placing learner at the center as the core of formative assessment to improve comprehension and elicitation. Varied teaching approaches can effectively cater to the diverse students' learning needs and encourage responsive teaching as suggested by the informal formative assessment cycle (Ruiz-Primo & Furtak, 2006).

4.1.4 Analysis of Frequency Distribution of “Interpreting Information (3rd phase ESRU Model)” across Private and Public Elementary Schools

Figure 3

Frequency distribution of interpreting information across private and public elementary schools



Once the teacher collects student information and responses, the teacher needs to identify that information in order to make critical adjustments (Ruiz-Primo, 2007). Interpreting student information or student response in the ESRU Model is the third stage of the process in formative assessment that requires the teacher to have frequent pauses while teaching reading comprehension to make sense of students' knowledge and interpret the effectiveness of their understanding. So that the instruction can be adjusted accordingly, in the process, the teacher can correct learners' errors, provide

feedback on performance of English comprehension, and conduct repeating and rephrasing strategies. Moreover, students must be provided a contextual setting to capture clues out of the text and make an overall understanding. However, the most critical component of the phase is to offer learners effective feedback that helps learners shape and reshape their behavior, thinking, and learning process (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Throughout the observations, it was noticed that the teachers in both sectors mainly used interpreting information strategies through error correction, a practice also suggested by the Fountas & Pinnell (1996). However, the provision of feedback did not have an effect on triggering learners' thinking processes or encouraging their self-assessment, especially across government schools. Classroom observations showed that the teachers used following feedback practices in classroom:

Verbal comments like “you are still weak in sentence structure, work on it”, “good work, keep it up”, “this one is good, but improve more the next time”.

Drilling and repetition through correcting errors immediately in pronunciation and sentence structure.

Direct corrections such as when a student said; “he go to school, “the teacher immediately said: “he goes to school”.

Teaching practices for comprehension like error correction and immediate feedback are conventional strategies used in ESL classrooms. Immediate feedback is one of the components of Allen & Ryan's (1969) “microteaching” concept to teach comprehension skills. However, the modern practices used in formative assessment go beyond, focusing on feedback that help students construct meaning themselves through cognitive and social representations.

4.1.4.1 Analysis of data from classroom observations of private sector classes

In the 1st class, the teacher interpreted students' responses through using discussions and reinforcing vocabulary terms out of the text. Engaging students in open-ended questions help them to recall concepts like “pandemic” and “quarantine” while the teacher's explanations of certain terms also enhance learners' understanding. Furthermore, textbook exercises were also conducted for error-correction and monitoring students' progress. Much of the class time was subjected to interactive discussions that helped learners connect the text with context and teacher's scaffolding to clarify new words for comprehension improvement. However, using

only-verbal questioning techniques does not leave space for diverse elicitation techniques that could foster critical thinking among students. Harvey's (2007) comprehension techniques emphasize on oral, written, and artistic response by the students to remind them of the purpose of making meaning. Moreover, the incorporation of visual aids and peer collaboration activities could better enhance learner interpretation and deeper understanding of the lesson (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

In the 2nd class, this teacher effectively engaged students to interpret their responses throughout the reading session. The use of visual images helped students to actively participate in learning while it helped the teacher to offer personalized feedback to each student for improving pronunciation and fluency. Moreover, the visual activity also helped create the text context. During the reading, the teacher also took pauses for questioning to check if the students had understood the text's meaning, one of the Harvey's (2007) comprehension practice as STR (stop, think, and react). However, the teacher's reliance on close-ended questions limited the deeper understanding. At the end of the session, the teacher guided the struggling students of the class to correct their errors and clarify concepts that they see as difficult. However, activities like collaborative discussions could better help addressing individual learners' comprehension challenges in detail.

In the 3rd class, it was a grammar class where the teacher interpreted students' response as depicted in Ruiz Primo's model 3rd stage of formative assessment approach by creating a context for learning. The teacher incorporated the use of relatable examples to clarify the difference between dependent and independent clauses. It helped learners to actively participate and apply their knowledge through other sentence creation. The feedback practices were also observed during the discussion that the teacher offered individuals to address comprehension gaps. However, teaching in this class was teacher-centered that lacked chances for students for interactive engagement. An effective engagement and learner autonomy was missing that could better foster deeper understanding of grammatical concepts.

In the 4th class, the teacher encouraged participants to have an interactive reading session where they were guided with error-correction. The teacher also offered feedback on students' performance but feedback to improve learning was missing. As the observation excerpt of this class reveals, the teacher's calling one of

the students to present their knowledge on a certain concept may have employed a general understanding. However, designing the session with more contextual clues could have better aligned with the formative approach of interpretation. Moreover, effective feedback and error-correction strategies were lacking in the teacher's instructions that could help identify an individual student's level of comprehension.

Many students raised their hands, some seemed impatient to answer the question. She picked one and called him to come in front of the class and explain. The student came and read the definition of smog to class and sat back to his seat.

Well done! She cheered. So I hope everyone is now clear on what is smog, right?

Yes teacher!

Shall we proceed further?

Yes teacher!

She picked one student and asked him to read out loud from the portion of the lesson they left in the previous class.

The student stood up on his seat and started reading. She corrected him when he was pronouncing a word wrong and paused him and explained a word which was new to the students.

In the 5th class, the teacher's error-correction strategy and providing elaboration of concepts significantly helped in interpreting students' responses and knowledge. Students were also provided feedback on performance and effectively on improving reading comprehension. However, creating contextual clues was not much effective to strengthen the understanding.

She started going through each student to check what they've written and corrected those who wrote something wrong.

Teacher: Great! You all did a wonderful job. Now we will learn Acronyms. Any idea?

Only two students raised their hands. She called one.

The student: Acronyms are names of big organizations.

Teacher: You are partially right but that is not the correct definition beta! But you are close, good

She called another student .

Student: Acronyms are short forms of big names.

Teacher: You are right but I will tell you a complete meaning of acronyms. It is an abbreviated form of first letters of some words and are pronounced as one word which are usually names of organizations, laws, and so on and so forth. Such as a big university of Islamabad is NUST. Yahan hr letter ak word ka pehla letter hy. National University of Science and Technology. She underlined first letters of each word on board.

Students nodded in affirmation and understood her explanation.

Student: NASA is also an acronym, right?

Teacher: Absolutely! Does anyone know the full form of the acronym NASA?

4.1.4.2 Analysis of data from classroom observations of government sector classes

In the 1st class, the elements of interpretation of students' response following the 3rd stage of Ruiz-Primo's formative assessment model was observed through the teacher's providing feedback. The teacher effectively addressed the learner response and created a text context to enhance comprehension of the day's lesson. Students also followed the discussion with teacher's posing relatable questions to help build on their response. It was also a flow of open-ended questions by the teacher to elaborate idiomatic usage of the text such as "accident" and "longevity". However, it was a teacher-led discussion as observed that limited the opportunities for learners' interactive participation. Although the teacher offered feedback to individual response, collaborative activities were missing to encourage deeper exploration of students' ideas. Moreover, the assignment by the teacher lacked immediate reinforcement of comprehension that could be improved with in-class exercises to improve learning of reading comprehension.

In the 2nd class, it was conducted by the same teacher where a mix of outcomes were observed for students' response interpretation. The teacher's explanation of vocabulary in native language effectively reinforces prior learning and supports comprehension. Moreover, guided group reading encourages collaboration where students actively participate. However, the teacher's reliance on negative reinforcement such as punishment threats caused demotivation among students. The limited use of constructive feedback rather focusing on note-taking hindered the development of critical thinking among students. Hence, the teacher could adopt more interactive techniques to interpret and deepen learner understanding along with the positive reinforcement as per the principles of formative assessment.

After looking into a few students' work, she paused, where are other students? Why they haven't done it? If only few students were supposed to do the work?

She called one or two more names.. Saying, haven't you done yours?? What were you doing all the day? Next time you are going to get punished!

Well, make an applause for those that have done their work...(clapping)!

Teacher: *ok now i'll tell you the meaning of those words and you will note down on your notebook, ok?*

Students: *yes mam.*

She wrote the words on the board with their urdu (the native language) meaning/ synonyms of the vocabulary and said hurry up! Make all these to your notes and we'll continue our yesterday's lesson.

After a few minutes, the reading session started.

Student 3: *(reading) an island located in japan, Aakeenwa..ehmmm..Okin..na.wa is one of the five places around the world where people live the longest, happiest lives. The island of Okinawa are one of the "blue zones", areas where a population has a life expectancy much higher than the global average.*

Teacher: *ok stop here.. So you see, which people have long life in this world..what did you get out of this?*

In the 3rd class, the teacher began the session with appreciating students on their performance through test results announcement. With positive reinforcement and personalized feedback provided by the teacher, the students feel a sense of achievement. It was an interactive type of teaching method where the teacher engages students in identifying sentence structure using examples and visual aids to contextualize concepts. However, the nature of feedback is collective and lacks detailed individualized input. Although the assignment was for an independent study, students could benefit more from open-ended questions to stimulate critical thinking. Moreover, the constructive form of feedback could better engage all students to actively participate in learning comprehension.

Another student: mam subject comes at the beginning and verb after that..

Teacher: hmm...and..

No response..

Teacher: ok i am writing on the board a sentence then you will tell me that which one is noun, verb and object.

She wrote on the board (sana eat an apple) and asked who will come to the board and mark these words?

One of the student stand up and place a circle around sana (subject) eat (verb) and apple (object).

Teacher: is it rightly done?

A few students said yes, or else, no response..

Teacher: yes, so this is the way a sentence is made. When a noun comes at the beginning, it becomes the subject an when a word shows an action, its called a verb in the sentence and the thing for example an edible object or if i say that i am writing on the board..

In the 4th class, the teacher's engagement techniques are effective by encouraging students to read individually. It was a group study reading and meanwhile the teacher keeps correcting errors when needed. For instance, the teacher's correction of the student's misunderstanding regarding laughter and health was crucial in contextualizing the text. The students' active involvement helped them understand the importance of a "hearty laugh" in reducing stress. It reinforced the real-time feedback. However, the periodic interruptions by the teacher may have disrupted the flow of independent reading and impacted pace. Hence, a significant balance of teacher's interruptions with allowing learners time to reflect and interpret is appreciated.

In the 5th class, this teacher also uses positive reinforcement techniques by rewarding students with prizes on their test results. The teacher also addressed students' concerns regarding the upcoming exams to get prepared. Meanwhile, the teacher got a good degree of learner interpretation for comprehension level. It was a practical activity where the teacher uses real-time feedback such as praising students on correct sentence identification. Although this teaching method supported understanding, deeper understanding was missing as the focus was only on identifying isolated facts than text as a whole.

In the 6th class, it was a traditional class approach to teaching the day's topic where the teacher elaborates concepts related to the text. Error-correction was also observed but less than the teacher instructions. Moreover, the teacher's dismissive response to students' questions (do not pose questions in between lectures) significantly discouraged students' active participation and clarification of doubts related to comprehension. Consequently, the teacher could not benefit from the activity to interpret students' responses. Considering the nature of the day's topic, (the difference between phrase and simple sentences) the learning could benefit more from a group activity or discussion rather than conventional elaborations. Overall, the teacher could improve the interactive nature of class with more open-ended discussions to encourage deeper exploration of the topic.

4.1.4.3 A Comparative Analysis of the Findings

The observations across both sectors indicated a different approach to the interpretation of student response due to the varying learner proficiency levels in both sectors. The practices across the private sector included discussion-based approaches for promoting student engagement, clarifying key concepts of the text, and providing real-time feedback as the critical component of formative assessment for response interpretation and improving student performance and comprehension as suggested by Applebee et al., 2003; Murphy et al., 2016, and Goodarzi & Yarahmadzehl, 2019. In contrast, the teachers in the government sector employed immediate feedback practices for the vocabulary development of learners that effectively helped students contextualize the text to get the meaning, aligning with the concept of Ruiz-Primo (2011). The idea of providing students with immediate feedback, particularly in vocabulary development that helps contextualize the text, has also been strengthened by studies such as Goodarzi and Yarahmadzehl (2019). Moreover, Stuart, (2004) has also examined the effects of real-time feedback on helping students adjust to learning and improve in real time. Although the practice of real-time feedback is significantly supported by the researchers, the descriptive forms of evaluating learner responses are preferred following the formative approach of teaching inside classroom learning, where the teacher offers detailed explanations to help students identify gaps and improve learning strategies (Ruiz-Primo & Furtak, 2006).

As observed by the researcher, feedback practices across both sectors relied on only providing students with praising words such as "good" and "excellent" instead of

interactive methods where students could reflect on their learning and receive guidance with student-teacher dialogue as highlighted by Ruiz-Primo & Li, (2013). Moreover, the teacher's reliance on only verbal questioning techniques across the private sector limited the formative implementation of interpreting responses as per the principles of the formative assessment approach to identify learner misconceptions and error patterns. On the other hand, the researcher observed that the government sector utilized teacher-led discussions without encouraging student interaction and engagement, which impacted students' autonomy, which is an element central to Ruiz-Primo's model and foundational to Black and Wiliam's (1998) conception of formative assessment.

Despite offering feedback for interpretation and error correction in the private sector, the teachers' practices lacked the effectiveness and individual student interaction to support student autonomy and learning reflection. Whereas government sector teachers utilized a collective type of feedback that limited individualized students' understanding, contradicting the idea of process-oriented feedback contradicting the idea of process-oriented feedback, contradicting the idea of process-oriented feedback suggested by Ruiz-Primo and Furtak (2007). Gan et al., (2021) also recommend the implementation of more personalized and interactive feedback to enhance student understanding and performance.

Moreover, the questioning technique was observed as close-ended in nature, falling short of the student's ability for critical thinking in both sectors. For instance, in the classes 4th and 5th of the government sector, the teachers used real-time feedback to support comprehension, but it was backed by the teacher's interruptions during an independent student response and a focus on isolated facts, limiting deeper exploration of the lesson. Despite the practices such as contextualizing the text in the government sector, the teacher's dismissive response to the student's inquiry restricted the student's active participation and engagement to participate in the comprehension session, as highlighted by Ruiz-Primo and Furtak (2006) that the teacher's attentive responses help students in learning. Meanwhile, private sector teachers' activities employed error correction strategies to keep students actively involved and motivated in learning.

4.1.4.4 Challenges and implications

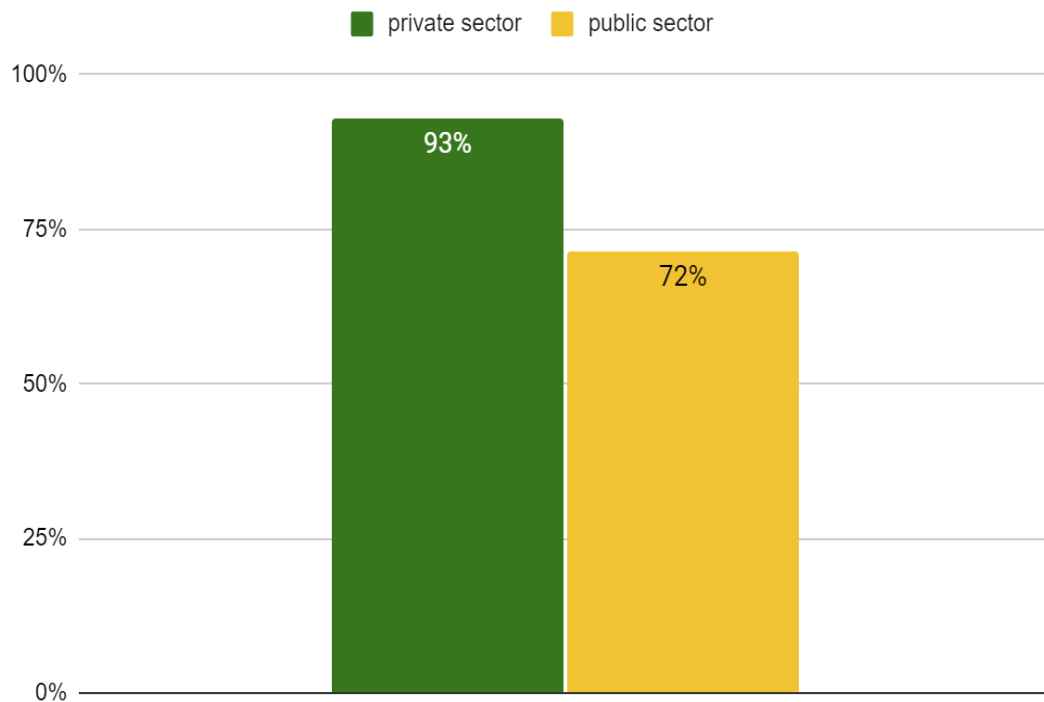
Interpreting student responses requires teachers to have a critical understanding of individual student proficiency levels where the teacher can conduct “focused skill practice” and “re-teaching” after feedback to help students reflect (Allen & Ryan, 1969). Moreover, teachers should effectively interpret students to support instructions, the teachers should have an adequate understanding of formative assessment principles such as effective error correction, contextualizing the text with the real world, and providing constructive feedback to help students identify gaps and improve performance. However, the observations indicate a lack of teachers' knowledge in effectively interpreting students' responses. Plus, the varying learner backgrounds across government sectors also interrupt the teacher's practices.

While the practices demonstrate elements of formative assessment in schools, a structured implementation of interactive engagement, contextualization, and diverse questioning techniques would better align with the formative approach's goals of interpretation and improvement in learners' comprehension skills in both sectors. Duke and Pearson (2002) have proposed “paraphrasing and summarizing” to help students express their ideas and understanding that could help teachers in interpretation. Yet, the practice falls short in both sectors except in a few classes across public sector. Although the teachers in private schools utilize a variety of techniques to encourage students to respond, the depth of individual student interaction is missing. Hence, a more balanced approach to interpreting students' responses is needed in these sessions that incorporate diverse questioning techniques and peer collaboration. Moreover, offering constructive feedback across both sectors is a significant shortfall as it is the central aspect of formative assessment for interpretation and adjusting learning. Thus, the teacher's knowledge of understanding and providing individualized and personalized feedback could deepen learner comprehension, and such progress is possible with a student-centered learning environment across both sectors.

4.1.5 Analysis of Frequency Distribution of “Acting on the Information Collected (4th phase ESRU Model)” across Private and Public Elementary Schools

Figure 4

Frequency distribution of acting on the information collected across private and public elementary schools



Acting on the information is the final stage of Ruiz-Primo's (2007) ESRU Model, representing the essence of all the above practices, including clarification of learning goals, collecting and interpreting information, and student response. All these activities are conducted to achieve the purpose of "improving" learning and teaching (Bell & Cowie, 2001). Once the teacher collects and recognizes the information of students, they are supposed to use this information to their advantage. That means adjusting all teaching strategies according to the learning needs. The teacher's acting on the information has to do with employing activities to help students fill in gaps in learning and adjust teaching according to the information gathered. The designed parameters for this stage were collected following the theoretical concepts given by the experts in the field of formative assessment such as "improving comprehension with sociocultural factors, teaching sentence structure and vocabulary of second language, and offering learners constructive feedback to improve comprehension". The data gathered from observations demonstrate teachers' active role in acting on the information. However, the practices varied according to the teaching context and learning goals, as observed in this study.

4.1.5.1 Analysis of data from classroom observations of private sector classes

As observed almost all the teachers followed an effective and varying teaching method to act on the information collected and improve learners' comprehension.

In the 1st class, this teacher discussed the day's lesson in detail and interactively with encouraging students' responses. The discussions carried questions from students to know their understanding and clarify text concepts with sociocultural factors that the students were already aware of. This connection especially of connecting textual terms such as "coronavirus" effectively helped students to get to the meaning and context of the text as a whole. Meanwhile, the teacher focused on vocabulary building that was new to the students. However, a feedback component was missing that could have further improved the implementation of comprehension practices. Moreover, the teacher lacked somehow the effective scaffolding for students to independently apply newly acquired knowledge of the concepts.

In the 2nd class, this teacher acted effectively on learners' collected information. The teacher's setting a visual related to the text before reading drew an interest for learners to get prepared for learning. Moreover, the teacher also provided feedback to individual learners as per their level. However, this teaching method limited the use of sociocultural factors to connect with the text context as students were asked to interpret on their own while the teacher provided guidance when needed. Plus, little focus on teaching sentence structure was observed in this class.

In the 3rd class, the teacher conducted a grammar class to teach sentence structure as one of the key components of acting on the information collected. However, it was a traditional method of teaching through using only a board-and-marker material as a visual to set the context of the activity. As it was observed the teacher used real-life examples to make understanding clear for students as sociocultural factors. However, the limited use of verbal questioning and students' responses hindered individualized feedback to support deeper understanding for learners that could improve comprehension.

In the 4th class, it was a classroom assessment-type teaching approach where the teacher calls a student to make the application structure on the board for a general understanding for the rest of the students. Such varied techniques helped the teacher to act on the information collected from learners. However, it effectively lacked the

use of individualized feedback to improve comprehension. Making a general understanding did not help students to self-reflect and the teacher to address the individual challenge effectively in comprehension.

In the 5th class, this teacher followed a traditional method of teaching the day's lesson by randomly turning the initial discussions into reading-aloud. Although the students got teacher's support during the reading session with clarification of new terms and later on highlights on the text vocabulary, it was observed the text was not connected with sociocultural factors to improve the meaning. Plus, individualized feedback was missing that could better improve the deeper understanding of the text.

In the 6th class, the teacher acted on the information by teaching the day's lesson through depicting the documentary using multimedia. It was a very exciting learning experience for the students as it boosted the level of interest, active participation, and preparation for learning. Plus, follow-up questions and discussions after the visual session consolidated the comprehension further among students. However, the whole-class discussions lack the provision of individual feedback to strengthen the understanding in a deeper sense. The documentary display effectively connected the text with sociocultural factors but little focus was on vocabulary building for improving comprehension.

4.1.5.2 Analysis of findings from private sector

Based on the last stage "acting on the information collected" from Ruiz-Primo's model, the observed classes demonstrated a varying effectiveness of practices. The 1st and 6th classes successfully integrated sociocultural factors by connecting text with real-life contexts like "coronavirus" or using multimedia to improve comprehension. However, the rest of the classes observed did not show the consistent use of sociocultural elements, limiting the contextual engagement. The 1st and 5th classes employed the activities for vocabulary building to help students with learning new terms but other classes overlooked this component. As for teaching sentence structure, it was taught in the 3rd class through a traditional board-based method while missing the interactive strategies.

Furthermore, constructive feedback as the critical component of formative assessment for reading comprehension, was provided inconsistently as the teachers relied on the whole-class discussions rather than following the practices for

individualized support. Considering the practices, more comprehensive approaches such as personalized feedback, scaffolding, and a balance of interactive methods are needed to align with Ruiz-Primo's model, for acting on the information collected from students.

4.1.5.3 Analysis of data from classroom observations of government sector classes

In the 1st class, it was an interactive reading session as observed where the teacher discussed the meaning of key concepts of the text. Open-ended questioning technique was used to clarify meanings while connecting the text with sociocultural factors. However, individualized feedback was not provided as it was a general whole-class discussion. Considering the varying linguistic backgrounds of students in the government sector, the teacher did not address the language barriers of individual students rather the reliance was on assigning the task related to the text reading.

In the 2nd class, the same teacher was observed with the day's task where students were asked to get their assignments checked. Among a majority of students, only a few students got their work checked from the teacher and received feedback on their performance. While the rest were discouraged with a fear of punishment by the teacher. After that, the teacher acted on the information collected through highlighting the meanings of the words from the lesson along with the lesson reading. It was an interactive type of reading aloud in the classroom where the teacher took pauses to correct errors of students' pronunciation. The text meaning was effectively connected with sociocultural factors. However, learners did not get feedback to improve comprehension skills.

In the 3rd class, the teacher acted on the information by initiating the discussions and divergent questioning from the students. However, a little response from the students was observed. Hence, the teacher used the board to make concepts clear while asking students to follow for note-taking.

In the 4th class, the same teacher continued with teaching the previous task for sentence structure. Teaching sentence structure is the main component of acting on the information following the last stage of Ruiz-Primo's model of formative assessment. However, the teacher lacked feedback provision except immediate feedback with words like "good" to a student. Moreover, learners were not motivated to connect text with sociocultural factors.

In the 5th class, the teacher followed a traditional reading strategy to get students following the reading-aloud method. Many students participated in reading a piece of text where the teacher took many pauses to make meaning clear of the new concepts and an effective connection of textual terms with sociocultural factors. However, a constructive form of feedback to improve comprehension skills of students was missing.

In the 6th class, this teacher initiated the discussion by appreciating individual student's performance on the assessment taken as effective feedback. Later on, the teacher acted on the information collected from learners by assigning them a comprehension paragraph with guiding its structure to interpret. Almost all students excitedly performed their work with the teacher following open-ended questions to improve learners' understanding. The students that responded also were provided positive feedback. However, individualized feedback to improve comprehension was missing throughout.

In the 7th class, once the teacher collected the information by following an open-ended questioning session, the teacher acted on the information through explanations. With the help of the board to write concepts, and making explanations along, the teacher effectively clarifies the concepts of sentence structure. However, the teacher did not allow students to pose questions during the lecture until it was completed. Plus, the explanations did not carry the forms of feedback and connection to sociocultural factors to improve comprehension.

4.1.5.4 A comparative analysis of findings

Based on the last stage “acting on the information collected” from Ruiz-Primo's model, the observed classes demonstrated a varying effectiveness of practices. However, reliance on socio-cultural factors to teach and connect textual concepts was a common practice used across both private and government sectors. Moreover, students' vocabulary building was also supported through the use of socio-cultural factors in classroom discussions. (Ozfidan et al., 2014) also suggested in their study that sociocultural factors impact second language learning and enhance the students' active participation.

Acknowledging the principles of formative assessment, providing immediate and constructive feedback is a crucial component of the last stage—“acting on the

information collected”—in Ruiz-Primo’s (2006) formative assessment model. Similarly, Allen and Ryan (1969) highlight microteaching as an effective formative tool for enhancing comprehension. However, observations revealed inconsistent feedback provision in private sector schools, with teachers often relying on whole-class discussions, limiting opportunities for individualized support. Likewise, government sector teachers offered immediate positive feedback through praise but did not provide personalized, detailed comments to promote student reflection and revision, contradicting Hattie and Timperley’s (2007) concept of clear and purposeful feedback essential for improvement.

Duke and Pearson (2002) in their seminal work have significantly observed the outcomes of “paraphrasing and summarizing” for the ESL teachers to help students retain text and re-express their ideas. Paraphrasing techniques encourage students to solidify comprehension, while, summarizing encourage them to identify and condense key points for meaning making. Such techniques give way to the teachers to identify students’ comprehension level and act accordingly by re-teaching and re-implementing (Allen & Ryan, 1969) for what’s more needed to adapt teaching for comprehension improving. The observations conducted indicated a significant scarcity of structured practices of paraphrasing and summarizing as the key comprehension strategies across both private and public sector schools.

Moreover, the formative assessment experts such as Ruiz-Primo & Furtak (2006) and Shepard, (2000) emphasize on the modification of teaching practices and remedial teaching based on the student response collected from the students, essential elements of the formative model to act on the information. Formative assessment as a progressive form of teaching and learning encourages adaptive teaching following contemporary practices such as Shute, (2008) have given the idea of tech-based formative assessment that paves paths to personalized learning. Recognizing such explanations, only one of the classes across the private sector employed a visual tech-based practice of teaching the text to increase understanding levels of learners and enhance motivation. (Maitlo et al., 2024) has also scrutinized the effective uses and outcomes of technology integration in second language teaching but the rest of classes overlooked the interactive method rather followed the traditional board-based strategy to teach comprehension. Similarly, government sector teachers were observed to have a rigid method of board-based practice to teach vocabulary and sentence structure as

the crucial components of language teaching without employing interactive opportunities to increase learner motivation. Although the practices for vocabulary building were addressed in the 2nd and 5th classes as one of the principles of second language teaching proposed by McGraw Hill Education (2009), the deeper comprehension development of students was not encouraged in these sessions.

4.1.5.5 Challenges and implications

Apart from providing constructive and clear feedback to learners for improvement, acting on the information requires stakeholders to keep modifying teaching practices as per the students' response collected (Ruiz Primo & Furtak, 2006) and the successful addressing of this stage necessitates the effective practices of identifying and interpreting student response. However, the observations demonstrated shortfalls particularly in encouraging student response and interpreting that data to modify teaching instructions. Moreover, modification of strategies can take place with the effective knowledge on the teacher's side and useful resource utilization such as technology-enhanced tools for student progress in comprehension as suggested by Ahmed et al., (2024) in their study. However, the classrooms observed seem to have little to no such resources employed in teaching English as second language instead a conventional style of teaching was followed particularly across government sector schools. Whereas, a single class from private school effectively employed the documentary session aligned with the lecture that attracted the students to take interest and responsibility to get meaning.

Considering the practices, more comprehensive approaches such as personalized feedback, scaffolding, and a balance of interactive methods are needed to align with Ruiz-Primo's model, for acting on the information collected from students. Yet, such operations stand in need of effective teacher knowledge and training on effectively identifying and interpreting student information to adjust teachings to yield workable outcomes of students' comprehension skills.

4.1.5.6 Critical discussion of key findings

Considering the major question of this research on formative assessment practices to improve reading comprehension skills in English, both private and public sectors show strengths as well as weaknesses. Verbal questioning techniques, falling short of written and artistic responses, were commonly used to clarify goals and elicit

information from learners, though their degree and effectiveness varied across both sectors. Private school teachers employed open-ended questions to encourage participation and enhance meaning, yet they fell short in fostering critical thinking crucial for deeper comprehension, as emphasized by Black and Wiliam (1998). In contrast, government sector teachers lacked the depth and effectiveness in questioning, which is fundamental to formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Private school practices more closely aligned with Vygotsky's scaffolding theory, Fountas and Pinnell's guided reading framework, and the principles of formative assessment by Black and Wiliam, compared to government schools. Shepard (2000) supports that varied, interactive methods significantly enhance student engagement and comprehension. The stages of interpreting and acting on information in Ruiz-Primo's (2007) model were variably implemented, with private schools employing some interactive sessions but often lacking balance between surface-level engagement and deeper learning, as well as inconsistent use of resources. Government schools predominantly relied on traditional, board-based methods focusing on vocabulary and concept clarification, with limited visual aids and learner-centered practices (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Ryerse (2018) and Sadler (1989) stress the importance of interactive, dialogic learning in formative assessment, which was notably absent in many sessions. Ultimately, both sectors inadequately utilized higher-order questioning and interactive strategies, diverging from the formative assessment ideals proposed by Ruiz-Primo (2007), Black and Wiliam (1998), and Ryerse (2018).

As for the feedback practices as the key component of formative assessment to improve comprehension skills and another major objective of this study, the researcher observed that it was applied in a generalized form, restricting the personalization and construction, contradicting with the Hattie and Timperley's model of actionable feedback. Ruiz-Primo (2007) signifies the effective interpretation requires individualized feedback that can address diverse learner levels. Only one class (6th) from the private sector used individualized feedback to encourage comprehension but the rest failed to offer constructive feedback. Black and Wiliam (1998) argue that while real-time feedback is essential but effective when supported by the opportunities for learner autonomy and reflective thinking. However, immediate use of feedback in the government sector restricted students' reflective thinking and self-assessment. Similar findings were reported by black and wiliam

(1998) that feedback practices lacked personalization and specificity to improve comprehension.

The distinction of formative assessment practices across both sectors may occur due to the factors such as class size difference, teacher skills, and resource availability. For instance, Reay (2004) highlighted that socio-economic disparities can impact both teaching styles and student engagement. So, making distinctions across both at the same level may be unfair. The success in the private sector may be attributed to smaller class sizes, motivated students, and infrastructure, and structured teaching planning. Moreover, traditional methods of reading comprehension may not completely be overlooked as Rosenshine's *Principles of Instruction* (2012) highlight the value of explicit teaching and modeling as common approaches. Similarly, Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark (2006) argued that explicit instruction can be more effective than discovery learning, particularly benefiting those novice learners who lack foundational knowledge such as in government sectors.

While scrutinizing the facts from both sectors, there is a need for improvement in terms of explicit application of formative assessment principles to teach and improve reading comprehension skills at ESL level in both sectors. According to the propositions of Ruiz-Primo's (2007) formative assessment approach, schools should promote teacher training and professional development to enhance the ability to ask open-ended and higher-order questions to prompt critical thinking of students. Such type of questioning techniques will create a dynamic classroom environment, motivating learner responses and better diagnostic information. Furtak and Ruiz-Primo (2006) also suggest, teachers should also be trained to provide more effective feedback that helps students improve their comprehension and learning. Furthermore, encouraging peer collaboration, as noted by Ruiz-Primo (2007), can also empower students to actively engage in the learning process. As far as the improvement of formative teaching and learning of reading comprehension, private school teachers should also emphasize peer collaboration and timely, specific feedback. Providing feedback will further reinforce formative assessment's role in improving learning outcomes.

Conclusively, the findings of these classroom observations may be influenced by observer bias who might have preconceived notions about effective teaching, favoring private sector teaching methods over government sector practices. Hence, the

interviews were conducted with those teacher participants to strengthen the data related to formative assessment classroom practices along with questions on teachers' perceptions to find out what constitutes the better alignment of formative assessment and what causes the challenges in the implementation across both private and public sector.

4.2 Research Tool - Interview Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 teachers across private and public schools over the period of five months from November 2023 to March 2024. Interview protocols were designed following the study questions. Following the interview protocols, the researcher visited the schools with the school management's consent and a permission letter from the University and Federal Board of Directorate (FDE Islamabad) (Annex E). The researcher arranged a meeting with the teaching participants to schedule the time slot for the interview. All of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded through a voice Memo. However, 3 of the participants chose to give written responses. The interview data was transcribed and translated by the researcher with several replays of the audio. The researcher used verbatim translation to clarify all participants' utterances from both sectors. To maintain the reliability and validity of the data, the researcher invited two professors from the English department of Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU) Khairpur, from where the researcher got a Master's Degree in English (Linguistics) in the data screening process. The duration of every interview session was around 20 to 25 minutes. Interviews were carried out in the English language. However, the participants could use a bilingual method (shifting and switching between English and Urdu) to conveniently respond to the questions. For analyzing the data, the researcher used a thematic analysis approach to identify the participants' views explicitly and in detail. The interview data was organized and coded using NVivo Software. The researcher has generated three major themes out of all the coded data, along with the subcategories of each theme. The descriptions are followed under each sub-theme of the study.

Interview questions were aimed to identify (1) the teachers' educational background and teaching experience in teaching ESL students; (2) their understanding of the value of formative assessment in teaching English reading comprehension; (3) the implementation of regular informal assessment to teach reading comprehension

(with linguistic schema and content schema); (4) the process and presentation of feedback on learners' regular work on reading comprehension; (5) challenges faced while applying strategies of formative assessment in teaching English reading comprehension.

The interview questions were aligned with the research questions and theoretical framework to operationalize the theory of formative assessment. Teachers' practices of formative assessment for English reading comprehension and the provision of a formative feedback process were analyzed using the Ruiz-Primo (2009) ESRU Model. In contrast, the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of formative assessment in teaching and improving reading comprehension were described following the relevant literature. Interview questions were organized into three sections: (1) on teachers' perceptions, (2) practices, and (3) feedback procedure, and each section carried nine sub-questions.

4.2.1 Interview Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews and observation field notes provided rich insights regarding the teacher practices of formative assessment in teaching English reading comprehension in public and private schools. The researcher analyzed the interview data using thematic analysis followed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. After transcribing the interviews verbatim, the researcher got familiarized with the data, generated initial codes, and identified recurring themes relevant to the teaching and assessment of English reading comprehension. These themes were then refined and organized into broader categories reflecting key issues across public and private sectors. In the write-up, findings were presented thematically with supporting direct quotes from participants to ensure authenticity and to provide voice to the respondents.

This section presents the description of themes generated out of the data and related categories. Themes and categories were generated deductively following the phases of Ruiz-Primo's (2006) model for observing classroom practices. The researcher also used the inductive data analysis approach to formulate themes from the data collected on teachers' perceptions and feedback practices. Interview questions were designed to address the three major aspects of the study, including teachers' perspectives, practices, and feedback process. Observations were used to enhance the

validity of the data and to identify the practices in natural settings that the researcher could have missed when conducting interviews with participants. The chapter outlines the detailed analysis of three major themes along with their subcategories as represented below in table 7. In addition, there is a comparison in the description of both public and private elementary schools that the researcher conducted throughout the data collection and analysis process. Although the themes were generated generally by detecting patterns and relationships across the entire data, the researcher conducted a comparative analysis to identify the FA practices in light of those themes across both sectors.

Table 5 and 6 represented the participants' demographic information. Among all 12 private and public sector participants, nine teachers are female, and three are male. The teaching experience ranged from one year to more than 13 years. The English proficiency level of participants varied across both school sectors. Some of the teachers from the private sector showed advanced fluency. However, other participants were observed with average English proficiency levels.

Table 7

Participants' Profile from Private Sector Elementary Classes

Teacher	Gender	Qualifications	Teaching Experience (Years)	Experience in Teaching Grade 8 (Years)	Number of Lessons Observed
T1-S1	F	BSC (Eng)	5	1	2
T2-S1	F	BS (Eng)	4	2	2
T1-S2	M	B.S (Eng) B.Ed	6	4	1
T2-S2	F	B.S (Eng)	5	3	1
T1-S3	M	B.S (Eng)	5	2	1
T2-S3	F	B.S (Eng) B.Ed	7	4	1

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Table 8***Participants' Profile from Government Sector Elementary Classes***

Teacher	Gender	Qualifications	Teaching Experience (Years)	Experience in Teaching Grade 8 (Years)	Number of Lessons Observed
T1-S1	F	B.S (Eng) B.Ed	7	3	2
T2-S1	F	B.S (Eng) B.Ed	13	5	2
T1-S2	F	B.S (Eng) B.Ed	5	3	1
T2-S2	F	B.S (Eng) B.Ed	4	2	2
T1-S3	M	B.S (Eng) B.Ed	6	3	1
T2-S3	F	B.S (Eng) B.S (Eng) B.Ed	7	4	1

4.2.2 A General Summary of Thematic Discussions from Interview Results**Table 9*****Themes and Related Categories on Formative Assessment Practices***

Major Themes	Subcategories
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1. Inefficient use of formative assessment practices in teaching English reading comprehension 2. Feedback practices lack quality and construction 3. Assessment is the part of regular teaching	● Improper clarification of learning goals ● Inconsistent practices to interpret student response ● Summative approach of assessing student level and performance ● Reliance on Grammar Translation method ● Informal assessment through questioning technique ● Contextual implementation and construction ● Partial understanding of formative assessment ● Positive but less productive feedback ● Challenges in implementing formative assessment ● The need for teacher training on effective use of formative assessment for reading comprehension ● Assessment should be flexible to adapt to diverse student needs
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4.2.3 Theme 1: Inefficient Use of Formative Assessment Practices in Teaching English Reading Comprehension (Themes on Formative Assessment Practices)

All learning and teaching strategies used in the classroom are formative if they fulfill the purpose of learning improvement (Black & Wiliam, 2004). Following this view, the researcher analyzed all those activities and practices performed by the teacher in their interview responses and observations to determine their effect on improving reading comprehension in English. However, the significant focus of the analysis was on collecting data regarding teacher practices with respect to the categories designed in Ruiz-Primo's (2007) ESRU Model. Moreover, the researcher's analysis was guided by the principles of McGraw Hill Education (2009) for 2nd language teaching in the classroom and other researchers' views in the field of formative assessment. The data from interview responses was vital to understanding the teachers' daily activities and planning to teach reading comprehension. In addition, the observation results provided more insights into the aspects that were missing in the interviews.

The study was guided by the principle that formative assessment (FA) practices are employed by teachers to enhance students' reading comprehension (Furtak & Ruiz-Primo, 2007). A range of formative strategies was identified through the data collected in both public and private sector classrooms, particularly in reading comprehension and grammar instruction. However, the core findings indicate that FA strategies were not consistently aligned with the formative assessment standards necessary for effectively supporting reading comprehension in either sector. The contributing factors behind this inefficiency will be discussed in the section on teachers' perceptions. Furthermore, data from interviews and classroom observations revealed that private sector schools demonstrated more frequent and diverse use of informal assessment techniques compared to public sector institutions—a trend also supported by Anila et al. (2022). The subsequent thematic analysis, including the division into subcategories, further highlights the gaps in current formative assessment practices.

Table 10

Themes on formative assessment practices across private and public sector: A comparative representation of findings

Themes	Similarities	Differences
Improper clarification of learning goals	Both sectors use questioning techniques for goals clarification Both sectors use amended versions in lesson planning following learning needs Exams and accountability sessions were common standards of regular assessment in both sectors, hindering the lesson planning organization and implementation	Private sector have better lesson planning: public sector lack clear frameworks Private sectors offered better scaffolding Private sector teachers used the diversity of practices for goals clarification
Inconsistent practices to interpret student response	Both sector teachers employed summative forms including written tests for information interpretation Feedback practice lacked the depth for understanding student response in both sectors	Private sector used varied techniques to interpret including tech-integration The government sector used grouping and error-correction strategy
Summative approach of assessing student level and performance	Test-taking and grading students' performance was common practice across both sectors to assess students level and performance	Private sector teachers employed strictly followed test-taking as a tool to confirm teaching is on track Government teachers applied memorization, verbal assessments, and

		repetition for comprehension, neglecting the analysis of individual performance
Reliance on Grammar Translation method	Sentence structure was taught using grammar translation method across both sectors	Government school teachers taught reading comprehension and meaning-making through the use of translation
Informal assessment through questioning technique	Elicitation and student response was identified through questioning techniques across both sectors Comprehension was taught through contextual clues in both sectors	Private sector used multiple other techniques as an informal form of regular assessment Questioning was organized yet lacked the depth and detail-orientation Government sector teachers used close-ended and random questions without management Students lacked the participation and encouragement to response in public sectors
Contextual	Introducing contextual clues for	Private sector teachers

implementation and construction	activating learner prior knowledge for comprehension used in both sectors	prioritized student independence in sentence creation. Public sector teachers focused on direct instructions, lacking student agency and clarity of instruction.
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4.2.3.1 Improper Clarification of Learning Goals

Clarification of learning goals is the initial stage, according to the FA model. The instructors' clarifying clear learning intentions before proceeding with the teaching holds critical value in terms of informing learners to realize the responsibility of their learning. Before the teaching process is enacted, the learning goals and steps needed to progress toward these goals must also be clear to both learners and teachers (Ruiz-Primo, 2010). The step implies that the teachers must explain the learning objectives as well as success criteria to the learners. The data obtained from interviews and observations from teachers of both sectors reveal that the teachers lacked proper understanding and value in clarifying clear learning goals for students. Only one out of twelve teachers (T1-S3-P) from the private sector responded about setting clear learning objectives and lesson planning when asked about how lesson planning supports and helps your teaching of reading comprehension. She explained:

"We are offered our lesson plans already built-in by our head department but sometimes I make changes in those due to the tests and exams schedule and learning needs. Plus, I follow my strategy for lesson plans by breaking the lesson into parts, reading-first, discussion, follow-up, and feedback."

The teacher's responses matched with what she implemented in her classroom while observation about setting clear learning goals. On the other hand, the teacher's response shows that they do not entirely rely on the built-in lesson schedules but follow adjustments as per the learner and learning need. Plus, tests and regular

accountability is the common factor followed in classrooms and may hinder the usual schedule of teaching reading comprehension with formative principles.

Some of the portion of the observation excerpt from her class shows:

“The teacher enters the classroom (greeting with a smile). Almost a minute later, they excitedly projected a vibrant image onto the board, depicting a scene from the reading passage they would explore together.

The teacher: So, students, have you got an idea of what we are going to do with this today? (a warm smile tone)

Students: Teacher, does it look like a story or drama?

Teacher: ehmm..near to, but not exactly the drama. Let’s discuss it today and meanwhile, you will keep noticing who the characters are, what the story is about and finally, what was the moral, right?

The observation excerpt demonstrates the teacher’s good knowledge of implementing goal clarification before actual teaching. Other participants followed only the lesson-planning strategy as one of the sub-themes of the clarification stage of learning goals. However, they did not fulfill the other activity criteria designed during the clarification phase of learning goals. Some of the teacher participants’ responses from interview excerpts are:

Excerpt from interview with teacher (T1-S1-P):

“My teaching plan includes dedicating the first two lectures to teaching the necessary techniques, while the remaining two lectures are divided into practicing on worksheets and taking tests, respectively”.

Excerpt from interview with teacher (T1-S2-P):

“I make lesson plans following the scheme of studies/ different strategies to meet the need for learning.”

Excerpt from interview with teacher (T2-S3-P):

“Planning is very important before teaching. I make my lesson plans considering the students’ needs like if a lesson is too lengthy or filled with difficult vocabulary so I have to extend its reading duration by two to three days. Plus, there are discussion sessions, reading, exercise, and feedback.”

Interview excerpts from government school participants:

Excerpt from T1-S1-G:

“We are provided some built-in lesson plans and we make amendments according to our need. Basically, the whole teaching learning syllabus in Punjab Government is politicized. And we have to go according to specific exams that are objective most of the time so we have to make our students prepare for those objective questions. We may divide our lessons in short sections and compartments which they can understand briefly and step by step. In this way, I have to change my lesson plan according to time. Plus, there are sudden vacations or something like that so we do not exactly follow those built-in-lesson plans but make amendments according to the learning needs.”

This is similar to the response by the teachers in the private sector in that they are provided lesson plans but adjustments are needed to meet learners and learning needs. Plus, frequent assignments including written tests also influence the exact implementation of formative assessment to improve comprehension across both sectors.

Excerpt from T2-S2-G:

“Topic is divided into parts. Introduction, explanation, repetition by students, summarizing topics by students and oneself.”

Excerpt from T1-S3-G:

“Planning lessons play an important role in the teaching and learning process. I make weekly lesson plans. However, not all of the lectures I deliver are lesson plan based. I follow a simple format for all lessons with the following format:

Beginning from the “introduction” where I briefly check background knowledge of the learners and then present the topic, the second phase is “development” where I go for the lecture and present the topic. For reading comprehension, I provide passages and read them to the students. I write difficult words and their word-relations on board and explain the grammatical structures as well. The third section is “follow-up” in which I check the understanding of the learners. I ask them to respond to the comprehension questions and then I explain the questions to them after they respond. The fourth is “Feedback” where I assign homework to the students and also check the previous one.”

Participants from both sectors deem lesson-planning as the crucial component of teaching reading comprehension. Plus, they have mentioned the feedback as important factors to get learners prepared for the day's task activity. Yet, the practices followed and recorded does not represent a comprehensive implementation of clarifying learning goals as per the basic principle of formative approach across both sectors. However, both of the sectors' participants follow an amended version due to the regular test schedules that disrupt the formative focus of teaching and to meet varying learner needs.

Excerpt from T2-S3-G:

"We follow lesson plans that our management offers to us but sometimes I make changes in those plans according to the learning needs and exams schedule. Yes, lesson plans are important that direct you to conduct class in a manageable way."

Tomlinson (2013) state that lesson planning helps teachers adjust teaching to students' varying needs, interests, and abilities. When asked about the lesson planning strategy and the initiation of reading comprehension classes, almost all the teachers from both sectors responded that they strictly followed a designed lesson plan. Moreover, three teachers from both sectors said that they made amendments to the plan according to the learning needs, aligning with the idea of personalized instructions to address learning needs by Kem, (2022). However, only one teacher from the private sector responded to have a proper strategy for clarifying learning goals before teaching reading comprehension. Other teachers did not follow proper practice in clarifying learning objectives before teaching to students, significantly contrasting with Ruiz-Primo's (2011) formative approach and impacted learners' performance in comprehending the text as highlighted by (Brookhart et al., 2010). Although personalizing instructions based on the learner need is strengthened by the experts but, the teachers from both sectors highlighted the interruption of exams and accountability sections as summative forms of assessing learner ability and performance, leaving little space for practices used formatively in classroom such as scaffolding, detailed discussions, tech-integration, and student-involvement in goal-setting that could support both teaching and learning (Black & Wiliam, (1998), Ruiz-Primo & Furtak, (2006), Vygotsky, (1978), and McGraw Hill Education (2009, William & Leahy (2015). Such findings trigger the need for more innovative strategies of goal clarification in the classroom for comprehension.

4.2.3.2 Inconsistent Practices to Interpret Student Response

Implementing formative assessment in ESL classrooms not only facilitates learners with information and feedback on their performance level but also allows teachers to understand the degree to which their students fall so that learning can be improved. Interpreting student responses requires the teacher to employ strategies to recognize the student response and information gathered from information collected to adjust instructions accordingly (Furtak & Ruiz-Primo, 2007). Interpreting students' responses is the second phase of the Ruiz-Primo (2007) ESRU model. The subcategories in the phase included error-correction techniques, feedback in general, feedback on comprehension improvement, and establishing the contextual setting. However, the data collected from interviews and observations showed an inconsistent approach by teachers across the government school sector to make sense of learner responses. Consequently, the students could not actively respond to the teacher's comprehension questions, nor did they seem able to monitor their response and act to improve comprehension information, as implied by Furtak & Ruiz-Primo (2007). In addition, the teachers' responses in interviews varied from what was observed in the classroom.

Interview Excerpt from (T2-S3-G)

“We take assessments on the basis of that assessment/ information. With assessment we come to know about the speed which we have to follow for teaching and what is our momentum, what should be our momentum, and what are things we need to revise and things that need single-lecture reading and how we have to divide the lesson. Like, in text we have several lessons, in some the vocabulary is very simple, sentence structure is very simple, so we can complete it in two to three days.

About reading, the students have activities in class, like we have some specific tests which we have to follow and for that they read. I monitor them closely and I improve their pronunciation as well. They are not at a very basic level, they know how to pronounce the words, but there are some new or difficult words which i have to teach but they know how to read.”

Observation excerpt from the same teacher (T2-S3-G):

Teacher: OK, now I'll tell you the meaning of those words, and you will note them in your notebook, OK?

Students: Yes, mam.

She wrote the words on the board with their Urdu (the native language) meaning/ synonyms of the vocabulary and said hurry up! Make all these into your notes, and we'll continue our lesson from yesterday's lesson.

After a few minutes, the reading session started.

Student 3: (reading) An island in Japan, Aakeenwa..ehmmm..Okin..na.wa is one of the five places around the world where people live the longest, happiest lives. The island of Okinawa is one of the "blue zones," areas where a population has a life expectancy much higher than the global average.

Teacher: OK stop here. So you see, which people have long lives in this world.what did you get out of this?

Student 3: Mam, people of Okinawa.

Teacher: yes exactly, that's why the island is called "blue zone" which means the people that have the longest life in the world. (sociocultural factors).

Teacher: OK, children, now we do that; any one student will read the paragraph, and any other student will make the meaning. Meanwhile, I will guide you on the meaning. OK?

Students: OK, mam.

One of the students further read the passage, and another student tried to make its meaning but with the help of the teacher's discussion. The teacher gave the students some questions from the lesson to find their answers in the text and assigned the rest of the text reading into groups. She ended the session by saying, "It's your homework." I will check your work tomorrow in your notebooks. And the one that does not do it will get punished". (Negative reinforcement).

The teacher's strategy aligns superficially with Fountas's (1996) concept of guided reading, particularly when she attempted to support learners through text-based questioning and small group collaboration. However, true guided reading emphasizes tailored support within students' zones of proximal development, not mere task delegation. The absence of differentiated feedback and the punitive tone limited ability to respond, student-centered instruction.

Furthermore, Harvey (2007) advocates for active comprehension strategies such as questioning, inferring, and synthesizing. The observed sessions showed the questioning technique yet, it lacked depth and responsiveness to student thinking, which are central to Harvey's framework. Rather than facilitating strategy use, the teacher primarily emphasized answer-finding, suggesting a surface-level approach to comprehension.

The grouping of students for reading tasks did suggest an effort toward peer interaction, a principle emphasized by Allen (1969) in her early work on collaborative guided reading. However, the activity lacked structured roles or clear objectives, reducing its potential for promoting engagement or accountability. Duke and Pearson (2002) emphasize summarizing and paraphrasing as vital strategies in constructing meaning, yet these were absent from the observed lesson. No opportunities were provided for students to rephrase the text in their own words, a missed opportunity to deepen comprehension.

Moreover, the lesson's teacher-centered nature and reliance on control-oriented language constrained opportunities for student agency and self-assessment, limiting their ability to internalize comprehension strategies. This approach contradicts the formative principles outlined by Ruiz-Primo (2011), who stresses the importance of timely, constructive feedback in promoting metacognition and learning progression.

Interview excerpt from (T2-S3-P):

“Usually, we have a regular written tests policy. Almost after every lesson I take an informal test and measure their understanding of the lesson by giving grades. Plus, I notice my students through questions, answer sessions and discussions in general.”

T2-S2-P:

“By repetitions, rephrasing, and recalling. With each reading session, I give them a few minutes to silently read the text and tell me what they have understood. This way most of the lesson is covered. While for the rest, I help them with discussions about words that are challenging, or they are seeing it for the first time.”

T1-S2-P:

Ans. I assess their linguistic knowledge by making them write on a particular topic. It gives a clear picture of their proficiency level. Plus, I mark their assessments and compare the marks. I often compare the reviews I give on the assessments.

T2-S1-P:

I assess their understanding by asking questions. I also use drilling, repetition, and reading different texts.

Interpreting student response across both sectors is conducted through practices such as error-correction and grouping strategy yet feedback was missing that could yield productive outcomes to suggest both learning and teaching in the government sector. Whereas, teachers in private sector schools use varied techniques for interpretation but reliance on summative forms of interpreting student response is a common practice. Government sector teachers also interpret student response through usual testing and assignments in classrooms as a standard assessment method, contradicting the ongoing informal assessment suggested by Ruiz-Primo (2011). Moreover, Bui and Nguyen (2022) found that out that not the frequency but the characteristics such as diagnostic and interactive assessment cause increase in learner motivation. Hence, interpretation of student response is a mutual practice that involves learners as well as teachers to adopt interactive forms of assessment yielding productive information, particularly the focused feedback improvement that is needed in these sectors for improving comprehension skills.

4.2.3.3 Summative Approach of Assessing Student Level and Performance

Regular test-taking strategies in language classrooms bear value in terms of producing the productivity of learners, as they are an activity of practicing a certain skill for improvement. However, researchers in the field of language teaching have shown concern about the frequency of test-taking. They believe that regular testing or consistency of practicing an exam increases the likelihood for learners to pass the exam and increase performance for the next time. However, such practice lacks the guarantee of improvement in certain skills and abilities. Learners and instructors may focus on leveraging test design features to maximize performance rather than cultivating the targeted language skills. Similarly, Green and Weir (2024) emphasize that test-focused preparation can lead to "test-deviuous" strategies that prioritize score

outcomes over meaningful language learning, thus impacting learners' interest and intrinsic engagement.

The data collected from interviews and classroom observations across private and government schools indicated that the teachers use test-taking and informal examination as part of daily teaching and assessment practice. 5 out of a total six teachers from the private sector responded that in almost every lesson reading completion, they used a test-taking method to interpret learners' information, as noticed in their interviews:

Interview excerpt from (T1-S2-P):

I am satisfied with monthly assessments. Assessment process means to evaluate students' knowledge about the learned topics after a certain period of time. It can have multiple processes. We have midterm assessment, final assessments etc. it helps to understand what students have learnt so far and what still needs to be taught, how our methodology was etc.

T1-S1-P:

My assessment strategies like quizzes prompt reflection, comprehension questions check understanding, discussions clarify confusion, and peer collaboration deepens understanding of the text.

T1-S3-P:

It takes almost a week to teach a lesson along with all its exercises, grammar, extra activities and a test at-the-end. I record each and every student's performance and progress level in my daily register and treat them accordingly.

T2-S3-P:

Usually, we have a regular written tests policy. Almost after every lesson I take an informal test and measure their understanding of the lesson by giving grades.

T2-S2-P:

When I take tests based on vocabulary portion and while reading aloud also, I assess whether they are making sense of the text or not.

T2-S2-P:

I make a preplanned strategy and time-management. My sessions are divided into segments including tests and exam preparation.

Interview excerpts from government sector:

T1-S1-G:

We have some specific tests which we have to follow and for that they read. I monitor them closely and I improve their pronunciation as well.

T1-S1-G:

I take a short assessment at the end session or maybe that would be in the next day or it can be on the weekend. Depending on the length of the lesson. Like, there are short assessments as well as a whole paper-like assessments., or a test-like assessment.

T2-S3-G:

I give them prizes when they pass a test with good grades.

T1-S2-G:

Usually, I take tests or ask questions and that's my strategy. Plus, because there are plenty of students in my class, assessing each and every student individually isn't possible for me. I use grouping strategies and discussions plus presentations for text reading and comprehension.

Although Ruiz-Primo and Furtak (2006) promote formative approaches to assessment, such strategies must be complemented by instructional methods that foster comprehension. The examples include Harvey's (2007) comprehension strategies and Duke and Pearson's (2002) concepts of paraphrasing and summarizing along with Fountas's (1996) guided reading model, all these require ongoing formative feedback to be effective.

Traditional assessments such as quizzes and graded tasks have the potential to offer concrete performance metrics. However, these forms of assessment are time-intensive and often disconnect teaching from meaningful comprehension goals (Hausgaard, 2021). This is particularly problematic in large classrooms, where teachers struggle to assess each learner's progress authentically. Observations from this study revealed that both private and public schools leaned heavily on summative tests, particularly in private institutions where exam preparation dominated

instructional time. These practices, along with a strong focus on test performance, undermine the application of comprehension-focused strategies—such as those proposed by Harvey (2007), who emphasizes metacognitive techniques like questioning and inference-making. Similarly, Duke and Pearson (2002) argue that paraphrasing and summarizing foster deeper engagement with texts, yet these skills are rarely captured through conventional testing. Considering the observation data, teachers need a clearer balance between summative and formative practices, with formative approaches like guided reading (Fountas, 1996; Allen, 1969) that can encourage students to observe and support comprehension in real-time. Without creating such a balance, both the teachers and learners may risk prioritizing grades over genuine reading development.

4.2.3.4 Reliance on Grammar Translation Method

In order to teach reading comprehension in a second language, the grammar-translation method (GTM) can be an effective tool for building a strong base in sentence structure and vocabulary. However, Akramy et al. (2022) highlight that GTM's emphasis on translation and grammar rules may hinder the development of communicative skills in EFL learners. In addition to this, students may struggle while comprehending the text, which requires understanding beyond the sentence level, such as the theme or purpose of the text passage (Gupta, 2024).

In the data collected from participants' interview responses and classroom observations, the researcher identified teachers' frequent reliance on translations and emphasizing grammatical rules to support teaching comprehension of English text across both private and public schools. The majority of the teachers, especially in the government sector, seemed satisfied with the approach and used translations to assess the comprehension level of students, contradicting with the principles of formative assessment to teach reading comprehension to prompt learners for active participation and reflection on their abilities to improve comprehension (Ruiz-Primo, 2009; Brookhart, 2013). In contrast, teachers in private schools enforced an English-only classroom policy and provided instruction aligned with language acquisition principles outlined by McGraw-Hill (2009), focusing on immersion rather than passive exposure. Still, a grammar-based approach to teaching comprehension and sentence structure remained a common practice, as highlighted in the interview responses below.

Interview excerpts from private (T2-S2-P)

“I use a grammar translation method and a direct method of teaching English comprehension.”

T1-S3-P:

“I always start from an overview/ discussion of basic English grammar rules like tenses and parts of speech so they master these first and then be able to solve more complex exercises with my help and facilitation.”

T1-S2-P:

“Well, for both sentence structure teaching and vocabulary, I use a grammar translation method as it helps them to learn the idea through their native language. Plus, I use grammatical rules for them to follow for understanding sentence structure.”

Interview excerpts from government (T1-S1-G)

“We use translation methods, grammar translation methods and sometimes lectures. Activity-based learning is less applied because we have a specific timeline and syllabus to follow. So we use activities that are included in class but we cannot go for some extra activities. So we do repetition as well, like I read and translate a paragraph once, for the next day, there are two to three students which will repeat the same paragraph and translate that. So there is drilling, grammar translation, and some lecture methods as well.”

T2-S3-G:

“For reading comprehension we have a reading aloud method in the classroom and generally I follow grammar translation by telling students the meaning of English text bit by bit with their native language.”

T1-S3-G:

“Grammar rules, parts of speech and tenses usually. This is my strategy to follow in the classroom and through lecturing I teach them sentence structure and writing on the board.”

T2-S2-G:

“For assessing language, I have to start from the very basics. They don’t know the grammar rules and that stuff except some students that were good at in their previous classes. So instead of assessing, I have to make clear their understanding of grammar and sentence structure. But they can help themselves with word meanings as they know some of these from their previous sessions.”

Teaching the English language through the grammar-translation method (GTM) remains a prevalent approach in Pakistani schools. The common and continual use of this method in this context is due to the benefits such as ease of implementation, support for vocabulary development, and assistance with text comprehension, as noted by Elmayantie (2015). Moreover, educators see translating texts and emphasizing grammar rules as foundational for mastering language structure. However, this approach has been criticized for its limitations, including the lack of contextual engagement, critical thinking, and communicative competence (Gupta, 2024). These gaps are echoed by Eisa (2020), who observed that GTM can lower student motivation, hinder mastery of grammar, and obstruct development of the four essential language skills. Many teachers interviewed for this study admitted using GTM predominantly for sentence structure and vocabulary instruction usually lead them to passive learning and limited comprehension in real-world contexts.

In contrast, formative assessment-based instruction promotes active engagement, higher-order thinking, and personalized feedback that deepens reading comprehension. Ruiz-Primo and Furtak (2006) emphasize adapting instruction to meet learners’ needs through ongoing assessment, a principle that remains underutilized in GTM-dominated classrooms. Complementing this, Harvey (2007) asserts comprehension strategies such as inferring, questioning, and synthesizing that require students to interact deeply with texts—far beyond the literal translations emphasized in GTM. Similarly, Duke and Pearson (2002) stress the value of summarizing and paraphrasing as formative tools that empower students to express understanding in their own words. Guided reading approaches, as supported by Fountas (1996) and Allen (1969), offer structured, formative assessment opportunities within small-group instruction that respond to individual student needs. Hence, there is a need to replace passive, rote-driven learning with dynamic, student-centered practices in ESL context of Pakistan.

Teachers in this study also acknowledged the need for flexible lesson planning to accommodate students' evolving needs, often deviating from standard curricula prescribed by governing bodies. Such teachers' willingness to adapt novel practices aligns with the call for responsive instructional methods emphasized by Ruiz-Primo & Furtak (2006). To improve learning outcomes, particularly in government schools, this study recommends shifting toward communicative approaches and target-language immersion, supported by interactive activities and technology integration (Sevarakhon, 2024; Shawaqfeh et al., 2024). However, for such changes to be effective, teacher professional development remains a key that can enhance understanding of formative assessment principles and improve students' reading comprehension across both public and private sectors.

4.2.3.5 Informal Assessment through Questioning Technique

Asking probing questions from the students is one of the critical techniques in the process of formative assessment. Teachers may pose varying questions, such as summarizing a passage, predicting outcomes, or connecting the text with learners' personal experiences. Questioning is a key tool in the practice of formative assessment, leading to stronger learner outcomes (William, 2011). By asking frequent questions, the teacher can offer immediate feedback to students and enhance the interaction level. Moreover, higher-order questions promote critical thinking by encouraging students to infer, predict, and evaluate—skills essential to effective reading comprehension.

Almost all teacher participants across the private and government sectors responded that they commonly use questioning techniques to collect information on reading comprehension and help learners reach the meaning of the text, strengthening the concept from Ruiz-Primo (2006) ESRU Model of formative assessment. The observations also revealed that questioning techniques helped teacher correct errors, connect text with context, and teach sentence structure in these sessions. This aligns with the findings observed by Amalyia and Devanti (2016) in their study, which showed that questioning techniques have a positive impact on students' reading comprehension and active participation. However, teachers are supposed to pose various types of questions in comprehension class, such as open-ended, close-ended, multiple-choice questions, and questions related to describing things (McBain, 2024).

Both convergent and divergent types of questions related to the text and questions were observed to inform learners about the reading session. The research study by Chin (2006) also highlights the effectiveness of using a variety of questions in teaching to address and stimulate various cognitive processing and learning. However, observations indicated that the level of teacher questioning in these sectors lacked organization and management in verbal assessments such as formative ones with specific consideration on government sector. Mkhwanazi (2014) similarly found that teachers often did not adequately plan and design the questions for reading comprehension in classroom assessment. Mostly, the questions asked were random in nature and didn't encourage students to respond purposefully, nor were questions asked intended to improve comprehension skills. The excerpts demonstrate the difference:

Observation excerpt from private sector (T1-S1-P):

“Teacher: So, students, do you know what we are going to learn today?”

One of the students: Teacher, we have to learn our lesson: “We are all one, a happy family today.”

Teacher: ehmm.. That's nice. So let's discuss something about the happy family now! As you know that there are five members in the house, do you remember their names?

Student: Yes, teacher, there are three children, a mother and a grandmother.

Teacher: So, do you know what the problem was with Grandma? What did you notice about her features, personality, and habits? What were the problems that she faced at this age? And do you know the reason behind her problems?

Student: Her eyesight, mam; she used to have weak eyesight and had problems seeing things clearly.

Teacher: ohh yeeha.. That's nice! Another student? Like you may have studied the passage before or if you have really gone through it..

Teacher: it was the gray blurry eyesight that she got because of her illness and that made her neighbors worried.

Teacher: exactly! It was the new type of illness that caused the chaos but you know she finally found the cure that helped her in healing from the illness.. Well, what were the other lessons that we learned from the story?

Applying questioning techniques formatively to assess students is an opportunity to enhance and improve learners' knowledge (Black & Wiliam, 1998). It was observed that there was a flow of questions from the beginning to the end of the reading session. Text-related questions at the beginning not only helped students get an idea of what was in the reading but also had value in that questions helped students engage and connect their previous knowledge with the current topic. On the other hand, questions also helped teachers monitor learners' responses and offer immediate feedback and further clarification of the concepts (Ruiz-Primo, 2007).

Observation excerpt from government sector (T2-S1-G):

"Teacher: students! I am giving you five minutes for revision. Revise every student's own reading then I will ask questions from you about that.

Students started revising their textbooks. Each one seems immersed in their book, making noise sometimes.

Teacher: Sshhh.. Be calm, read it silently, don't make noise.

After a few minutes, the teacher asked, OK, now stop revision, time's up. Start reading. Each member of the group will read their own piece of reading, and then we will discuss it. Meanwhile, you will notice lesson questions and exercises that we have to fill in later after the reading, and I will check your exercise. You can ask any question regarding that.

Student: (reading) a few lines from the text.

Teacher: So the writer in this paragraph shows a connection between health and happiness and that it is necessary to live happily for good health."

Utilizing different types of questioning techniques nurtured by the teacher in the classroom yields different types of thinking abilities of students (Deutch, 1983). However, it was observed that there was a lack of pre-reading questions. The class was more teacher-dominated, where learners only followed the instructions; instead of asking something related to the text. The reading sessions simply began with an emphasis on revising the previous discussion. Students followed a passive reading, though the teacher initiated the discussion later on, but students lacked active participation and preparation for the text and to get to its meaning. Furthermore,

interview responses from participants across both sectors shed light on the specific questioning techniques teachers employ.

Interview excerpts from private:

T1-S1-P:

“They mostly use their previous knowledge when I ask them questions, relate the words to some contextual clues and give hints.”

T2-S2-P:

“I assess them by asking questions about sociocultural factors like why do muslims pray and so on.”

T1-S1-P:

“Of Course! Reading questions before the text is always a great idea. Scanning and summarizing and then giving a complete read to the text has been more beneficial in my classes.”

T1-S3-P:

“Regular and informal assessment in the classroom usually involves asking questions from the students.”

T1-S3-P:

“Yes, mostly, they know the basic grammar rules they have learnt in their previous learning so i ask questions or relate the structure with the meaning so it helps them understand the rule like what’s the function of noun, verb, or adjective.”

T2-S3-P:

“I ask them questions about each paragraph and vocabulary that they find difficult.”

T2-S3-P:

“Usually I ask them questions (open-ended) or sometimes close-ended depending on the nature of the topic. Questioning helps to bring their previous knowledge of grammar rules and some simple vocabulary.”

T2-S3-P:

“First I start with a brainstorming session that includes discussions, questioning, and interaction with students about the topic so that they should have a know-how before reading and it helps them to understand the text.”

Excerpts from government sector participants:

T1-S1-G:

“So I assess students according to their level. There is no rigid way of assessment like sometimes I ask questions during the lesson or in, like when I teach them translation, so again after finishing my lesson I take a short assessment at the end session.”

T1-S1-G:

“Sometimes, I ask intriguing questions which activate their thinking process.”

T2-S2-G:

“When we ask questions regularly and ask about the new words' meaning, it helps them to make a good practice of English vocabulary.”

T1-S2-G:

“By asking questions about what is a noun and other parts of speech. They improve this way and learn further about the sentence structure.”

Questioning techniques were used across both private and public sector schools to assess learners in various ways, such as the teachers using questions to elicit information, questions to construct learners' knowledge, and providing feedback. For instance, Brookhart (2010) emphasizes regular questioning techniques in formative assessment to gauge student understanding and help teachers adjust instruction accordingly continuously. However, the nature and effectiveness of the questions asked varied across both sectors. As one of the teachers from the government sector said in the interview, *“Usually, I ask questions and help them know the term by using their knowledge of the environment like from T.v, social media or family discussions.”* However, a difference was observed in this teacher's classroom.

While teaching reading comprehension, it was observed that the students were minimally involved in the reading, and no contextual or text-related questions were posed except when the teacher asked about the general theme of the text at the end.

Observation excerpt: (T2-S2-G)

“Teacher: We have left the reading of unit 10 in the middle and we will continue the lesson from there. All students, open your books, and who will start reading?”

Few students raised their hands and she called one student to read the passage. I saw other students eagerly waiting for this student to end so that they may read the rest. The student was reading a couple of sentences and the teacher was translating them and explaining some difficult words and some points that were hard to understand. There was no student asking questions during reading.

When the student completed the reading, she asked who would come to tell what was there in the text.

A few students raised their hands so she called two of them to come over and tell the class a summary of the lesson they just completed. Meanwhile she looked at the rest of the students to ask if they were right. The students nodded their heads affirmatively.”

T2-S2-G:

“I ask questions like what do you think is in the text or in the story we read, the material and what message lies there in the text in general. Then, after tracking their knowledge for those concepts that they couldn’t get.”

T1-S3-G:

“We also ask questions after each reading like what new words have you learnt today, so this way they recall their memory with our asking questions to remember those words and make clarity of ideas.”

T2-S3-G:

“I let them read the text and then ask about their understanding. I ask general questions related to the paragraphs and they respond in their mother tongue.”

T2-S3-G:

“Yes, maybe! Because when I question their understanding of what did you get out of the text so many students cannot answer and some can so this way they know that they are weak at their understanding.”

In summary, private school teachers tend to use a more structured and varied approach to questioning, incorporating pre-reading strategies, sociocultural context, and a mix of question types to engage students actively and deeply with texts. Pre-reading techniques such as scanning and summarizing, as highlighted by McLaughlin and Allen (2002), help students build a conceptual framework for better understanding. On the other hand, public school teachers, while also using effective questioning techniques, often focus more on flexible and contextual approaches that cater to different student levels and leverage environmental knowledge. While both approaches have distinct strengths, integrating the structured formative assessment practices common in private schools into public school teaching could improve comprehension outcomes, supporting the recommendations of Looney (2005).

4.2.3.6 Contextual Implementation and Construction

Learning and teaching a second language with the help of establishing a contextual setting is one of the core principles of formative assessment, and it was the frequent strategy employed by the teacher participants, as observed in their interview responses and classroom observations. Moreover, learners are facilitated best when provided with exposure to the context and construction of their previous knowledge with current concepts (Vygotsky, 1998). Although the process is time-consuming and resource-dependent, the teachers across both sectors relied on the verbal introduction of contextual clues and sociocultural factors to help students understand and interpret the textual meaning regardless of utilizing additional resources. Gay (2000) asserts that culturally responsive teaching, such as the inclusion of sociocultural aspects and questioning, significantly enhances student engagement and comprehension by making learning more relevant to learners' lives. The teacher participants employed contextual clues while reading to help considerably in students' vocabulary building in English and understanding new ideas as suggested by the teachers in their interview responses.

Interview excerpts from private sector school participants:

T1-S1-P:

“They are encouraged to search for relevant answers by studying contextual clues, especially for challenging vocabulary, and to locate answers that may not be explicitly stated in the text.”

T1-S1-P:

"I use techniques like contextual clues, guessing through root words, prefixes and suffixes. Keeping a vocabulary journal helps a lot."

T1-S1-P:

"Contextual clues are used a lot to interpret the accurate meaning."

T2-S1-P:

"By realizing that they know the meaning of the particular word or they have heard it in some context like on T.v, in social media, in news or anywhere else in the conversion. So they recall their memory and understand the word."

T1-S2-P:

"I tell them the meaning and they note down in their notebooks, use these words in sentences, and I provide the context and real-life examples of those words to them."

T2-S2-P:

"Usually, I connect them with real-world examples and their context so it helps them grasp the meaning earlier. Plus, they practice by making their sentences on their own."

T2-S2-P:

"I ask them to put effort into searching in their homes, and get interested in different activities like reading short stories, listening to English dramas, and movies to understand the words in their context."

T1-S3-P:

"I use words with their context and actual use in real-life and daily routines. However, I facilitate them with understanding the word in a new context or in relation to another topic currently."

Interview excerpts from government sector participants:

T2-S1-G:

"Yes, it helps us a lot to use their previous knowledge. When they cannot understand the word in a new context in the text, I make a chart on the board and related features of the word on the board so they get the idea."

T1-S2-G:

“I help them by using words in the same context that students can easily get.”

T2-S2-G:

“We give them text to read, correct their pronunciation, help them with meaning in Urdu and in English, and explain their surroundings (context).”

T2-S2-G:

“Assessment helps them in proving its context and connection to another word to get its meaning. Or, when a word that they have already studied about in another context, so we help them to know that now they are studying it in another context with the same meaning. So, this strategy helps them in recalling their memory for the meaning of a word in a new context.”

T1-S3-G:

“When they present the text, a paragraph with meaning in front of the class or read aloud, I ask them and confirm a certain idea that they got it or not. Many times they tell me but sometimes they don’t so I help them by discussing it and relating it with a particular context.”

According to Moll et al. (1992), connecting classroom instruction to students’ cultural and environmental knowledge enriches their comprehension and engagement. Interview responses from this study indicate a mixed but purposeful approach to using contextual information in the teaching of reading comprehension and grammar. Research by Ellis (2006) supports the integration of grammar instruction within meaningful contexts to foster practical language use and deeper understanding. Both government and private sector educators demonstrated the use of contextual clues and the activation of prior knowledge, although notable differences emerged.

Private school teachers prioritized student independence through strategies such as vocabulary journals and encouraging learners to construct original sentences. In contrast, government school teachers relied on direct instruction through offering definitions and real-life examples to support immediate comprehension. This contrast reflects a difference between promoting student agency and ensuring foundational understanding. Additionally, the use of formative assessment practices varied: while some teachers, such as T2-S2-G, employed questioning techniques to probe

comprehension, others, like T1-S3-G, relied on student presentations that show a gap in terms of consistency as an assessment tool.

The effective use of contextual clues to enhance comprehension depends on a balanced approach that can merge student-centered strategies with clear, guided instruction. Formative assessment plays a crucial role in maintaining this balance. As Black and Wiliam (1998) argue, timely and targeted feedback is essential to monitoring learning and promoting progress. Complementing this, Harvey (2007) emphasizes strategies such as activating background knowledge and asking questions to help students make meaning from text, while Duke and Pearson (2002) highlight the value of paraphrasing and summarizing as tools for assessing comprehension. These practices, when integrated with context-based instruction, support both independent learning and teacher-guided development to improve effective and more sustainable comprehension outcomes.

4.2.4 Theme 2: Feedback Practice Lack Quality and Construction (Themes on Formative Feedback Practices)

The effective use of contextual clues to enhance comprehension depends on a balanced approach that combines student-centered strategies with clear, guided instruction. Formative assessment plays a crucial role in maintaining this balance. As Black and Wiliam (1998) argue, timely and targeted feedback is essential for monitoring learning and promoting progress. Complementing this, Harvey (2007) emphasizes strategies such as activating background knowledge and posing questions to help students derive meaning from texts, while Duke and Pearson (2002) highlight the value of paraphrasing and summarizing as tools for assessing comprehension. When integrated with context-based instruction, these practices support both independent learning and teacher-guided development, leading to more effective and sustainable comprehension outcomes.

In contrast, one of the teacher participants from the private sector (T2-S2-P) seemed in favor of comparisons as an effective strategy to make improvements among students. As she stated, *"Mainly, the ones that get positive feedback sometimes make others jealous, so the next time, these others seem more active and prepared to perform well. Whether it's a test or reading aloud session and presentation, comparison is also a helpful strategy to bring success through feedback."*

Such responses along with the others that will be highlighted revealed the teachers of elementary level schools lacked the general understanding and use of formative feedback in the classroom. Furthermore, the feedback provided by the participants lacked construction, deviating from the concept suggested by Black and Wiliam (1998) for constructive feedback to help learners realize the areas that need improvement. Furthermore, such findings contradict with the Ruiz-Primo & Furtak's (2006) suggestions that feedback should be actionable and interact with the learning goals rather than comparative.

Two teachers (T1-S2-G and T1-S3-G) from the government sector viewed comments on students' performance as sufficient to suggest feedback. T1-S2-G stated in the interview, *"I check each and every student's work and make comments on their mistakes so they know their weak points and can improve."*

The T1-S3-G said *"We also make written feedback by providing comments on their work, both ways written or verbal feedback is there."*

Identifying errors is a necessary component of feedback. However, the responses reveal that the feedback provision through verbal and written comments lacks the specificity and constructive guidance crucial for effective formative feedback suggested by the formative assessment researchers. According to Black and Wiliam (1998), effective feedback must go beyond the identification of errors and should provide learners with clear and productive advice on how to improve. Simply pointing out students' mistakes, without guiding on the instructions and strategies to take the next step, does not help learners think on skill enhancement and knowledge on reading comprehension, contradicting with Ruiz-Primo's qualitative rather than quantitative feedback.

Furthermore, both teachers' using verbal commenting strategy was also observed in their classrooms while teaching reading comprehension, as the excerpt below shows:

T1-S3-G classroom observation excerpt on English reading comprehension:

"Teacher: Ehhmm, Ok, stop now; you understand what was there in the story, so if I ask you to underline the sentence where it tells the man was old? Who will come and do this?"

One of the students came in front and underlined the first sentence.

Teacher: Very good. Ok, so tell me, which sentence shows that the man lost his sheep? Who will come now?

One student raised his hand and came out.

She underlined the last sentence.”

One of the teachers (T1-S1-G) from the government sector, in her interview, said, *“First of all, they have marks, they have grades, they have remarks, written remarks. Plus, I explain the results to them. I tell them their mistakes, their good points, and their learning points, and I discriminate between their pain points and major shortcomings and discuss them in class. Plus, like, I don’t point them out, but generally, we discuss the things you are missing. So we discussed that.”* However, the classroom observations of this teacher identified that the teacher discussion did not address individual student feedback, and learners were not informed on the strategies that need to be done for future improvement in comprehension, except there were some general verbal comments on text comprehension test as the excerpt shows:

Observation of English reading comprehension class (T1-S1-G):

“Greetings!

The teacher brought some test results along with some little prizes. She distributed the results to students by commenting nice, excellent, good, or best on the first 4 to 5 positions. After that, the learners got their prizes for getting positions. It was a reading comprehension test where students had to read a simple passage and find answers within the passage. The teacher then started discussing the remarks and the learner's performance for a few minutes, saying we are having our exams soon, so make sure you will get prepared for each test.”

Research by Nicol and Macarlane-Dick (2006) recommended that effective formative feedback should engage students in dialogue about their learning so that the students can reflect on their performance and actively participate in their improvement. However, the lack of student engagement and encouragement to self-assess, as observed in the participants' responses, implies that feedback practice by the teacher may not adequately support learner engagement and self-regulation as the key components of formative assessment. This shows conflicts with Ruiz-Primo's (2006) recommendations for feedback to involve learners and Vygotsky's scaffolding through feedback that encourage deeper understanding.

Moreover, the teachers' offering verbal and written remarks, comments, and grades were the common feedback strategies that were observed in classroom observations and participants' interviews. However, private school elementary teachers relied more on providing comments as assessment feedback on students' comprehension performance. Almost all teachers from private schools responded while being interviewed that they use written more than verbal comments as feedback to their students.

Interview excerpts from private school respondents:

T2-S1-P reported that *“Feedback is provided through grades in tests. But in classroom we use verbal comments like good, excellent, and nice”*.

T1-S2-P said *“I just pass comments or make separate discussion sessions with them at the end of the class. Plus, they know their weaknesses from the grades provided in their tests.”*

T2-S2-P elaborated that *“I put reviews on their daily work and written assignments. Informal comments are also used frequently in class like excellent performance, nice and sometimes, clapping.”*

T1-S3-P presented her view on feedback practice saying *“Yes, feedback helps them a lot especially when they are supported by the reviews and comments of their teacher and parents alike.”*

Teacher's verbal comments also were observed in classroom teaching such as the observation excerpt of one of the teachers from private sector (T2-S1-P) presented:

“The teacher enters the class with a textbook and some notes.

Greetings kids! A warm and cheerful smile on her face.

Teacher: How is everybody's day going so far?

Students: A very good teacher.

Teacher: What have you learned today?

One student: Many things..”

The participants' responses from the private sector emphasized written forms of feedback while public elementary schools revealed that both written and verbal feedback is used in ESL classrooms for reading comprehension. Gul et al. (2016) also

found that teachers deem written feedback as important as verbal feedback in the classroom for improving learners' work performance; however, discussing written feedback with students was time-consuming. Although written and verbal feedback are among the various forms of formative feedback, the feedback through comments lacks a detailed description of students' performance and suggestions to make improvements. Hence, there are both strengths and weaknesses in processes. Hattie (2009) highlights the importance of descriptive feedback that provides information to students about what they are doing well, what needs improvement, and the specific steps that they can take toward progress. Without detailed descriptive feedback, students cannot decide how to make meaningful progress in comprehension.

As observed from the data, the teachers' practice of feedback appears to be more evaluative rather than formative. Formative assessment researchers suggest evaluative feedback focuses on judgment and correction as reported by the teachers from the private sector that they encourage competition among students. On the other hand, the objective of formative feedback is to support learning and offer construction. For instance, Sadler (1989) argues that for feedback to be formative, it must offer adequate information to students who can use the feedback information to close the learning gap between their current and performance and anticipated learning goals. However, the teacher's commenting-only practice may limit learners' effectiveness in developing reading comprehension in English. The gap in feedback quality suggests a need for deeper teacher understanding of formative assessment principles. Harvey (2007) emphasizes that effective comprehension instruction includes feedback strategies that help students clarify confusion and refine their thinking. Similarly, Duke and Pearson (2002) advocate for feedback linked to specific comprehension tasks such as summarizing and paraphrasing, which foster reflection and revision. Moreover, guided reading frameworks, as described by Fountas (1996), encourage responsive feedback during reading instruction tailored to individual student needs.

Overall, the findings indicate that while feedback is present in both sectors, its quality, rather than the form or presence, determines its effectiveness. Government school feedback tends to lack depth, while private schools prioritize competitive evaluation. Hence, there is a need for a critical professional development need: to

cultivate teachers' understanding of formative feedback as a developmental tool that can improve reading comprehension instead of measuring learners' comprehension.

Table 11

Themes on formative assessment feedback process across private and public sector: A comparative representation of findings

Themes	Similarities of practices	Differences across public and private sector
Partial understanding of formative assessment	Feedback provision lacked specific guidance across both sectors A collective form of feedback was offered, lacking the individual learner feedback	Government sector teachers relied on positive and immediate forms of feedback through verbal comments Private sector participants offered detailed feedback yet it lacked the construction
Positive but less productive feedback	Feedback used as a positive reinforcement to enhance learner motivation across both sectors	Private sector teachers considered individual needs but feedback lacked the depth for students on self-reflection

4.2.4.1 Partial Understanding of Formative Feedback

A considerable number of formative assessment researchers account for teachers' knowledge and understanding as crucial to providing effective feedback, including Black and Wiliam (2009), Hattie and Timperley (2007), Heritage (2010), and Carless (2006). Feedback is an integral part of formative assessment that facilitates both teachers and learners in continuing to improve learning with desired

objectives. Furthermore, teachers who are well-versed in providing detailed and constructive feedback can develop a more engaging and productive learning environment (Black & Wiliam, 2009). The data collected from the teacher participants revealed that the teachers from both private and public elementary schools lacked ample knowledge on practicing formative feedback for improving students' English reading comprehension skills. Only one of the teachers (T2-S3-P) from a private school out of all 12 teachers responded effectively to her knowledge and practice of formative feedback. The interview excerpt signifies the details:

T2-S3-P said: "Well, my feedback depends on the learners' performance remarks that I record on my register. I interact with them openly and discuss their performance matters. Encourage slow learners and motivate sharp students to help them, so this is my way of providing feedback. Mostly, it is a detailed discussion with each student on their performance, and particularly when I contact their parents, knowing their child's performance is good or weak, they realize the need for further improvement in comprehension. Yes, feedback helps them a lot, especially when they are supported by the reviews and comments of their teacher and parents alike. So they realize the need for improvement and next time make more effort in comprehension."

This teacher's feedback practice was also observed in her classroom observations, where she started the reading session by anticipating students' thinking and providing visual clues in front of learners. It was a collaborative learning environment where the teacher assigned students individual reading tasks and simultaneously kept offering corrective feedback while taking pauses. This aligns with the Ruiz-Primo's (2006) idea of feedback that aligns with clear learning objectives. The teacher also posed open-ended questions related to the text message and overall theme unless the students got a complete idea of what they were reading about. According to Fisher et al. (2016), teachers who incorporate pausing techniques and ask questions help students to process information more deeply, and it facilitates a more engaging learning environment. Moreover, the researchers suggest that the pausing technique is more beneficial for ESL classrooms where continuous clarification and feedback are essential for language development.

However, all other participants from both sectors showed a significant lack of understanding and information on the value, purpose, and practice of formative feedback to improve students' reading comprehension. The majority of participants

proposed a general statement depicting the teachers' partial understanding of the formative feedback process as shown in their interview responses.

Interview excerpts of participants from private schools:

T2-S1-P said that *“Usually, feedback is provided through grades in tests. Written comments and grades help them measure their performance. They know their weaknesses from the grades provided in their tests. Plus, feedback helps them monitor their performance.”*

T1-S2-P responded that *“I use both written and verbal feedback, they feel obliged by mentoring their weakness and feedback helps a lot in encouraging them.”*

T2-S3-P presented her views by saying that *“For language comprehension, usually I appreciate their pronunciation and meaning or when they offer a synonym of a particular word. Written or verbal feedback specifically makes them encouraged and prepared fully for the next time. While there are also slow learners that struggle to compete with those getting good grades, I use my extra time for them, making error-correction in their worksheet and text exercises.”*

Interview excerpts from private school teachers reveal a common tendency to rely on summative elements, such as grades, as a feedback mechanism. This practice can limit the formative aspect of feedback, as the focus tends to remain on outcomes rather than the learning process. However, these participants understand the role of formative feedback in language learning by providing detailed and specific feedback, especially to slower learners who need guidance, and by indicating the teacher's commitment to differentiated learning. Furthermore, they used a more structured form of feedback to students to improve reading comprehension. Dwek (2006) also emphasizes the role of feedback to cultivate a growth mindset for second language learners. The researcher found that the teacher who provides feedback to encourage effort rather than simply focusing on correctness can help students develop a positive attitude towards learning English, which is crucial for long-term success.

Interview excerpts from government school participants:

T2-S1-G responded, *“When they check their work and see a “good” or “excellent” response, they are motivated to make more improvements. And for those who are weak students, they check their errors highlighted, but I also appreciate them making*

improvements so that you can get the prize next time. Plus, they feel active or slow learners with my remarks.”

T1-S2-G said that *“With my feedback and remarks, those who are weak get encouraged. Plus, I improve their weakness by focusing on that problem”*.

T1-S3-G proposed her understanding by saying that *“We use feedback like if a student improves well, we make an applause for them or like that, and those students that are weak, we try to motivate them. Positively reinforce them to make improvements so the next applause goes for you. Or we also call learners for presentations and comment on their performance, this way helps other students to get motivation for being called for a presentation. Then, we also make written feedback by providing comments on their work, both ways written or verbal feedback is there.”*

“I think that there is a benefit of feedback. For example, if we call a student present and make appreciation for them so they will improve and not lag behind. The student will always try to get that treatment or that level or better than that. Plus, other students that get motivation by competing with them will also improve.”

The interview responses from government teachers on their understanding of formative feedback showed a general approach. For instance, the T2-S1-G emphasized positive reinforcement and motivation through feedback. However, it lacked specific guidance on how to improve, which can limit the potential of formative feedback to encourage deep learning. Furthermore, the T1-S3-G highlighted various forms of appreciation, such as applause for students' performance, which may indicate a supportive environment through general acknowledgment and peer motivation. However, the public nature of such feedback may discourage some students, and it may not address individual learning needs effectively. Deci and Ryan (2000) note that although public recognition may motivate some students by offering a sense of achievement, it can also discourage other students who may feel embarrassed or overshadowed by the success of other students.

While both groups of teachers demonstrate an understanding of the importance of formative feedback, there are gaps in fully realizing its potential in classroom practice for comprehension. Private school teachers lean towards a more structured yet somewhat summative approach, while government school teachers emphasize motivation and general encouragement. Research highlights that effective formative

feedback (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hattie & Timperley, 2007) should strike a balance between providing specific, actionable guidance and positive reinforcement, with the ultimate goal of comprehensively supporting students throughout their learning process.

4.2.4.2 Positive but Less Productive Feedback

The role of positive and negative reinforcement in formative feedback is crucial since it shapes student's behavior and learning outcomes within the ESL context (Skinner, 1953). Moreover, the implications of Skinner's theory suggest that educators can use various forms of positive reinforcement to assess students formatively, such as praising words, comments, good grades, and rewarding gestures after receiving the desired response from learners. However, the approach of positive reinforcement has been criticized by some researchers, including (Deci, 1999; Henderlong, 2002; Kohn, 1993). In simple means, the approach is inadequate in terms of developing learners' intrinsic motivation. Deci (1999) puts it as positive reinforcement can lead learners to take learning on a surface level and over rely on external rewards rather than increase interest in deep learning and critical skills. On the other hand, negative reinforcement may also cause discouragement and anxiety among students, leading to unlikeliness toward learning (Reeve, 2006).

The interview data collected from participants suggested that the majority of the teachers across both private and public elementary schools use positive reinforcement in the classroom, but the number is surpassed in the private sector. Furthermore, these teachers deem it as an adequate practice of informing students about their learning and comprehension level rather than negative reinforcement. Interview excerpts of teacher participants from private schools highlight the details:

T2-S1-P believed in positive reinforcement more than negative. She proposed her view that *“Positive reinforcement has been very beneficial because students share their responses whether they have understood the feedback or not and in case of appreciating them, they always work harder the next time.”*

T1-S2-P said that *“Feedback motivates them a lot when they get feedback from the teacher whether positive or negative and know their strengths and weaknesses also so next time improve.”*

T2-S2-P suggested that *“I use positive feedback more than the negative as it makes them realize their capabilities rather than their weakness. And they improve this way.”*

T1-S3-P put it as: *“For slow learners, I encourage them with positive words and comments.”*

T2-S3-P also emphasized on positive feedback by elaborating her view as *“I believe in positive feedback and verbal in class. I think verbal feedback in class is much more motivating than other types. Mostly I call them to present a reading or some other task so if they perform well or even not, I use positive words that encourage them to make improvements.”*

Interview excerpts from government school teacher participants:

Inside the public elementary schools, the teachers showed a slight lack of understanding regarding positive and negative feedback to assess students' understanding of English language. Only three teachers from the sector responded that they use positive more than negative feedback or reinforcement to inform students on their learning stage and progress level.

The T2-S1-G suggested that *“We use feedback like if a student improves well, we make an applause for them or like that, and those students that are weak, we try to motivate them. Positively reinforce them to make improvements so the next applause goes for you. Or we also call learners for presentations and comment on their performance, this way helps other students to get motivation for being called for a presentation. Then, we also make written feedback by providing comments on their work, both ways written or verbal feedback is there.”*

T1-S2-G said that *“ They realize their mistake when I tell them a particular weakness or when I appreciate their work. I usually use positive feedback.”*

T2-S3-G put it as *“Feedback helps learners monitor their learning in a positive manner.”*

The ongoing nature and process of formative assessment implies the use of constructive feedback to support teaching and learning. However, positive feedback or reinforcement, though beneficial in many ways, can frequently fall short of encouraging deeper learning and improvement (Kohn, 1993). Collected responses

from the teacher participants' responses suggest a common tendency toward positive reinforcement, aligning with the belief that praising and positive feedback can encourage students and enhance their motivation in learning. The usual practices of providing positive feedback in elementary schools are classroom applause, verbal praise, and positive words, as highlighted by the teachers (T2-S1-P, T2-S2-P, T2-S3-P, T2-S1-G). However, many researchers in the field of formative assessment pointed towards its limitations, such as the lack of individual guidance and specificity and overemphasis on superficial learning and comprehension.

Black and Wiliam (1998) noted that the purpose of formative feedback is to provide clear guidance on what was done and what needs to be improved. However, the teacher's general comments, such as "good," "nice," or "excellent," do not fulfill the criteria of constructive feedback that suggest insights into areas that need development. Hattie and Timperley (2007) also pointed out that feedback should be constructive in addressing learners' current performance and desired objectives, but constricted comments by the teacher may not encourage students to deal with constructive criticism necessary for their advancement in learning and reading comprehension.

The widespread use of superficial or collective feedback in government schools can also be attributed to structural limitations such as large class sizes and high student-to-teacher ratios. These constraints restrict teachers' capacity to observe and respond to individual learners' needs. In contrast, private sector teachers tend to work with smaller groups and are thus more capable of tailoring their feedback to the specific performance levels of their students. However, even in these contexts, the depth of feedback often remains limited, particularly in terms of encouraging students' self-monitoring, metacognition, and student responsibility as the core objectives of effective formative assessment (Harvey, 2007; Duke & Pearson, 2002). Moreover, guided reading strategies (Fountas, 1996) and comprehension-based instruction frameworks call for responsive and individualized teacher feedback, which was largely absent in observed practices. These models emphasize feedback not just as correction, but as a means of fostering engagement, interpretation, and strategic thinking while reading.

Ultimately, the data reveals a significant gap in teachers' understanding of formative feedback—not just in its delivery, but in its purpose and intent. Feedback

practices, across both sectors, appear more oriented toward momentary encouragement than toward long-term learning outcomes. As a result, the need to enhance teachers' conceptual and practical grasp of formative feedback is pressing. The following section explores teacher perceptions of formative assessment, offering insight into how these beliefs shape the effectiveness and purposefulness of their feedback practices.

4.2.5 Theme 3: Assessment is the Part of Regular Teaching (Themes on teachers' perceptions)

The analysis of teacher participants' interview responses across both private and public schools offered considerable information that helped the researcher design patterns and themes. This section answers the third major question of this study by providing a detailed analysis of the teachers' perceptions and knowledge regarding the role of formative assessment in teaching reading comprehension in English.

The researchers of formative assessment deem FA approach as a promising opportunity to improve learner outcomes. However, teachers' perceptions are significant factors in determining the willingness to apply formative strategies in classroom teaching for reading comprehension (Alsubaiai, 2021). In addition, Black and Wiliam (1998), in their seminal work, have extensively elaborated on the role of teacher's perceptions on the effective use of formative assessment. These researchers believe that if the teacher's views are positive and understand the value of formative assessment in student learning, they are more likely to employ various assessment techniques consistently and effectively. In contrast, if the teacher takes FA as an additional burden and questions its effectiveness, their level of motivation may deteriorate when using these practices, and so does the impact it will have on student learning outcomes.

The data gathered from participants' interviews from both sectors revealed that the teachers' perceptions were positive, and they had an adequate understanding of the value of formative assessment in improving learners' outcomes in reading comprehension. However, there were other factors that hindered the proper implementation of formative assessment, which will be highlighted in the theme "challenges in the implementation of FA." Correspondingly, Alsubaiai (2021), in his study, has pointed to various factors that shape teacher's perception of formative

assessment, such as their level of experience and education. Moreover, a single factor cannot be blamed for constructing a teacher's perception of formative assessment and its implementation. The following interview excerpts show the teacher's beliefs and knowledge of formative assessment for reading comprehension across private and public sector schools.

Interview excerpts from private sector teachers:

When asked about the purpose of regular Assessment in teaching the text, T1-S1-P said, *"Assessment helps to better understand the meaning and gist of the text. To grasp the idea being conveyed and to retain the important information."*

T2-S1-P elaborated that *"It's the most important aspect of language teaching. Like, we couldn't have known the level at which our students fall in the learning without Assessment. It helps us to know how much the student knows and what they should improve further."* Black and Wiliam (1998) have also emphasized that teachers who believe in the benefits of formative Assessment are more proactive in seeking and offering feedback and guidance by using learner information.

T1-S2-P said that *"assessment process means to evaluate students' knowledge about the learned topics after a certain period of time. It can have multiple processes. It helps to understand what students have learnt so far and what still needs to be taught, how our methodology was etc."*

T2-S2-P believed, *"In my view, assessment must be implemented frequently in class so that we understand the level of students and what they need to understand and learn further."*

T1-S3-P said, *"Assessment is part of regular teaching, or should I say Assessment is itself teaching. Like we cannot proceed further in our daily teaching without assessing the learners' current performance."*

T2-S3-P's excerpt shows that *"Assessment ehh, without Assessment we cannot improve our teaching practices. It helps us a lot in terms of informing learners' strengths and weaknesses so we adjust our teaching for the next time."*

According to the participants' responses from the private sector, regular assessment is an integral part of daily teaching and learning and in enhancing students' understanding. For instance, T1 and T2 from S1 responded that assessment

helps in grasping the text meaning and determining the learner level of knowledge. This aligns with Black and Wiliam (1998) that asserts that the teachers' understanding of the advantages of FA approach help them adjust instruction based on the learner information.

In addition, T1 and T2 from S2 highlighted the significance of frequent assessment in evaluating student understanding and adjusting teaching. The frequent use of formative assessment presumed by these participants is the key notion of formative assessment supported by Black and Wiliam as an "ongoing process" that informs teaching strategies. Moreover, the T1 and T2 from S3 elaborated on regular assessment as a fundamental element of teaching and in identifying students' strengths and weaknesses to improve learning. This perspective of participants corresponds with Shepard (2000), who emphasized the formative role of assessment to support learning and guide instructional decisions.

Interview excerpts from Government sector teachers:

T1-S1-G said, "Assessment, eh? That is an essential part of learning. In this way, you can understand the success of the lesson, how successfully it went, and secondly, it tells the level of students. How have you made your next lesson plan according to it, and what are the shortcomings and strengths? So, I assess students according to their level. There is no rigid way of Assessment. Sometimes, I ask questions during the lesson or in, like when I teach them translation, so again, after finishing my lesson, I take a short assessment at the end of the session, or maybe that would be the next day, or it could be on the weekend. Depending on the length of the lesson. Like, there are short assessments as well as a whole paper-like assessment., or a test-like assessment."

T2-S1-G answered that assessment is a *"mechanism for checking how much a student has understood and learnt."*

T1-S2-G highlighted *"It's a technique to know how much students are understanding which I am teaching to them."*

T2-S2-G said that *"Assessment process is very important because if you don't assess your children then they wouldn't take the responsibility of their learning except taking the lesson as far granted, this is from most of the students. Only 3 to 4 students*

are there that are interested in their education, otherwise we have to assess the rest of the class.”

T1-S3-G responded that *“Assessment is basically of two kinds. Formative assessment and summative assessment. I take oral and written quizzes through the session as formative assessment. The purpose is to know whether the students understand and apply what they read.”*

T2-S3-G said that *“Assessment is very much important as it tells us about the students’ progress level and helps us in our day-to-day teaching.”*

The teacher respondents from the government showed a subtlety of understanding when compared to the perspectives of respondents from the private sector. For instance, these teachers generally recognize the importance of formative assessment in evaluating lesson effectiveness and student understanding regardless of the overall efficiency of the reading comprehension skills of students. Moreover, there were certain challenges with the application of formative assessment in participants’ responses from the government sector. However, the majority of the teachers’ ideas aligned with Black and Wiliam (1998) and Shepard (2000) in terms of the utility of FA in enhancing learners’ progress and engagement level and informing instructional activities.

T1 and T2 from S1 focus on assessment to check lesson success and student understanding. Moreover, they said that they use various forms of assessment, including lesson-related questions and frequent tests, to follow the lesson plan. Such flexibility of assessment aligns with Black and Wiliam (1998), stressing the need for using FA to provide ongoing feedback and guide and adjust teaching according to learner performance.

T1 and T2 from S2 deem the role of assessment as significant for student active participation in learning; however, the second teacher from the same school expressed the challenge of motivating learners to realize their responsibility in learning. This observation underscores the significance of FA in maintaining student accountability as pointed out by Shepard (2000) who argues that regular assessment promotes learning culture where students must engage and be responsible with their learning.

The T1 from S3 has provided a distinction between formative and summative assessment, mentioning the use of oral and written quizzes to monitor student comprehension and application of reading material. The distinction crucially highlights the ongoing nature of formative assessment whereas, summative assessment approach is more evaluative in nature. Black and Wiliam (1998) also discuss the complementary roles of formative and summative assessment in a balanced assessment system.

Table 12

Themes on teachers' perceptions on formative assessment across private and public sector: A comparative representation of findings

Themes	Similarities	Differences
Challenges in implementing formative assessment	Both sector teachers believe formative assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning Both sectors reported challenges in the implementation of FA for reading comprehension	Government sector teachers lacked a proper understanding of FA practices value and effect on comprehension skills improvement Government school teachers faced the difficulty with large class sizes, weak learner linguistic background, and lack of resources for effective implementation of FA practices Private sector teachers reported diverse learner and learning needs
The need for teacher training on effective use of FA for reading	Both of the sector teachers shown the need for proper training and education on the effective implementation of FA in reading comprehension	Teachers from government schools demonstrated the need for interactive resources for second language teaching and linguistic exposure

comprehension		
Assessment should be flexible to adapt to diverse student needs	Teachers from both sectors opinionated that regular assessments should be flexible rather than rigid	

4.2.5.1 Discussion on Comparison in Perceptions

There are certain commonalities and differences in the perceptions of both private and government sector participants' responses. Teachers from both sectors signify the critical role of formative assessment in understanding students' comprehension and informing instruction. Two teachers from the private sector acknowledge that regular assessment is important in grasping text meaning for learners, aligning with Black and Wiliam's (1998) notion of proactive feedback use. Similarly, teachers from government sectors also highlighted that flexible assessment methods help students assess lesson success and student comprehension.

However, it was observed from the teacher participants from the government sector that encouraging student accountability and motivation is a common challenge that they face, as noted by T2-S2-G. This aligns with Shepard's (2000) view on the need for regular assessment to promote responsible learning. Furthermore, the teachers from both sectors value assessment as effective in daily teaching to monitor learner progress and improve teaching, yet, government teachers believed that assessment should be varied to cater to diverse student needs as discussed by T1-S3-G.

4.2.5.2 Challenges in Implementing Formative Assessment

An ample number of researches in the field of formative assessment have portrayed the significant challenges in implementing formative assessment in classroom teaching (Gang & Leung, 2019; Rehman et al., 2021; Mkhwanazi, 2014; Almahal et al., 2023; Looney, 2005). Some of the significant reported challenges across the studies of these researchers are the diversity of students' language backgrounds, cultural differences, need for individualized assessment, lack of teacher

training and resources, continuous monitoring and feedback, and technological constraints (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Heritage, 2010; Brown, 2004). Likewise, the data collected from the teachers' interviews across both private and public schools revealed that the participants face several challenges in the effective implementation of formative assessment in teaching reading comprehension in English. The description below highlights the challenges under the category of sub-themes explored in this study.

1. Large Class Size

Four out of 12 teachers from the government sector responded that they have difficulty assessing every individual in class due to the large class size. Black and Wiliam (1998) also highlight the logistical difficulties of formative assessment in large classes, suggesting that it often leads to a focus on overall progress rather than individualized feedback. The excerpts below clarify the explanations:

T2-S1-G said, *"The lengthy classes slow learners and lack of resources. Properly checking each and every student takes a lot of time and resources. And many times, the students cannot get a response on their progress."*

T1-S2-G answered the questions of challenges of FA implementation as *"Due to the large number of students (about 100+ in each section), it becomes difficult for me to manage the assessment of all students in one session (40 minutes). However, I look at the overall progress of students."*

T1-S3-G responded, *"I face a lot of challenges. The major ones are the large number of students in the classroom, and the other ones are lack of resources. Even we try to manage board markers from our own expenses."*

T2-S3-G said, *"Being in the government sector, there are many challenges, especially of large classes that make it difficult to manage classes."*

Amidst other factors contributing to the lower quality and management of formative assessment teaching for reading comprehension, teachers across government sectors encounter significant difficulty managing class sizes, often exceeding 100 students. Xu and Harfitt (2019) also identified the issue of large class sizes influencing the effectiveness of formative assessment in their study. These researchers found that the extensive class size has an impact on the teacher's overall performance, such as the way of paying attention to individual feedback, marking

strategies, involving students in assessment, memorizing student names, conducting teacher-student conferences, and employing technology in the classroom to support learner feedback. Furthermore, the systemic and time constraints add to the difficulty for teachers because effective formative assessment requires adequate time, manageable class sizes, sufficient resources, and systemic support to ensure the teaching and learning achieve their purpose of improving learners' reading comprehension.

2. Lack of Resources

Lack of resources is another major challenge that the teacher participants from the government sector encountered, as observed in their interview responses. The responses from teachers regarding the lack of resources in ESL classrooms highlight significant barriers to effective teaching and formative assessment. T2-S2-G said students from backward areas with low language proficiency require substantial effort and time to develop understanding and skills, but this effort is hindered by insufficient resources. This challenge is identified by research from Heritage (2010), which emphasizes that adequate resources are crucial for effective formative assessment and language instruction.

T2-S2-G responded, *“There is a lack of resources for teaching English because learners are mostly from backward areas and have a big lack of language proficiency so it takes a lot of effort and time to make them understand the meaning and language skills.”*

T1-S2-G believed that *“For improvement, we need a lot, especially for a language class. We need resources and materials, like projectors and listening material, to teach English. Instead of listening to the teacher only, the learners must listen to the English language by their native speakers to get to know their dialect, pronunciation, and words. This way, they can enhance their listening power and enhance their exposure to English. We should have the projector available to let them watch movies and documentaries. So our government must provide us with effective materials for teaching language, or else we can make many improvements with traditional methods.”*

T2-S2-G suggested that, *“Due to the lack of resources and time, we cannot properly assess our students. So, there should be policies on proper activities and*

management of class, only this way, we can help our students with proper teaching and assessment of English.”

T2-S3-G highlighted, *“For properly checking each and every student, it takes a lot of time and resources. And many times, the students cannot get the response on their progress. So time and resources are not enough to improve the comprehension skills of students.”*

Lack of resources for proper implementation of formative assessment is a significant barrier to effective teaching of reading comprehension, as highlighted by these respondents from government sector schools. One of the teachers (T1-S2-G) expressed the need for modern teaching aids, such as projectors and authentic listening materials, to expose students to native English dialects and pronunciations. This aligns with Nunan (1999), who suggests that technological resources can significantly enhance language learning by providing varied and authentic listening experiences. In addition, the lack of such resource limits students' exposure to the language, thereby limiting their ability to improve listening skills and overall language proficiency. Moreover, T2-S2-G and T2-S3-G both emphasize that the shortage of resources, coupled with limited time, restricts the ability to properly assess students. Black and Wiliam (1998) also support the notion that formative assessment requires not only time but also appropriate tools and materials to be effective. Without these, the feedback necessary for student improvement is delayed or insufficient, impacting students' progress in comprehension skills.

3. Diverse Students Learning Needs

The idea of individualized feedback in formative assessment for reading comprehension is highly emphasized by Black and Wiliam (1998) to address the unique learning needs of each student. McKay (2006) has also supported the notion of individualized monitoring, especially for young learners who can effectively benefit from assessments that cater to their specific proficiency levels. However, interview responses of three teachers from the private sector highlighted that aligning teaching with the purpose of fulfilling individual learning needs is a challenge for teachers to maintain teaching according to FA principles.

T2-S1-P said, *"Different levels of previous knowledge that vary from student to student are a challenge because they require dealing with students individually and monitoring their progress separately."*

T2-S3-P proposed her believe that *"I think there are different levels and backgrounds of students, so we cannot rely on a fixed, rigid way of teaching, but sometimes we need to make our assessment and teaching flexible as per the need of different students, and it takes mindfulness, strategy and preplanning to bring each student on the same page. So to do that, we need some more flexible teaching styles and methodologies apart from the pressure of fulfilling exams' purpose."*

T1-S3-P suggested that *"Time-management is very important and proper knowledge of assessment, particularly formative assessment that base our teaching of reading comprehension. Plus, we have a diversity of students that cannot be brought to the same level at the same time, but more or less, I try my best."*

Some of the key issues identified from the participant responses include the necessity for individualized attention, flexible teaching methods, strategic planning, and effective management. However, Brown (2004) discusses the importance of teacher proficiency in assessment practices to effectively address diverse learning needs. The issue of bringing students to a similar level at the same time is a common challenge in diverse classrooms. Stiggins (2005) emphasizes the importance of continuous and adaptive assessment strategies to ensure that all students receive the support they need to improve their comprehension skills.

4. Learners' lack of Exposure to English Language

Zoubi (2018) found that ESL learners' exposure to the English language has a significant impact on their overall efficiency in language. In addition, the researcher suggested that students should be continuously exposed to the English language through watching English movies and programs, surfing the internet, listening to the radio, reading English books, magazines, and newspapers, etc. Two of the participants from the government sector in their interviews highlighted learners' lack of exposure to English as a prominent challenge that they encounter while teaching reading comprehension.

The T1-S3-G pointed towards the difficulty of learners' background that influences their English language proficiency. She said the difficulty causes them an additional time consumption to understand the meaning and improve skills of English.

The T2-S3-G believed that the learners' background is a big challenge; their domestic environment has much influence, especially in English language learning as a foreign language. Usually, they are very involved with their native or national language, so we also get help from their native language to improve their comprehension of the English language. So, there are problems because of the local environment and their base that influence English pronunciation. But by practicing repetition for the same word, they get it fixed. However, sometimes it becomes difficult for them to clarify the pronunciation that they have learned previously and need to correct right now as they got it fixed in their mind. So it becomes difficult for us also to change their ideas and pronunciation for some words. We can easily teach new words, but it is difficult to correct their old ideas.

Considering the idea of English language exposure for improving comprehension skills, one of the teachers (T2-S2-P) from the private sector elaborated that *"for our students' comprehension skills in English, we have only an English-speaking policy in our school. So this way, they get a lot of hurdles sorted out, such as pronunciation, simple sentence structure, and fluency. For practices, we make it flexible, like gaming and interaction sections, as per the text. We use dialogue sessions in our classroom, and many times, we make our students indulge in the character of the story that they are reading. (like real performance in class)."*

This teacher further highlighted that the English-speaking policy helps us a lot in terms of improving students' overall comprehension and vocabulary-building. August (2006) states that limited vocabulary can significantly impact the overall comprehension and academic achievement of English language learners. As observed in the classroom teaching of the participants, students get a good level of exposure to English through several interactive activities and teacher communication. However, participants from the government sector rarely provide regular practice in an English-speaking environment that could have strongly developed the communication skills of students (Cummins, 2000).

4.2.5.3 The Need for Teacher Training on Effective Use of Formative Assessment for Reading Comprehension

The extensive literature on formative assessment addresses the need for teacher understanding, education, and training to support teaching and learning effectively (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Heritage, 2007). These researchers are of the view that when teachers are proficient in assessment literacy skills, they can effectively utilize formative assessment strategies in adjusting instruction, offering timely feedback, and enhancing learner engagement and participation. Correspondingly, the participants from both private and government sectors signified the consistent need for adequate training and education to effectively employ formative assessment in the classroom for improving students' reading comprehension. However, only one teacher from a government school highlighted the need for teacher training, and four teachers from the private sector also opined that teacher training is an essential factor in the successful implementation of formative assessment.

T1-S1-P put, *"We need proper schedules and training to follow and improve formative assessment practices in our daily teaching ESL students."* Black and Wiliam (1998) have also emphasized the need for systematic and ongoing professional development for teachers to effectively integrate formative assessment into their daily teaching.

T2-S2-P revealed that *"For assessment, I believe we must get more knowledge and training on the implementation of these strategies but I try to handle it by trying new ways every day."* Heritage (2007) have also suggested structured training for teachers to provide them foundational understanding and strategies so that teachers may not end up in trials and errors in teaching.

T1-S2-P presented her view: *"But I would say we should get a lot of training and a proper timeline according to the formative assessment rules."*

T2-S3-P said, *"I think we should have training on innovative assessment practices to motivate our students to learn."* William and Thompson (2008) argue that teachers' professional development should include innovative and student-centered assessment techniques that can motivate and engage students.

One of the teachers from the government sector explained it as follows: *"Formative assessment is a new term for school leaders, so it must be promoted and implemented in a proper manner and with good training."*

Organized scheduling of training ensures that teachers can progressively build their skills and knowledge for consistent and effective implementation of formative assessment. Moreover, a proper understanding of formative assessment enhances teachers' confidence in practicing teaching formatively (Heritage, 2007). The respondents' interviews reflect a clear need for structured, comprehensive, and ongoing training in formative assessment across both sectors. However, teachers from the government sector did not pose the need for understanding on a majority level except for one teacher.

4.2.5.4 Assessment should be Flexible to Adapt to Diverse Student Needs

Flexibility in teaching and assessing learners' progress is one of the core principles of formative assessment that helps teachers align with the needs of individual learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The responses from teacher participants also highlighted the need for flexibility in teaching and assessment that can cater to diverse learners' language backgrounds and learning needs.

T2-S1-P suggested that *"I think there are different levels and backgrounds of students, so we cannot rely on a fixed, rigid way of teaching, but sometimes we need to make our assessment and teaching flexible as per the need of different students, and it takes mindfulness, strategy and preplanning to bring each student on the same page. So to do that, we need some more flexible teaching styles and methodologies apart from the pressure of fulfilling exams' purpose."*

According to Tomlinson (2001), differentiated instruction, which involves teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning needs, is important for effective formative assessment.

T2-S2-P said, *"Yes, in Pakistan, we must change our thoughts on assessment from something pressuring to something useful and interesting. The teachers must also be trained and knowledgeable about the use and benefits of assessments. Assessment helps a lot in improving comprehension, and our teaching must be flexible to meet the needs of every type of student."* This teacher's perception aligns with Black

and Wiliam (1998) that formative assessment should be used to support student learning rather than simply measure it.

T1-S3-P presented that *"Teaching the English language needs a lot of effort, time, strategy, and encouragement. Assessment helps a lot, but it should be more flexible. Like we have a variety of students like slow learners, proficient, and average. So, bringing them on the same page makes it difficult to manage. We need proper schedules and training to follow and improve formative assessment practices in our daily teaching of ESL students. The teacher's opinion significantly highlights the effort required to teach English. However, Heritage (2007) puts it as follows: professional development in formative assessment helps teachers plan and implement strategies that cater to various learning needs."*

T2-S3-P said, *"We should encourage and improve our teaching practices day-by-day and make it more encouraging and motivating so that students don't feel exhausted but enjoy learning English. With assessment, we can even improve their understanding more because there are several ways and strategies to tackle several English language skills, such as improving their grammar and actual listening, speaking, and writing."*

T2-S1-G represented as *"In my learning most of the time, I benefited from the movies, which were made on novels, so I feel that the students should be involved in sense of seeing, sense of understanding from the videos and visuals, that can help them a lot. I want them to be less rigid and less objective."*

Basically, the students are not robots; they cannot go through the same process, they have different learning levels, and they have different ways of understanding and learning. So, I suggest a relatively adjustable assessment plan that is not wholly representative of their learning. Ok, they have different issues. For example, every student behaves differently and shows different progress in their assessment. So I want to suggest that the assessment structure should not be fixed; it must have some elasticity in it to adjust to the different backgrounds of students." Research by William (2011) also suggests that formative assessment should be dynamic and adaptive so that students engage more deeply with the material and develop a variety of skills.

Participants from both sectors expressed the need for regular assessment to be flexible rather than rigid. Flexibility and adaptability in teaching and assessing reading comprehension are essential to accommodate students of varying abilities and learning styles. This perspective aligns with Black and Wiliam's (1998) emphasis on assessment practices that prioritize learning over mere achievement. Furthermore, the flexibility and adaptability of formative assessment are closely tied to diverse reading comprehension teaching methods, interactive classrooms, and learner-centered activities (Looney & Poskitt, 2005). The teacher participants have also shown concerns regarding their professional development and training, corresponding with the researchers in the field who have pointed toward the teacher's professional development and innovative teaching strategies that can assist teachers in adjusting teaching and learning to the varying needs of learners (flexibility of assessment). The more the teacher is trained in skills and understanding of formative assessment, the more ability and confidence the teacher attains to construct assessment strategies, reduce stress, and make learning more engaging and productive (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

4.3 A Summary on the Collected Data

According to the data presentation and analysis, Elementary teachers from private and public schools acknowledged that formative assessment is an integral part of regular teaching of English reading comprehension, corresponding to the idea of many formative assessment researchers. However, the data revealed that efficiency and comprehensiveness were missing in these teachers' practice of formative assessment for teaching reading comprehension, especially across government sector schools, contrasting with Ruiz-Primo (2006) and other researchers of formative assessment including Black & Wiliam (1998), and Looney (2015). The participants from both sectors stated several challenges in the effective use of formative assessment practices in regular teaching, including the diverse student needs, large class sizes, lack of resources, and time and grade-oriented mindset. These findings correspond with those of Mkhwanazi (2022), Ahmed et al. (2023), and Looney (2005), who note that structured implementation of formative assessment remains challenging. Yet, the participants from both sectors positively admitted that there is a need for proper teacher training and understanding of formative assessment approaches to improve the teaching of English reading comprehension in elementary-level schools. In contrast,

the study conducted by Negma and Maphalala (2021) found out that the teachers showed negative attitudes towards the School-based assessment, large class sizes, and heavy workloads.

Although the current study focuses on the teachers' practices regarding the approach and implementation of formative assessment across government and private schools of Pakistan, the findings reveal the implications for more structured informal assessment for language teaching which is possible with the involvement of school leadership, and government policies. Considering the challenges in the comprehensive implementation of formative assessment, not only the teachers but these authoritative entities must be involved to adapt with the principles of formative assessment across both sectors as supported also by Carless, (2010). Nevertheless, successful and constructive practice requires a systemic balance between the dynamic formative practices and understanding of learner needs across private schools. Meanwhile, government school teachers must align their teaching with formative assessment principles to foster constructive thinking among students, along with other contextual considerations (Gan & Leung, 2020). To address these issues, teacher's professional development and training on the principles and value of formative assessment is essential across both sectors as reported by these participants in the study.

The present chapter sheds light on the collected data. It provides a detailed interpretation of formative assessment practices and perceptions of ESL teachers in the context of Pakistan's private and public elementary schools. The data analysis has been supported by the views of researchers and the proponents of formative assessment theory in language teaching. The next chapter (five) of the study will describe a comprehensive summary of the study's findings and address the study questions based on the evidence and analysis of the collected data throughout the research.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter has addressed the research questions through a critical analysis of the collected data and by utilizing the applied methodology. Finally, the chapter has outlined the limitations of the study and has included recommendations and suggestions for the future researches in the field.

5.1 A Summary of Present Research

The current study has explored formative assessment practices in the teaching of English reading comprehension in ESL elementary classrooms in Pakistan. In this context, the student's native language is Urdu, and English is the medium of instruction, which is taught as the second language in both the private and government sectors. The research is in the domain of second language teaching. The core issue is whether the teachers effectively employ formative assessment practices in teaching and improving the English reading comprehension skills of elementary-level students across both public and private sector schools in Pakistan.

Formative assessment is an approach used in the field of pedagogy, education, language learning, and teaching. The approach and process are ongoing and involve the continuous evaluation of student learning with the primary objective of providing feedback to improve both learning and teaching (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The model of formative assessment has been applied in several fields, including business education, medicine, and higher education, and in the context of the present study, the formative assessment model was applied in the teaching and learning of English as a second language. The proponents of the formative assessment approach, including Black and Wiliam (1998), Looney (2005), and Ruiz-Primo & Furtak (2007), offer a critical contribution of the teacher's role in employing informal formal assessment through classroom conversation and interactive dialogue in language teaching.

Thus, the current study contributes to the field of education by offering context-specific insights into how formative assessment practices are applied in ESL classrooms at the elementary level, particularly within urban schools in Pakistan. It sheds light on the practical realities, challenges, and inconsistencies faced by teachers in implementing formative strategies to support reading comprehension. By analyzing

teacher perceptions, classroom practices, and feedback approaches, the study bridges the gap between theoretical frameworks of formative assessment (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998; Ruiz-Primo & Furtak, 2006) and their real-world application in early language education. Moreover, the findings inform teacher training and policy-making by emphasizing the need for structured, reflective feedback and learner-centered instruction, thus contributing to more effective ESL reading pedagogy and improved student outcomes in similar educational contexts.

The sample of the current research was taken from the government and private elementary level schools in Rawalpindi where 12 teachers from six schools (2 teachers from each school) participated in semi-structured interviews. The researcher also observed 17 classes from both private and public elementary schools on English reading comprehension and grammar classes.

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 Answer to Research Question One

Address to research question one, which assessment practices do ESL teachers apply in developing ESL students' reading comprehension (at the linguistic level and content level) in English, the researcher utilized classroom observations as the primary tool to elicit the data in a natural setting, and semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the participants from both sectors to gain a complete understanding of the teachers' formative assessment practices, and their lesson-planning strategies to teach reading comprehension.

The process of data gathering was guided by Ruiz-Primo's (2007) model of formative assessment for learning through stage-wise teaching and assessment practices. In the first stage of the FA model, "clarifying learning goals," the researcher measured 84% of practices used to support clarification of learning goals across the private sector, and the government sector used only 50% of these practices in teaching reading comprehension. In the second stage, "eliciting information from students," 88% relative frequency was measured to support eliciting information across private schools, and 68% of practices were reported in government schools. In the third stage, "interpreting information," the relative frequency of practices was measured at 78% across the private sector, and the government sector utilized 65% of the practices to support this stage. In the fourth/ final stage of the model, "acting on the information

collected," private schools were observed to utilize 93% of formative assessment practices to support this stage, and government sector schools were measured at 73% utilizing FA practices to act on the information collected from students to improve reading comprehension.

The thematic description of interview data revealed that both private and public elementary schools strictly adhered to the contextual implementation and construction strategies following the concept of Vygotsky, 1978 and Shepherd, 2000 as the core components of formative assessment to assess ESL students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, questioning techniques were more prevalent in assessing students' understanding and interpreting responses across both sectors, aligning with the study findings of Black & Wiliam (1998). Private schools relied on a more structured and organized approach to teaching and assessing students with diverse practices along with accountability and summative techniques to ensure learner achievement, but the assessment practices lacked the depth and systemic balance between interactive formative activities and the individual learner needing adjustments. On the other hand, the government sector lacks organization and adequacy of informal assessment practices for improving students' reading comprehension, which may significantly cause the neglect to address individual student learning needs and comprehension gaps. There were other issues, including the reliance on grammar translation methods to teach English reading comprehension, as reported by the majority of teacher participants from both sectors, and the summative approach of regular assessment was also frequently employed to interpret student information and comprehension level without encouraging individual active involvement.

5.2.2 Answer to Research Question Two

To address research question 2, how do ESL teachers provide feedback to learners to support their comprehension of English at the elementary level? The researcher referred to the thematic analysis of the data from interviews answering this question. Moreover, classroom observations also assisted the researcher in generating themes on elementary teacher participants' feedback practices to support the reading comprehension of English. The themes on formative feedback practices were cited following the concepts of formative researchers in the field (Ruiz-Primo, 2007; Black & Wiliam, 1998; and Sadler, 1989). The themes for feedback practices were

generated inductively out of the gathered data through participants' interviews and following classroom observations. Black and Wiliam's (1998) seminal work on formative feedback on educational practices and research review of over 250 studies demonstrating the significant impact of formative assessment in learning and improvement has contributed to the thematic description of this study. The data from both tools reflected the matching results, but classroom observations revealed a slight difference in the participants' interview responses across the government sector.

Firstly, the data gathered revealed that the feedback practices used by the teachers in ESL elementary classes lacked quality and construction. For instance, the proponents of formative assessment such as Ruiz-Primo & Furtak (2006) and Hattie, (2009) propose the notion of "constructive feedback" in the FA approach and practice. In addition, the researchers of FA emphasize effective feedback that could engage students in reflecting on their performance and progress and actively engage in classroom learning and comprehension activities. However, the majority of the teachers across both sectors showed a lack of critical understanding and utility in offering feedback to students on regular performance to support reading comprehension, contradicting the formative model of feedback to yield information. Instead, the participants believed that feedback is evaluative in nature rather than "constructive" as the core principle of formative assessment to support ongoing learning, a neglect to the Ruiz-Primo (2009) "Ongoing Feedback Loops". The frequent practices used across both sectors were verbal and written remarks, commenting on learner performance, and general discussions, limiting the tendency of assessing individual learning, especially across government schools. In addition, the teachers across both sectors reported that they are in favor of providing positive feedback to students through praising words and encouraging comments. However, the approach is criticized by the researchers due to its limited scope of offering detailed discussions on individual learning needs.

On the other hand, private school sector teachers relied on the grading policy and written remarks as ongoing feedback to fulfil the purpose of improving reading comprehension. According to Shepherd (2000), grading often emphasizes summative assessment while limiting the formative implementation of practices. Almost all participants from these schools reported that they use marks, grades, and written remarks to suggest feedback on individual comprehension levels and performance.

However, grading leads towards a summative approach and can neglect the provision of detailed and specific feedback because the focus is on outcomes rather than learning, especially for slow learners.

5.2.3 Answer to Research Question Three

To address the third research question, what are ESL teachers' perspectives on the role of formative assessment in improving learners' reading comprehension in English at the elementary level? The researcher collected considerable data through face-to-face interviews with teacher participants from both private sectors. The collected data helped the researcher in generating themes inductively following the patterns on teachers' understanding and perceptions of formative assessment integration in teaching and assessing students' English reading comprehension.

The data gathered revealed significantly that the teachers' perspectives across both sectors were positive, and they proposed an adequate understanding of the effectiveness of formative assessment in improving reading comprehension. Black and Wiliam (1998) also suggested in their extensive research on formative assessment that the positive perspectives of teachers on formative assessment have a significant contribution to the productive implementation of formative assessment. On the other hand, negative teacher perspectives may lead to a lack of willingness and motivation to practice FA effectively in the classroom. However, some of the researchers in the field of formative assessment have suggested that many other factors also determine the teachers' perspectives, including the level of education and experience needed to practice FA effectively for reading comprehension.

Correspondingly, the data collected for this study on teachers' perspectives revealed that almost all six teachers from private sector schools responded that formative assessment is an integral part of language teaching, especially in improving reading comprehension through multiple activities and strategies. However, the participants from the government sector showed a subtlety of understanding compared to the responses from private school sector teachers. The interview data presented government teachers' general understanding of formative assessment in lesson evaluation and student understanding, but the overall efficiency of comprehension skill improvement was missing in their words. Furthermore, many of the challenges of implementing FA effectively were highlighted, including the lack of resources, large

class size, and lack of exposure to the English language across public elementary schools. Private school teachers also pointed out that varying student learning needs is a significant challenge that often hinders the effective practice of FA while teaching reading comprehension.

Ultimately, the study data suggested that private sector teachers employed more organized and varied classroom practices aligning with the formative approach to teach reading comprehension when compared to government school teachers who lacked the organization, diversity, and individual learning adjustment. However, the findings from the study of Anila et al. (2022) illustrate the contrast, highlighting that public-sector practicing teachers use classroom assessment better in terms of goal setting, continuous practice, and feedback than private sector teachers who use fewer assessment techniques. This calls for a critical longitudinal study to analyze the effectiveness and longevity of formative assessment practices in the context of Pakistan. Nevertheless, the participants from both sectors manifested the need for flexibility and adaptability of regular informal assessment in daily teaching to address varying students' needs to improve reading comprehension in English. Furthermore, the teachers from both sectors emphasized the need for proper teacher training and education on the principles of formative assessment for the effective adjustment of formative assessment for improving reading comprehension in daily teaching. The researchers of formative assessment, including Li et al. (2023), Sancer et al. (2021), and Liang et al. (2020), have also highlighted the core effects of teachers' professional development in the successful implementation of formative assessment.

5.3 Limitations and Delimitations

This study has certain limitations that may influence the scope and interpretation of the findings. Limited access to classrooms due to administrative restrictions constrained the frequency and depth of classroom observations, potentially affecting the richness of the data. The study relied primarily on teacher input, without directly incorporating student perspectives, which may have limited insights into learner experiences. Time constraints also restricted the opportunity to conduct longitudinal analysis or observe changes over an extended period. Additionally, the findings may not be generalizable due to the small sample size and the focus on a specific urban district. Differences in teacher training, experience, and classroom diversity were not fully controlled, and the possible influence of school

policies and administrative support on formative assessment practices was not explored. Furthermore, the absence of quantitative data and reliance on qualitative methods limited the ability to measure outcomes objectively.

The current study was delimited to elementary-level classrooms to specifically address early-stage reading comprehension, thereby excluding middle and high school contexts. It focuses solely on English language teaching for reading comprehension skills, omitting assessment practices in other subjects and English language skills such as writing, speaking, or listening. The research centers on formative assessment methods, excluding summative evaluations like standardized tests or final exams. Geographically, the study was confined to urban schools within a single district, limiting its applicability to rural, remote, or other well-resourced private school settings. Only qualitative data collection methods—interviews and classroom observations were employed, and teacher participants were selected based on their availability and willingness, potentially excluding broader perspectives.

5.4 Suggestions and Recommendations

After conducting this study, the researcher has made some suggestions and recommendations on three levels, including recommendations to elementary-level ESL teachers, education authorities of elementary-level schools, and for the future researchers.

5.4.1 Suggestions for Elementary-Level ESL Teachers

1. Elementary-level ESL teachers from both private and public schools should engage in innovative and emerging formative assessment practices to improve their teaching of reading comprehension in English.
2. These teachers should focus on their teaching and assessment styles to identify the gaps in their practices in the light of the formative assessment principles for teaching reading comprehension.

5.4.2 Suggestions for Education Authorities and Policymakers of Elementary-Level Schools

1. Education authorities should introduce and engage elementary-level ESL teachers in frequent training and professional development to teach reading comprehension according to the principles of formative assessment.

2. Policymakers should provide ESL teachers with essential resources and systemic flexibility to focus on improving learning rather than evaluating reading comprehension.

5.4.3 Suggestions for Future Researchers in the Area of Formative Assessment for English Language Teaching

1. Future researchers can replicate this study and consider other English language skills, including listening, speaking, and writing, to present a more comprehensive understanding of the overall impact of formative assessment practices on English language proficiency.
2. Conducting a longitudinal study over a more extended period may offer a deeper analysis of the long-term effects of formative assessment on ESL students' reading comprehension skills in English.
3. Collecting the data from elementary-grade students on the impact of formative assessment practices for reading comprehension may offer more productive insights.

5.5 Conclusions

As stated by Black and Wiliam (1998), formative assessment is a tool if it is communicated effectively; the approach can help all pupils, especially the lower achievers, to attend to their focus on the problems with their performance and identify gaps in learning to adjust to improvement. Throughout the context of education and ESL teaching, the approach has been well-established, with novel trends and technologies to fulfill the purpose of learning achievement. However, underdeveloped countries such as Pakistan still face challenges while implementing the approach for successful teaching of reading comprehension in English as a second language. The study reported that the teachers across both private and public elementary-level schools perceived FA as an integral part of regular teaching in the ESL context. The participants from the government sector recognize the potential of FA to enhance elementary students' reading skills with the provision of continuous feedback, guiding instruction, and cultivating a supportive learning environment. However, the teachers experience critical challenges, including the large class sizes, lack of essential resources, and varying learner linguistic backgrounds. On the other hand, private sector teachers deem addressing varying needs of individual students in improving

reading comprehension is challenging. Hence, teachers across both sectors need proper training and professional development to overcome the challenges and effectively integrate FA in their daily teaching of reading comprehension.

This study has also observed that the private school sector considerably manages an organized practice of formative assessment to support students' reading comprehension with diverse activities in comparison to public elementary schools that lack the quality and construction in terms of effective feedback and formative assessment practice to improve the reading comprehension of students. Referencing the work of Black and Wiliam (1998), who highlighted the transformative impact of formative assessment on student learning, this study has highlighted the necessity for elementary educational policymakers and administrators to address these challenges.

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Annex A

Informed Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to explore formative assessment practices used in the classroom to teach English comprehension at elementary level. The study will record and identify the application of formative assessment practices used in the classroom to improve ESL learners' English Comprehension in Pakistani context. It is hoped that the present study will add new data to ESL teaching regarding the role of formative assessment in the improvement of ESL learners' comprehension skills. Furthermore, the study may benefit the present and future ESL teachers by incorporating the effective techniques in the process of formative assessment to support English comprehension.

Your identities will be kept confidential and your statement will never influence your present or future life. The benefit of participating in this research work is to deliver a moral service to the profession of ESL teaching in Pakistan. If you agree to participate in the interview,_____ or if you agree to allow the researcher to observe your classes____, (Please tick whichever you agree to.) Please sign this informed consent form.

Signed By: _____

Dated: _____

Annex B

Interview Protocol

Interviewer:	Data:
Interviewee:	Place:

Interview Questions are based on four phases:

5.1.1. Introduction

1. Please briefly tell something about your qualification and teaching experience specifically about teaching English to ESL learners.
2. How long have you been teaching English to ESL students at elementary level?
3. How do you teach language skills like reading and comprehension in English and what are the practices that you use to teach English comprehension?
4. What materials and resources do you use for teaching reading comprehension in the classroom? (Text Images and Graphs to display)
5. If you think that planning lessons regularly help you in teaching and assessing students' language skills, how do you make lesson plans for teaching comprehension?
6. What do you understand about the assessment process?
7. How do you assess learners' understanding of English text in the classroom?
8. What do you think is the purpose of assessing learners' comprehension skills?

5.1.2. Assessment for Linguistic Schema

9. How do you think that assessment strategies help learners in building English vocabulary?
10. Do you think that assessment strategies you use regularly help learners to actively monitor their understanding of the text? How?
11. Which strategies do you use in classroom for teaching sentence structure of the text to your learners?
12. Which activities do you apply to improve learners' English vocabulary?

13. If you think that the assessment strategies you use in classroom help learners in connecting their previous knowledge of language with their current one, how do you connect learners' previous knowledge with new concepts?
14. If you think that learners' previous knowledge of language and grammar help learners in comprehending the text? How do you assess their previous knowledge?
15. How do you assess learners' linguistic knowledge (vocabulary and grammar) regularly, and how often do you do that?

5.1.3. Assessment for Content Schema

16. How do you help learners in understanding the meaning of text in classroom?
17. If you think that the assessment practices you use help learners to understand English text, how do you assess their progress?
18. How do you assess that learners get meaning of text by using their previous knowledge and experience of the text in daily teaching?
19. If you think that learners predict meaning of the text by using their prior knowledge of sociocultural factors of the text? How do you observe so?
20. Which classroom activities do you use for learners to connect their previous knowledge and experience of sociocultural factors of the text?

5.1.4. Assessment for feedback

21. How do you give feedback to learners on their regular work?
22. If you think that feedback is a crucial element to support learners' language comprehension, which type of written and verbal feedback do you provide?
23. How do you believe that learners respond and benefit from feedback?
24. If you think that the feedback you provide to learners help them identifying their weaknesses, how do you help them in improving their weakness?
25. If you believe that you are helping learners into monitoring their own performance, do you think your feedback help them to monitor their progress?
26. What are the challenges that you face while teaching and assessing learners' English comprehension?

27. How do you deal with those challenges?

28. Would you like to share some ideas on teaching and assessment practices for English comprehension?

Annex C

Class Observation Sheet

Name of the Observer/ Researcher	Participant's Identities are Confidential
Date:	Place:
Course Title:	Course Book Title:
Level of the Students:	Topic Related to the Course Work:

Observation of formative assessment practices for English comprehension in classroom:

No.	Assessment Activities	Yes	Partially	No
1.	The teacher plans lesson and teaching materials to teach comprehension			
2.	The teacher clarifies learning goals before start reading session			
3.	The teacher uses activities to track learners' comprehension level/ Brainstorming questions			
4.	The teacher interpret students' response to questions			
5.	The teacher applies strategies to help learners in correcting errors			

6.	The teacher Provides regular feedback			
7.	Activities to challenge their thinking and discussions with learners			
8.	Observation of constructivist activities and introducing sociocultural perspective in classroom for Comprehension			
9.	Strategies to connect learners' prior experience to the current knowledge of text			
10.	Helping learners in understanding sentence structure			
11.	Introducing sociocultural factors in classroom and Helping learners in building up vocabulary			
12.	Contextual setting for learners			
13.	Learners' active participation and self-regulation in comprehension			

Annex D

Selected Transcription of Class Observation

Class Observation Transcript 1 from Private School

Date: 12 December 2023

Grade and Section: Elementary ESL Class

Course Title: Reading Comprehension Class 40 minutes Transcription

Topic: The Life Journey of Samina Khayal (Documentary of a Young Woman of Pakistan)

The bell rang and I was surprised to see how impatiently students were waiting for their teacher to come. I presumed that there must be something that the students are excited about. Meanwhile, their teacher came into the class bringing her laptop and some notes in her hand. She kept everything on the table and greeted her students with a cheerful smile. After a little conversation with them, one student asked the teacher if she would be showing them the short documentary about Samina Khayal Baig that she promised them to show in the coming class.

She exclaimed: Of course! I have brought the laptop for that reason but before I play the documentary, who would come in front of the class and tell us about the lady we are going to read about and watch her journey as a mountain climber?

To my surprise, there were many students who raised their hand and wanted to come over. She called one student whom I saw the most impatient of all. He came in front of the class and told them about the life journey of Samina Khayal as a young Pakistani woman to climb the mount Everest.

After that, the teacher told the class about some additional things about Samina khayal before playing a short documentary on her life. It was recorded in English language and despite a small screen laying on the table, the whole class was focused on the screen and enjoyed watching it with complete silence.

As the documentary finished, the teacher asked the students if they enjoyed watching it. It was a loud affirmation from everybody!

After that, she revised the main points of the lesson that they had studied in their previous class about Samina Khayal Baig and what students watched in the documentary.

Now kids! Who would tell me what they liked the most about the lesson that we have just learnt? Many students stood up on their seats and started telling about their liking from the personality of Samina khayal to things they liked about the tallest mount Everest.

The class was about to end therefore, she wrote a list of seven summits mentioned in the unit that Samina Khayal is honored to scale and asked the students to memorize them and she will tell them more about these summits in the next class.

Class Observation Transcription 1 from public elementary School

Date: 13 December 2023

Grade and Section: Elementary ESL Class

Course Title: Reading Comprehension Class 40 Minutes Transcription

Topic: The Secret of a Happy Life

The teacher enters the class, paying greetings!

Teacher: students! I am giving you five minutes for revision. Revise every student's own reading then I will ask questions from you about that.

Students started revising their textbooks. Each one seems immersed in their book, making noise sometimes.

Teacher: sshhh.. Be calm, read it silently, don't make noise.

After a few minutes, the teacher asked, ok now stop revision, time's up. Start reading.. Each one member of the group will read their own piece of reading then we will discuss it.. Meanwhile, you will notice lesson questions and exercises that we have to fill later after the reading and I will check your exercise. You can ask any question regarding that.

Student: (reading) a few lines from the text..

Teacher: So the writer in this paragraph shows a connection between health and happiness that it is necessary to live happy for good health. Plus, it is scientifically approved that "laughter" makes our body use 15 calories so it's a good thing for our health improvement.

Students: hahahhh...(laughing)

Teacher: sshhshh.. That doesn't mean you will keep laughing every time needlessly.

Students: But teacher, it makes us healthy naa..

Teacher: ok you read it ahead..and you will know which type of laughter is better for your health. Keep in mind that also. Writer says "a good hearty laugh releases physical tension and stress, leaving our muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after". So you know what's a "hearty laugh".. That means you laugh with all your heart because when we do it releases our tension and stress..Got it?

Students: yes mam.

Teacher: next reading please.

Reading session was kept for 7 to 10 minutes by different groups and somehow the teacher interrupted them to discuss and clarify a new concept.

The teacher ended the class with assigning students a lesson's exercises to fill in their homes and said she will check each student's work tomorrow in groups.

1 - Interview Protocol

Private school teacher (S2-T1-P)

Time duration: 20 minutes

1. Please briefly tell something about your qualifications and teaching experience specifically about teaching English to ESL learners.

Ans. I am a graduate in BS English, currently pursuing my MPhil in Linguistics. I am an English lecturer at a higher secondary and undergraduate level.

2. How long have you been teaching English to ESL students at the elementary level?

Ans. I taught elementary level for a year only.

3. How do you teach language skills like reading and comprehension in English and what are the practices that you use to teach English comprehension?

Ans. My teaching approach involves having students first read through the questions and then proceed to read the text provided. They are encouraged to search for relevant answers by studying contextual clues, especially for challenging vocabulary, and to locate answers that may not be explicitly stated in the text.

4. What materials and resources do you use for teaching reading comprehension in the classroom? (Text Images and Graphs to display)

Ans. I rely on worksheets to reinforce reading comprehension skills through practice. I prefer teaching techniques using a marker on the board, following a more traditional teaching style in this aspect.

5. If you think that planning lessons regularly helps you in teaching and assessing students' language skills, how do you make lesson plans for teaching comprehension?

Ans. My teaching plan includes dedicating the first two lectures to teaching the necessary techniques, while the remaining two lectures are divided into practicing on worksheets and taking tests, respectively.

6. What do you understand about the assessment process?

Ans. Sure, here's a simplified version in everyday language:

Assessment begins by deciding what students need to learn and how to test that. We create fair tests and give them in a clear way to gather reliable information.

Afterward, we look at the results to see where students are doing well and where they can improve. We share this feedback and use it to plan better teaching. Talking about results helps everyone work together, and thinking about how we assess helps us improve for next time.

7. How do you assess learners' understanding of English text in the classroom?

Ans. First, I give students a text to read and discuss it in class based on their understanding. Then, I ask them to write a short summary to check how well they understood the text and grasped difficult vocabulary.

8. What do you think is the purpose of assessing learners' comprehension skills?

Ans. To better understand the meaning and gist of the text. To grasp the idea being conveyed and to retain the important information.

9. How do you think that assessment strategies help learners in building English vocabulary?

Ans. Assessment strategies make learning new words easier by figuring out where students need help, using words in meaningful ways, and giving feedback. They help students actively use and understand new words, making it easier to learn and remember them.

10. Do you think that assessment strategies you use regularly help learners to actively monitor their understanding of the text? How?

Ans. Yes, my assessment strategies like quizzes prompt reflection, comprehension questions check understanding, discussions clarify confusion, and peer collaboration deepens understanding of the text, helping learners monitor their comprehension actively.

11. Which strategies do you use in the classroom for teaching the sentence structure of the text to your learners?

Ans. When teaching sentence structure, I start with basics; subjects and predicates can lay a solid foundation. Breaking down sentences into their components, like nouns,

verbs, and modifiers, helps students understand how sentences are structured. Incorporating visual aids, interactive activities, and real-life examples can make learning more engaging. Gradually introducing complex sentence types, such as compound and complex sentences, and providing ample practice opportunities can further reinforce comprehension and application of sentence structure concepts.

12. Which activities do you apply to improve learners' English vocabulary?

Ans. I use techniques like contextual clues, guessing through root words, prefixes and suffixes. Keeping a vocabulary journal helps a lot. Letting students engage in English conversational activities can help them learn from peers.

13. If you think that the assessment strategies you use in the classroom help learners connect their previous knowledge of language with their current one, how do you connect learners' previous knowledge with new concepts?

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14. If you think that learners' previous knowledge of language and grammar helps learners comprehend the text? How do you assess their previous knowledge?

Ans. Informal discussion with the student helps assess their previous knowledge and also reviewing their previous work also gives a good insight.

15. How do you assess learners' linguistic knowledge (vocabulary and grammar) regularly, and how often do you do that?

Ans. I assess their linguistic knowledge by making them write on a particular topic. It gives a clear picture of their proficiency level.

16. How do you help learners understand the meaning of the text in the classroom?

Ans. Reading aloud in the classroom which is followed by marking important points. Then encouraging students to share their interpretations and clearing the confusing portions. Contextual clues are used a lot to interpret the accurate meaning.

17. If you think that the assessment practices you use help learners understand English text, how do you assess their progress?

Ans. I mark their assessments and compare the marks. I often compare the reviews I give on the assessments.

18. How do you assess that learners get the meaning of the text by using their previous knowledge and experience of the text in daily teaching?

Ans. They mostly use their previous knowledge when I ask them questions, relate the words to some contextual clues and give hints. So their responses show me that they knew it already.

19. If you think that learners predict the meaning of the text by using their prior knowledge of sociocultural factors of the text? How do you observe it?

Ans. same, by asking questions about sociocultural factors like why do muslims pray and so on.

20. Which classroom activities do you use for learners to connect their previous knowledge and experience of sociocultural factors of the text?

21. How do you give feedback to learners on their regular work?

Ans. Encouraging and insightful reviews on their work is my daily practice.

22. If you think that feedback is a crucial element to support learners' language comprehension, which type of written and verbal feedback do you provide?

Ans. Comments on their assignments for written feedback and Verbal feedback during the one-on-one discussion which comprises encouraging comments and also appreciating feedback because I believe in positive reinforcement more than negative.

23. How do you believe that learners respond and benefit from feedback?

Ans. As mentioned earlier, positive reinforcement has been very beneficial because students share their responses whether they have understood the feedback or not and in case of appreciating them, they always work harder the next time.

24. If you think that the feedback you provide to learners helps them identify their weaknesses, how do you help them improve their weaknesses?

Ans. By providing them extra time after the classes and giving them the tasks that help with monitoring and correcting the mistakes. It may take up to several days or weeks of follow ups depending upon the pace of progress of the student.

25. If you believe that you are helping learners to monitor their performance, do you think your feedback helps them to monitor their progress?

Ans. My students very much rely on my feedback and assess their performance by the remarks I share regarding their progress. I think it helps them monitor their progress.

26. What are the challenges that you face while teaching and assessing learners' English comprehension?

Ans. Different levels of previous knowledge that varies student to student is a challenge because it requires dealing with students individually and monitoring their progress separately.

27. How do you deal with those challenges?

Ans. There is no easy way out of this, I must monitor students individually and help them separately because different students require different levels of help from the teacher. However, I encourage the weaker ones to seek help from the students who are facing their progress.

28. Would you like to share some ideas on teaching and assessment practices for English comprehension?

Ans. Of course! Reading questions before the text is always a great idea. Scanning and summarizing and then giving a complete read to the text has been more beneficial in my classes. Building vocabulary and teaching the usage of contextual clues is very beneficial. Lastly, peer discussions for a thorough interpretation is always a great idea for classroom activities.

As far as assessment is concerned, I believe old is gold. Reading comprehension! It always yields beneficial results. Retelling and summarizing assesses the understanding of text very well.

Annex E

Permission Letters for the Data Collection



No. 284 /DRA
DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER (M-EE)
FOCAL PERSON PRIVATE SCHOOLS
RAWALPINDI
DATED 25/10/2023

To,

The Management,
Roots International, Sideeq Public School, KIPS school system, Rawalpindi Grammar School,
Cambridge School, Mr. Cabin Public School, GHS Khayaban e Sir Syed Sector 4, Rawalpindi, GHS
Khayaban e Sir Syed Sector 3 Rawalpindi, GHS Khayaban e Sir Syed Sector 2 Rawalpindi,

SUBJECT: APPROVAL LETTER FOR THE VISIT OF SCHOOLS FOR RESEARCH WORK

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing on behalf of Mrs. Asifa Anum, daughter of Mr. M. Azam, who is a bona fide MPhil (English) Linguistics scholar at NUML (National University of Modern Languages) in Islamabad. Mrs. Asifa Anum is currently conducting research for her MPhil thesis, titled "Exploring Formative Assessment Practices in Teaching English Comprehension of Listening and Reading at the Elementary Level."

As part of her research, Mrs. Asifa Anum intends to collect valuable data from a variety of educational institutions in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of formative assessment practices in the teaching of English comprehension at the elementary level. In light of this, we kindly request your cooperation and support for her research work.

Mrs. Asifa Anum will conduct her research with the utmost professionalism and respect for the privacy and regulations of your institution. Any information collected will be used solely for academic research purposes and will be kept confidential.

We kindly request that you grant her the necessary permissions and access to the school premises to conduct interviews, surveys, and observations as required for her research. We assure you that her research activities will not disrupt the normal functioning of the school in any way.

Your support in this matter will be greatly appreciated and will contribute to the advancement of educational research in our region.


DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER (M-EE)
FOCAL PERSON PRIVATE SCHOOL
RAWALPINDI



Academics Wing

F.1-107/2008 (Academics) FDE
 Government of Pakistan
 Federal Directorate of Education

Islamabad, the 22nd November 2023.✓ **The Head of Institutions,**

- IMCG, I-9/1 • IMCG, I-10/4
- IMCG, I-9/4 • IMCG (VI-X), I-10/4

Subject: **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.**

I am directed to refer on the captioned subject and to say that Ms. Asifa Anum, M.Phil (English Linguistics) scholar of National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad is doing a research study on the topic “**Exploring Formative Assessment Practices in teaching English Comprehension of Listening and Reading at Elementary Level**”. In this regard she needs to visit your institution for collection of data / information. You are requested to extend your cooperation regarding her project.

2. The research scholar is required to forward a copy of her thesis to Federal Directorate of Education after completion.
3. This is issued with the approval of Deputy Director General (FDE).

(ABID ALI KHAN)

Assistant Director (Academics)
 Phone #: 051-9261146

Copy to:

- PA to Director (Academics & QA).



National University of Modern Languages
Sector H-9, P.O. Shaigan, Islamabad
Tel : 092-051-9265100-09 Fax: 092-051-9265076
Email: info@numl.edu.pk
Web: www.numl.edu.pk

Ref. No. 1-2/10-2023-MP-GS

Date: 02-10-2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

It is certified that Asifa Anum D/O Muhammad Azam Soomro, NIC No 45204-7923224-6 is a bonafide MPhil English Linguistics at this university. She is conducting a research entitled "Exploring Formative Assessment Practices in teaching English Comprehension of Listening and Reading at Elementary Level" under the supervision of the undersigned. She needs to collect data from the following Federal & Private schools.

- a. ROOTS International.
- b. Beaconhouse School System.
- c. The Prep School, Siddique Public Schools.
- d. Government Girls Elementary School.
- e. Government Shoukat Girls Elementary Schools.
- f. F.G Junior Model School

The cooperation of all the above mentioned Schools in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Best Regards

Coordinator MPhil Program
Dr. Azhar Habib
Lecturer
Department of English (GS)
Contact: 0332-5392176