

Student's Perspective on Formative Assessment: Quizzes and Discussion as Ongoing Process in Higher Education

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Abstract

The goal of this article was to investigate student's angle on quiz and discussion as development of learning process and its effect on learners. This study explored students perspective towards formative assessment in higher education. Ostensibly, to create a generation that preserves to be critical learners. The results of the study gained from students of Soran and Koya University in order to make the distinction between two universities. The aim of this research was to get students perception of process of learning (quiz and discussion) and its effect positively or negatively on learners. The findings set out that Koya University student valued formative assessment (quiz and discussion) in their process of learning more than learners of Soran University; however Koya university students have positive effect to formative assessment during the courses in the class. The finding increases student's awareness towards formative assessment and its sustainable growth in academic spheres.

Keywords: Assessment; Evaluation; Formative assessment; higher education; proactive learning.

1. Introduction

All around the world, assessment increased very quickly. It started to spread from the European countries to Middle East. Researchers focus more on students learning skills however, Teachers started to value assessment as an achievement of learning to students. It is essential to distinguish between two sorts of assessments, formative and summative assessment [20]. Assessment is a process which judge learners work during the courses [16]. This means that as a teacher, it is necessary to assess learners working skills during the courses and the final exams.

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A study shows that in higher education, some universities are arranged both types of assessments in their curriculum plans. However, formative assessment is a process which focuses on student's development, not depending on the degrees to judge their progress [12]. Another study conducts that assessment is central to learner's experiences and learning. That means assessments are a way of judging students learning and developments [8].

It has been argued that assessments were focused on remembering level of cognitive domain, guided learners to lack of learning whereas assessments that rely on application and synthesis tend to development of learning and increases their cognitive skills [19]. A study points out that formative assessment as a process of learning is used by learners and instructors to enhance students learning outcomes. It increases learners thinking skills solely, however scaffolding learning and instruction is essential to sustain process of questioning and discussion approach for learners. To achieve good learning process in higher education, it is important to encourage students to think dependently, not giving instruction only to achieve process of learning [4].

1.1. Research questions

1- Does discussion and quizzes help learners to be proactive in their learning? How? Why?

2-Does formative assessment enhances student's performances? How it affects them? Why?

3-What is student's perspective of formative process, And Are there any limitations?

1.2. Formative assessment & Evaluation in higher education

Formative assessment can be defined as a process of improving learning. It assesses students work during the course. That means, it achieves learners outcomes positively and to steer with the process of increasing knowledge's. Formative assessment has been increased over 30 years. However it encourages students -centre orient in higher education [17]. To sustain student's ability academically, there are variety implementation of assessment practices in higher education, as an illustration, essay, presentation, exam, discussion, and journal. These practices can enhance student's development and maintains them to rely on daily activities in the class [9]. According to another researcher, formative assessment is "FA refers to frequent, interactive assessments of student progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately [3:21].

This sort of assessment is facilitating student's performance and development in learning process. Practicing in the class will motivate learners to clarify their ideas and communicate with their peers easily. Furthermore, a study in [21] asserts that applying formative assessment in the class could be very demanding for teachers in higher education. Generally, students need motivation in the class to rely on learning, so formative assessment can shift students learning and attitude in the class, it creates an atmosphere of motivation and simplicity at the same time.

Formative assessment is an essential part of educational process, it broaden students horizon. Evaluating student's progress can be recognized by quiz and discussion in the class. Quiz is a way for learners to construct

their confidence, ideas about a subject. It emphasizes regularly and effectiveness in the class, however, instructors can assess learner's performances during the course easily. This means that quizzes open the gate for students who challenge the final exams [15].

A study shows that methods of formative assessment can be arranged by group working, quiz, discussion and review of drafts. In higher education, these facilitate an interaction between the students and teachers in terms of assignments and class interaction [11: 67] Moreover, a researcher formulated formative assessment as providing good performances and feedback to students. It emphasizes on frequent formative assessment in the class with good feedback to coincide ongoing process or work [18]. Interaction between students and teachers is essential to maintain acquisition of learning from both sides, not only provided by teachers, so a review of the research indicates that "This special issue addresses the need to diversify mainstream forms of assessment currently used in higher education, assessment succeeds when the learner monitors, identifies and then is able to 'bridge' the gap between current learning achievements and agreed goals. It is, however, more questionable whether adequate opportunities are given to the students to be active participants in closing what has been termed 'the loop' " [7: 491].

The researcher in [14] points out that assessment in higher education has been examined since the past till now. Assessment refers to a relationship between teaching and learning in higher education. According to study in [13] assessment in higher education is seen unacceptable. A researcher's scrutiny has recently shows that students can make judgements about their learning in higher education then learners can use their ingenuity or assumption to influence their approaches for future learning [6:34]. Researchers in [22] demonstrate formative assessment as a way to enhance students thinking skills and motivation. Curriculum in northern Iraq is summative assessment especially the national exams; it evaluates students work at the end of the year. Most of universities in Northern- Iraq evaluate learner's progress through summative and formative assessment which is assessing students learning during the course and at the end of the course such as quiz, discussion, presentation, and writing academically. These practices are good for EFL learners in which their native language is not English. As an English teacher who is teaching English language to non native speaker in the university, in northern-Iraq, It is better to focus on formative assessment that is assessment during the courses and practicing. Recently, this sort of assessment utilizes in the university by most teachers. Although most students prefer the traditional way which evaluates their learning at the end of the course, nowadays, learners can realize evaluating during the course is beneficial for their effectiveness in the learning. Therefore, most activities or practices which are used in the class are quiz or discussion to improve the standard of English language. In Soran University, Each week, at the beginning of the lesson, students will take quiz for 10 minutes in order to review the previous lesson and to demonstrate easiness of the subject at the end of the exam. However, discussion is another way to assess students learning especially those who feel shy to speak out in the class. In this case, it is better to give a topic for students that are suitable for both sexes. These performances encourage learners to exchange skills and strengthen their ability to utter English words correctly and fluently. As an illustration, before a week, the teacher will provide a topic for students. Then the instructor divides them into two groups. Each group have to participate in the discussion. Students have to jot down their opinion on the topic to discuss them. In the past, teachers depended on a technique for years without changing, nowadays; the curriculum is rapidly changing that is depending on novel techniques. The researcher focused on evaluation judgement in

higher education that is more programmes are student centres skill [5].

A study had been defined formative evaluation as improvement of the curriculum and assessing learner's progress during the course while summative evaluation comes in different shapes such as assessment given at the end of the units, mid-term, and at the end of the course, this can judge students learning. The purpose of these two sorts of evaluation is to show students grading and progression [2: 537]. Moreover, the researchers emphasis on formative as "Practice in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited." [1: 9]. Students have to practice in the class each lesson. If there is no activity, learners will be deactivating for learning in the class. It is clear that the practicing will be devoted to classes and instructors are responsible for students professional in a subject. Hence, the proactive approach will enable students to select the targets for learning fluently.

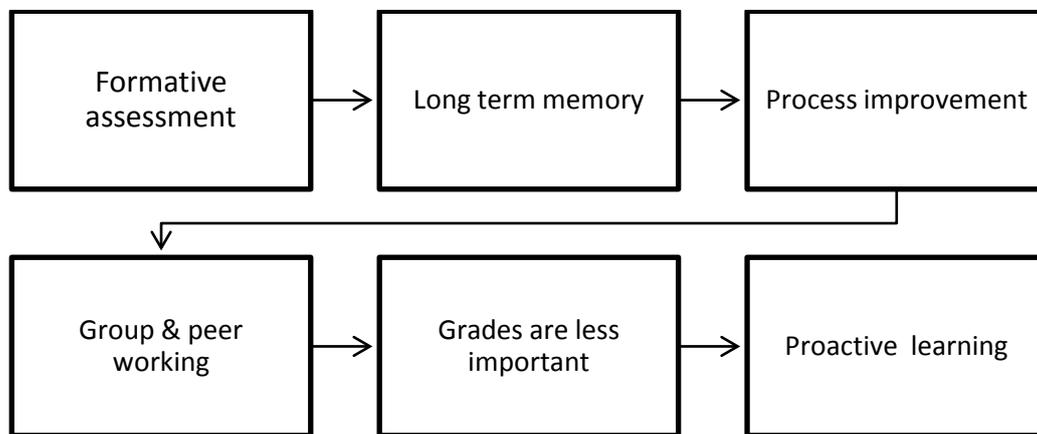


Figure 1: Proactive enforcer (FA).

Some reviews have identified FA. "Formative assessment can improve learning and achievement, not that it will. There is also the issue of how we might judge whether or not the quality of the learning process has improved, and whether or not achievement has been increased." [17:327). There were obstacles to innovation and development of learning in higher education. Most middle- east countries have problems in the systems and curriculum. There are many problems why formative assessment is not acceptable in some colleges or universities. The issue returns to mass of students in the class. It is nearly 40 or 60 learners in each class. The standard of students is low. Learner's background is poor. However, students are focusing on remembering (cognitive skills) only. They are unable to think critically that is learners don't value analysis or synthesis activity. Furthermore, students dealt with the degree instead of cognitive activity. This means learners are not reliable to process of learning. Lastly, there are economical and technological problems. In most universities and colleges, there is no enough computers and internet connection for students to collect references and study on it [10].

2. Methodology

The study was conducted at Soran and Koya University. It was exploring student's perspectives on quiz and discussion (formative assessment) and its effect on them positively or negatively. The participants were undergraduate students, second year of general sciences and physics departments. The participants were from both genders (female & male), and the author asked about their backgrounds. 119 students participated in the study. 61 students were from Soran University and 58 students from Koya University. The study was delineated to compare learner's result in Soran and Koya University. Before distributing questionnaire items to students, quiz and discussion were regulated for students of Koya and Soran University. One day allocated for discussion and another day for quiz in order to gain their views about quiz and discussion in general. For discussion, the students were divided into two groups. Students were take part in discussing the topic which is provided by the teacher. For quiz, learners take the test at the beginning of the lecture. The goal is to gain students perspective about formative assessment and how it affects them?

In order to achieve the result from students view about the progression, questionnaire items were distributed to students. The questionnaire items are divided into two sections A. and B. The items in section A., in a likert scales ranging from (strongly agree to strongly disagree) While in section B., the likert scales ranging from (Excellent to Bad) (please see Appendix A, B).The data analyzed quantitatively to gain students perception about formative assessment.

3. Results

3.1 Outcomes evaluation: Student's perception of formative assessment (quiz and discussion).

The analysis of the data discovered that there were distinctions between the data that were collected from questionnaire items (see appendix A, B), section A was 32 items and section B was 12 items. The items in section A. were distributed to students before taking quiz and discussion while the items in section B. collected after having quiz and discussion. The combined data between Soran& Koya university in section A refers to the items indicated that the students of Soran University value formative assessment progression more than students of Koya University. In Soran University, students were more significant about formative assessment (quiz and discussion), it can be seen in figure 2. The questionnaire items collected before students having quizzes and discussion. The items in section A. (items1-10) shows that the learners were value quizzes and discussion in their study system. The items in figure1 demonstrated that learners were eager to learn the process of learning through formative assessment during the whole course. Quiz and discussion enables students to enhance their language and gain fluent languages.

The finding in figure 3 implies learners significant about group working and daily assignments. It is clear that students were benefit from daily assignments. It encourages them to depend of learning rather than degrees. This indicates that learners value daily activities and assignments for learning better. The data in this figure revealed students influenced by formative assessment during the course.

Figure 4 demonstrates student's perception about exams during the courses and through final exams. It can be

shown that learners prefer exams each month while they were undecided about the final exam at the end of the course. Students view were argued and evaluated through the survey (before doing quiz and discussion through the course). So the items of questionnaires in section A. points out that student of Soran University value quiz and discussion in their learning process (formative assessment)

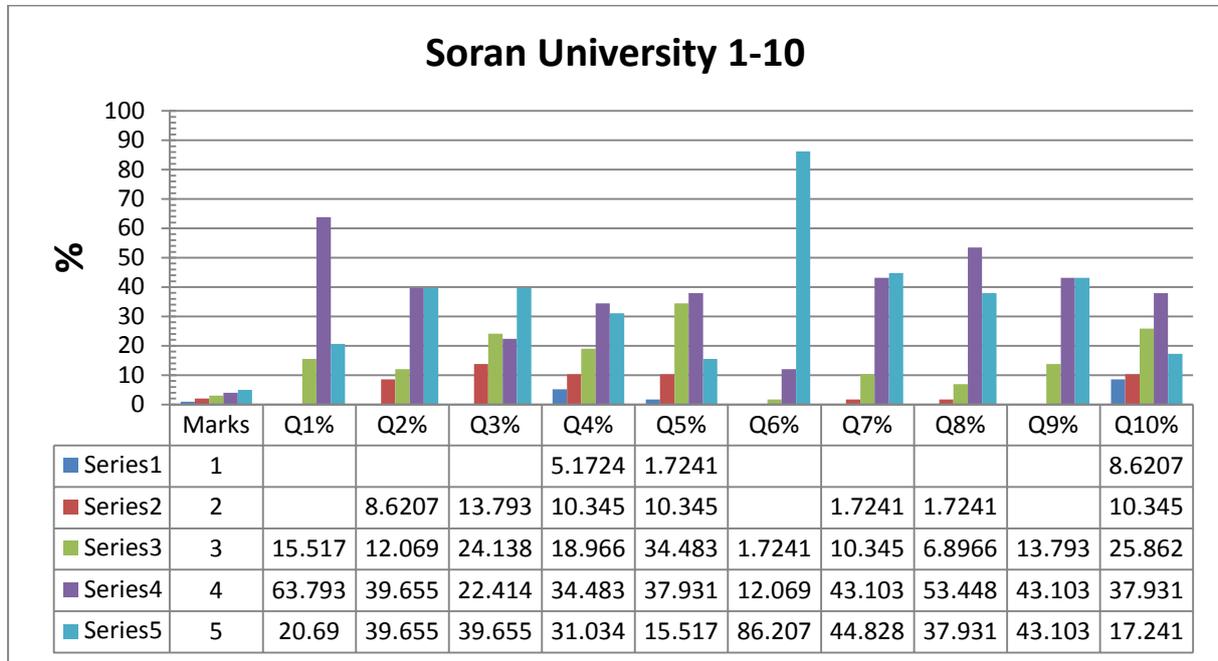


Figure 2: Student’s perception about formative assessment (quiz and discussion)

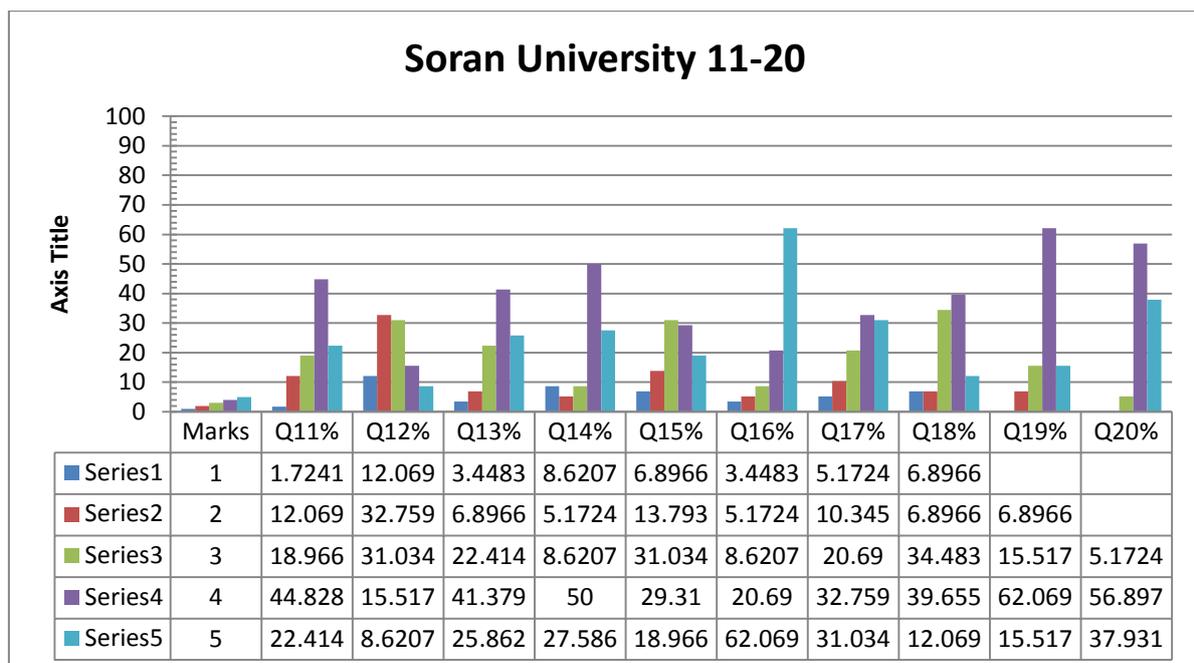


Figure 3: Students focus on learning process (daily assignment) rather than degrees.

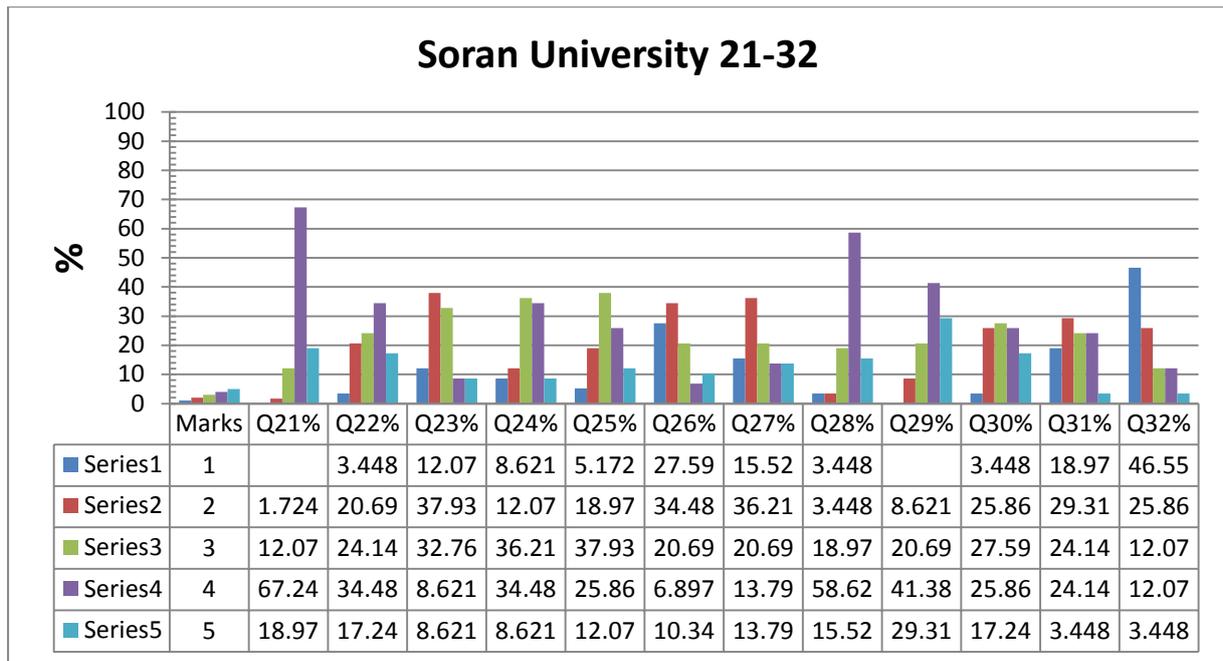


Figure 4: Students value exams during the courses.

The items of the questionnaire (section B.) were completed by students after taking quiz and having discussion in the class. The finding in section B. demonstrated that students were feeling good after taking quiz and having discussion in the class. The items in figure 5 revealed students positive attitude towards quizzes and discussion in the class. The average in item 10 showed that students were undecided about their feeling towards the tests after the exam. Students were quite specific about their perception of formative assessment which is positively affected to learners.

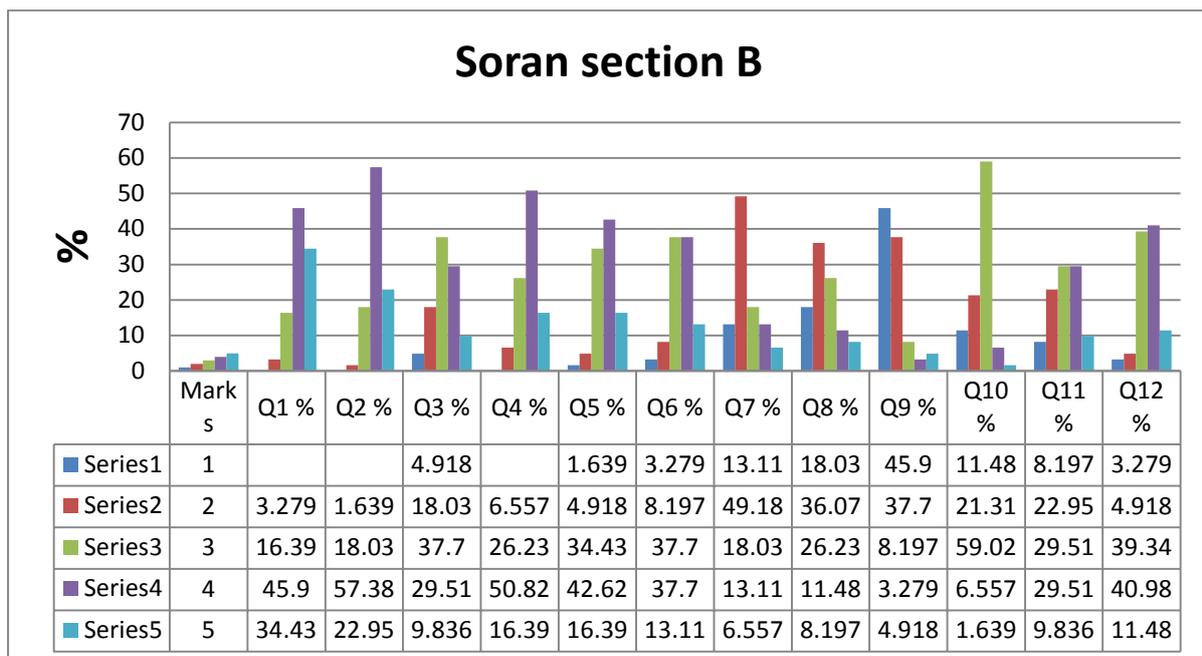


Figure 5: Student’s perception after having discussion and taking quiz in the class.

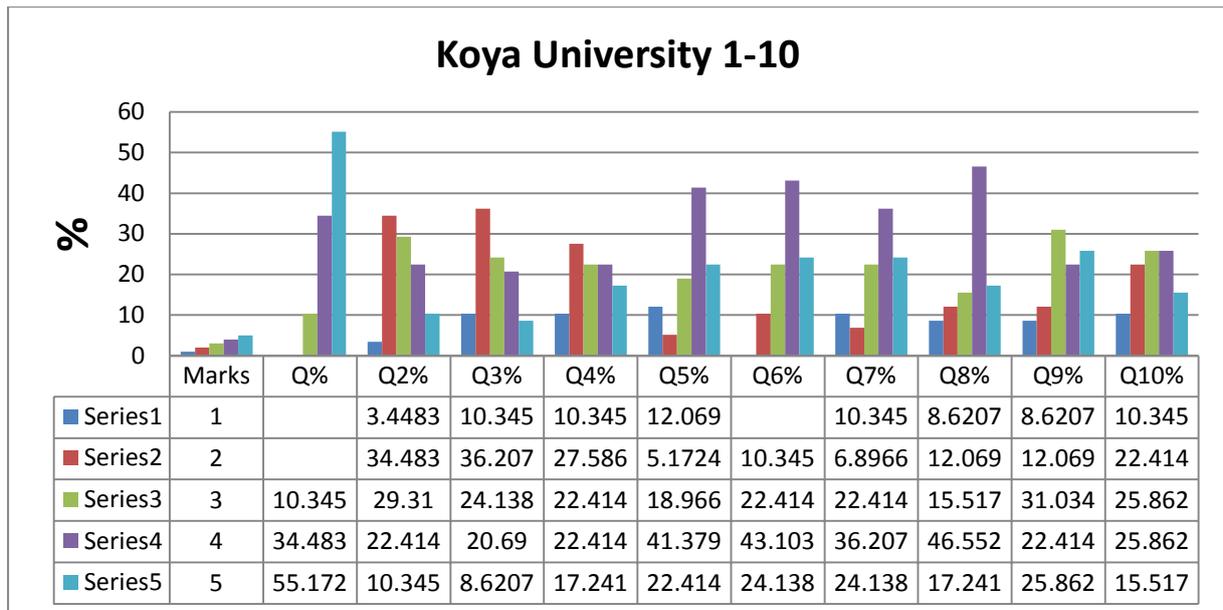


Figure 6: Students value formative assessment

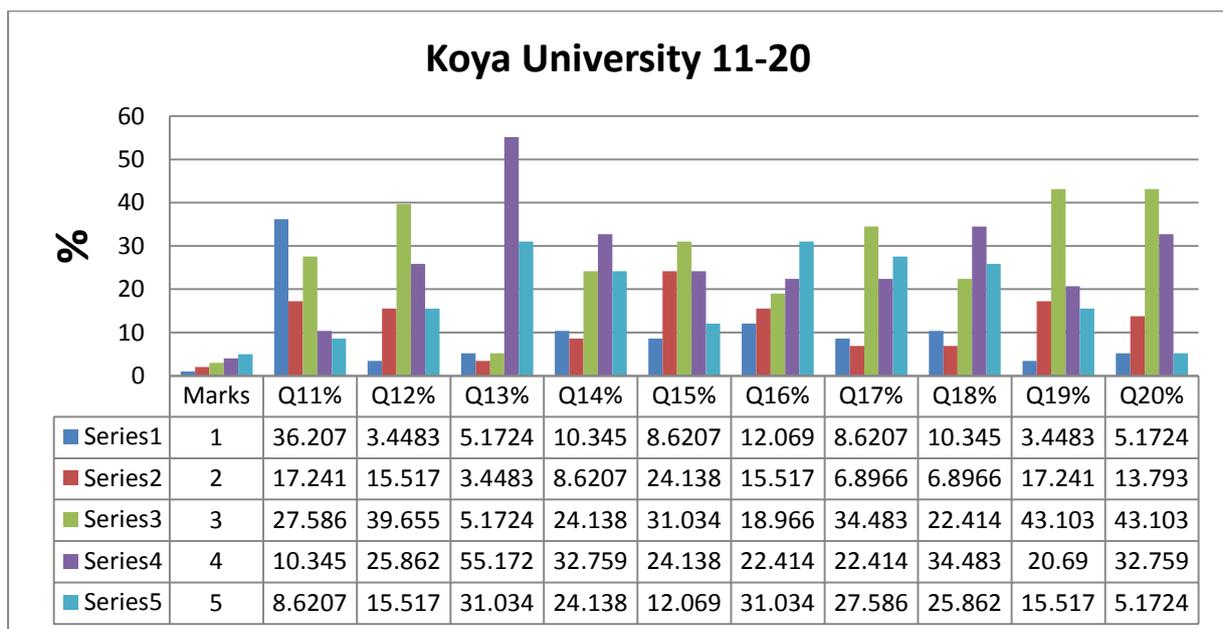


Figure 7: Learners prominent of group working and assignments.

On the contrary, in Koya University, the data were revealed that students value formative assessment. Q1, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8 points out that learners prefer FA in their learning study (see Figure 6). Figure 7 highlights that the students were too inestimable about group working and peer learning while the other items demonstrates by percentages that learners were undecided about the final exams and degrees. However Figure 8 illustrates that students ranked the significant items as useful process in their education system. It sheds light on quiz and discussion as proactive learning in the university. Although Q21 confirms students perception of good impact on formative assessment (quiz and discussion), but other items noted that students don't seem to make the highest

percentage towards process of learning during the courses.

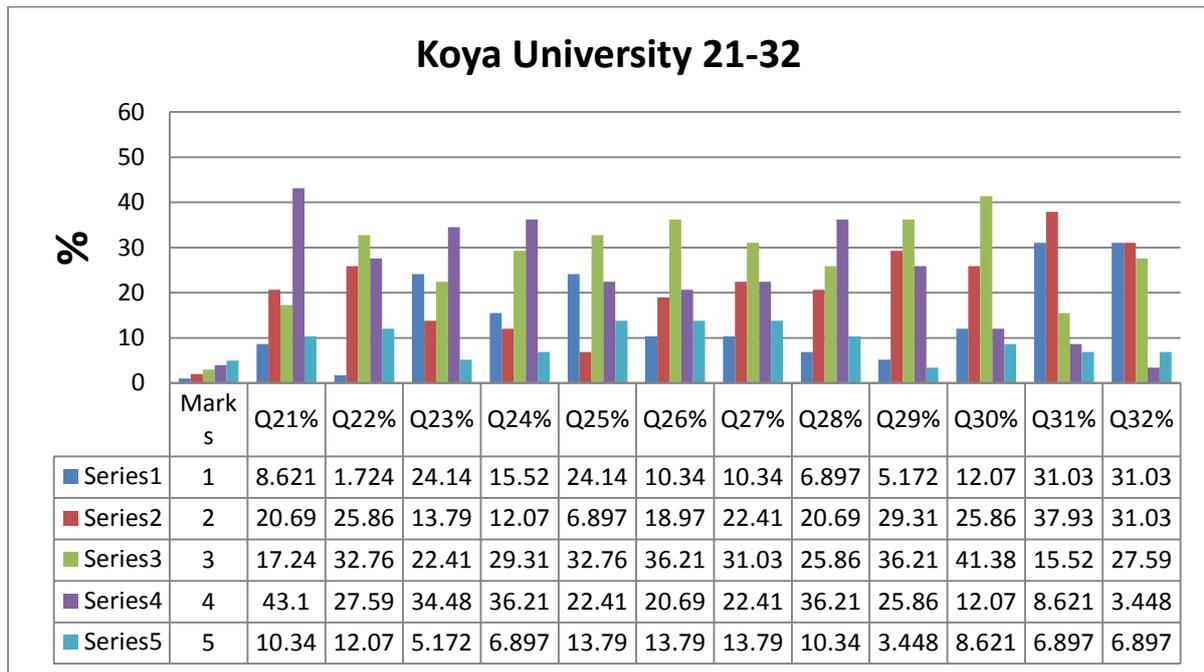


Figure 8: Education system in the university.

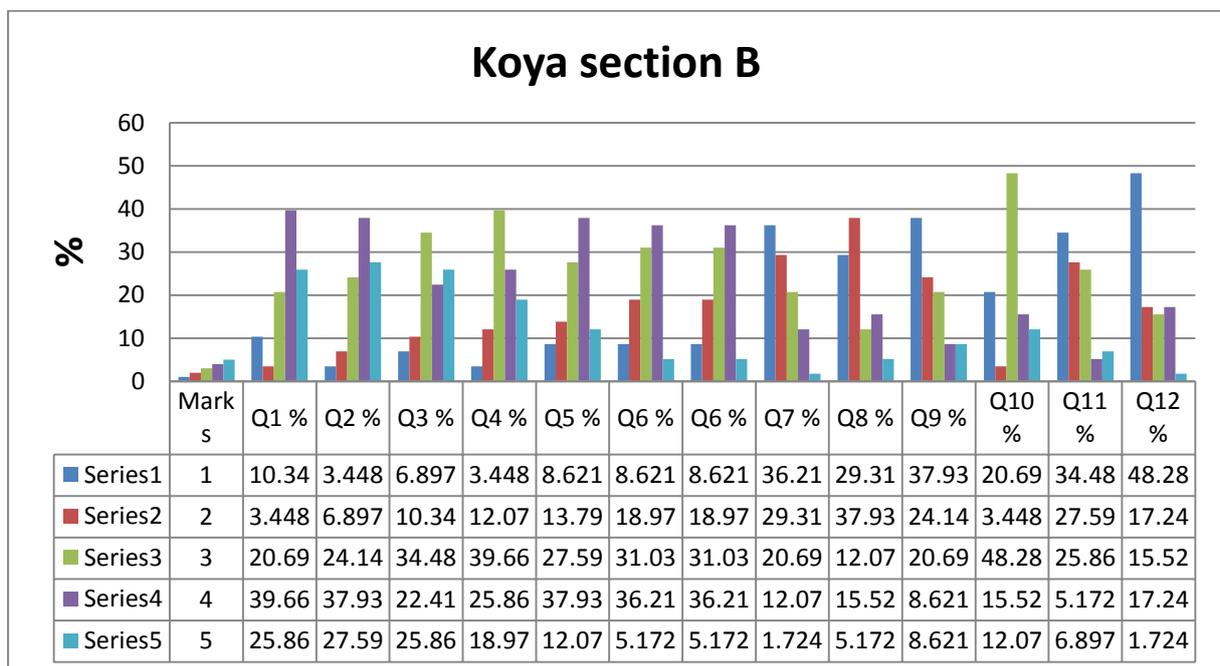


Figure 9: Koya University student's perception after taking quiz and having discussion in the class.

Furthermore learners were asked to provide prominent skills about their opinion towards proactive learning and how did they feel after taking the test and having discussion in the class. Most responded showed their

dissatisfaction of quiz and discussion in the items except Q6 ranked as the highest percentages of positive attitudes towards learning skills through having discussion and quiz. This emphasizes on learning new skills after having discussion and quiz in the class (see Figure 9).

The distinction between Soran University and Koya University is revealed according to the percentages of each section in questionnaire (section A & section B), before and after having discussion and quiz in the class. Responded criterion for formative assessment were given by percentages were revealed a full scale of the (strongly agree 5, agree 4, neither agree nor disagree 3, disagree 2, strongly disagree 1), The items in section A implies that Soran University students were agreed to formative assessment (quiz and discussion) in their learning process in the class. The average rating was 3.5875 while Koya University students were undecided about using quizzes and discussion in their education system, the average rating was 3.2. (see Figure 10- 11). On the contrary, Koya University learner’s satisfaction with formative assessment (quiz & discussion) was measured by using a scale of (Excellent 5, Good 4, Neutral 3, Bad 2, and Low 1). The items in section B. found students prominent satisfaction with quiz and discussion especially Q6 has got the highest percentage in the graph. The average rating was 3.9836. While responded of Soran University had positive reactions towards quizzes and discussion, the average rating was 3.2049. (see Figure 12-13). This indicates that Soran University had got the highest percentages towards using quiz and discussion in the class in section A. than Koya University, though Koya University had got the highest average rating in section B. in this case, Koya university students perspective towards quizzes and discussion was higher than Soran university students. (see figure10-12).

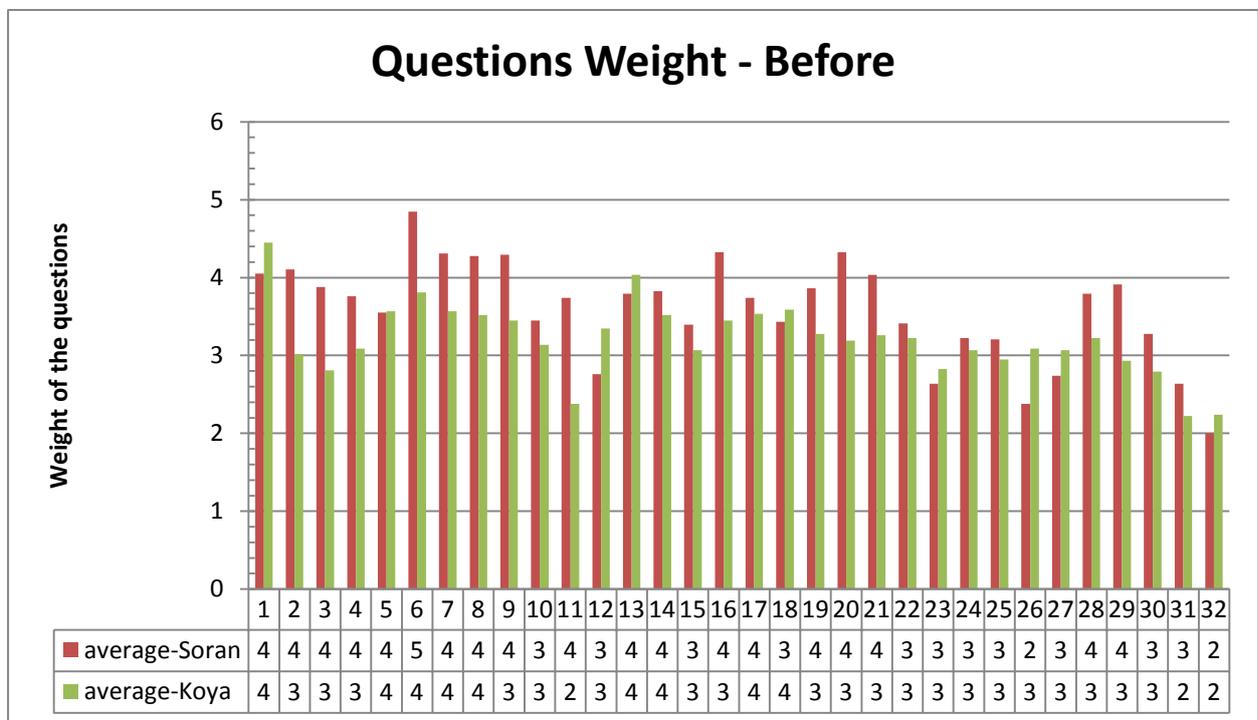


Figure 10: Questions weight- Before having discussion and quizzes.

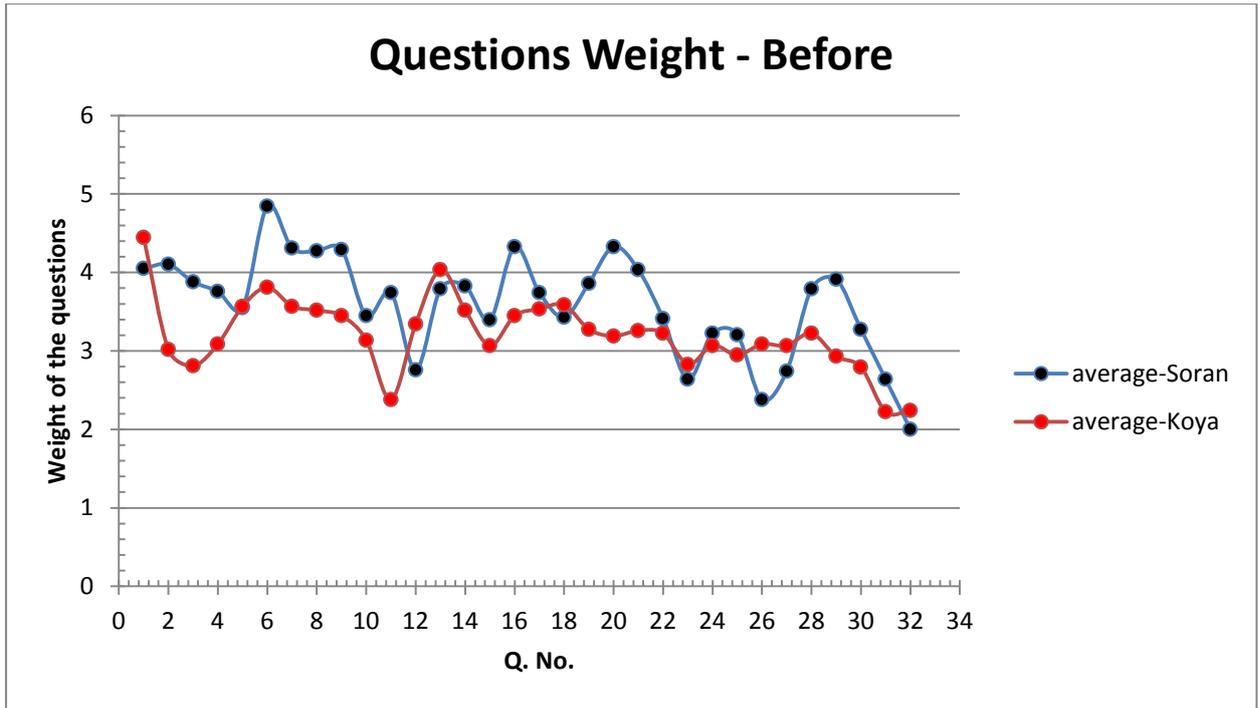


Figure 11: Questions weight- Before

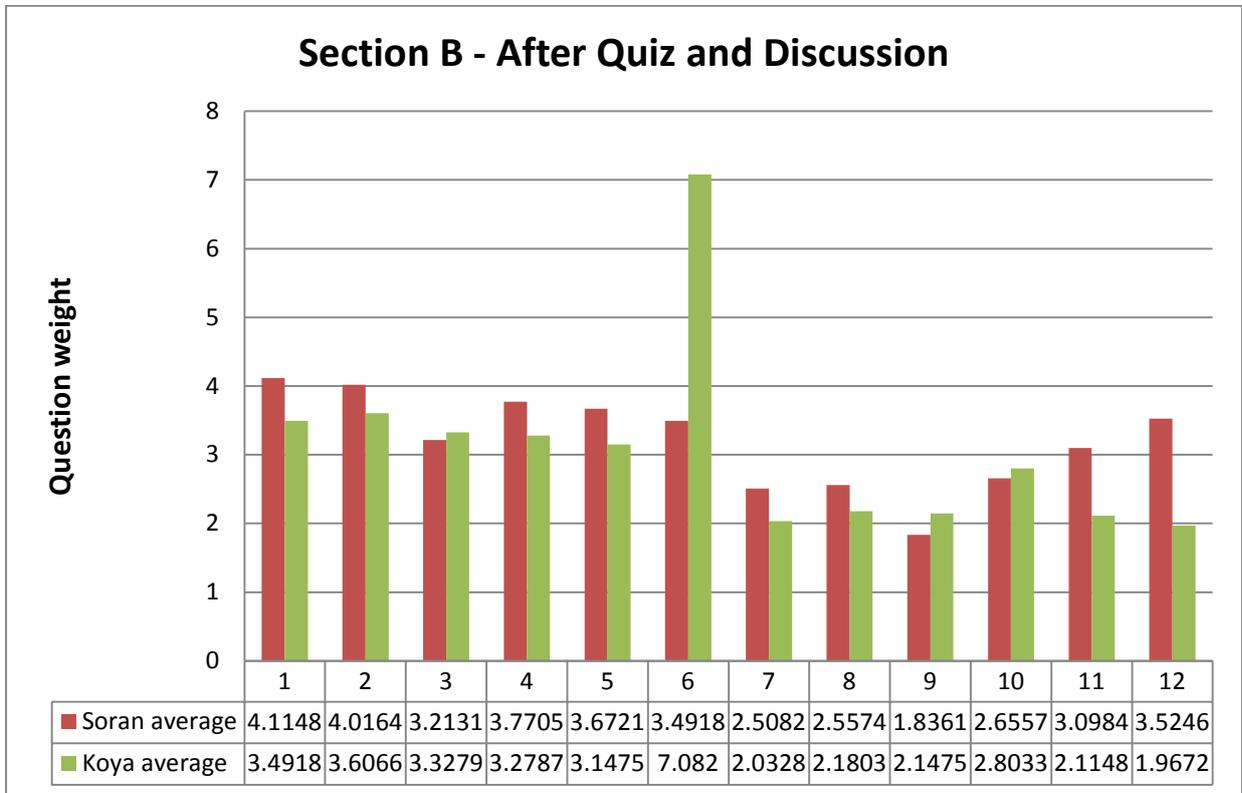


Figure 12: Questions weight- After taking quizzes and having discussion

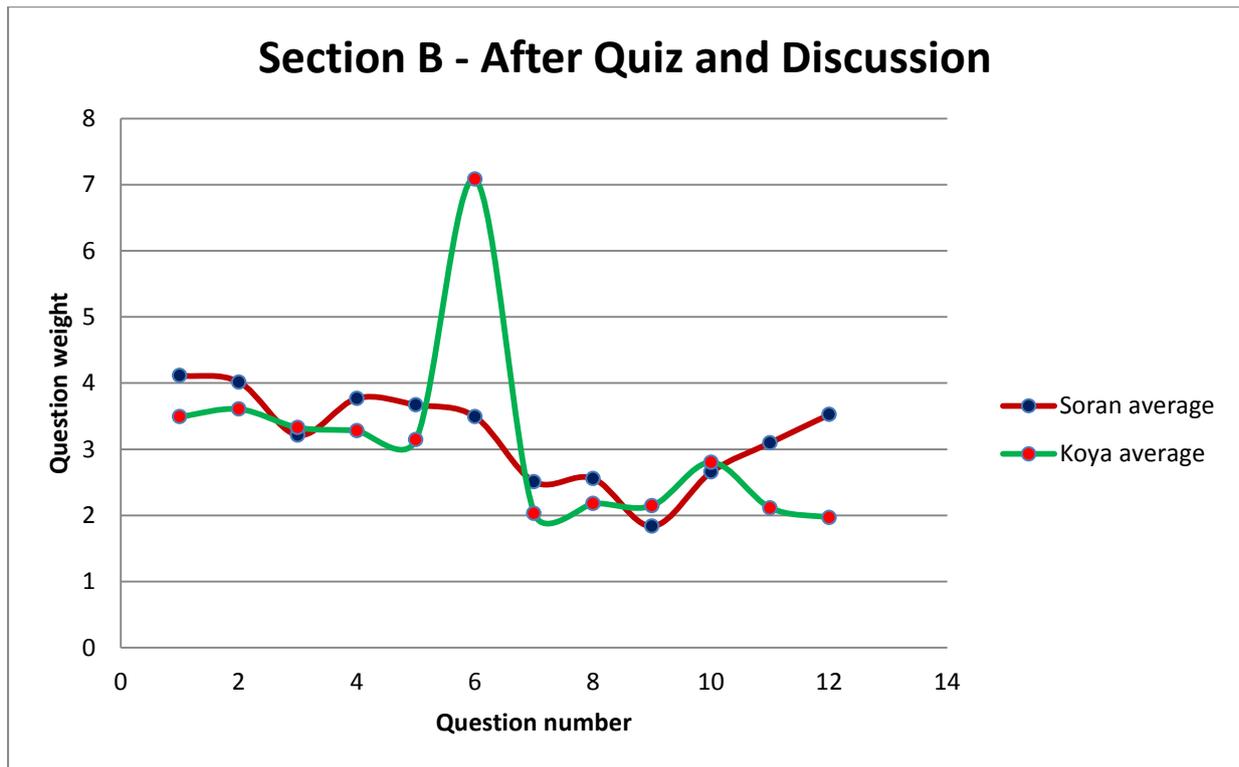


Figure 13: Questions weight- After quiz and discussion in the class.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The object of the study was to find students perception of formative assessment (quiz and discussion) however, to differentiate between two universities (Sorani & Koya university) and its effect on learners. The result exposed that students influenced by process of learning (quiz and discussion) during the course. Formative assessment is a tool of learning process in the class. It emphasizes on learners-centre rather than teacher- centre in the class. Practices and activities play a prominent role in student's evolution [16]; [9]; [17]. The students seemed to think that learning involves degrees then targeting the subject in their courses, this sort of process is not good for learners; they focus on degrees without targeting the materials. To evaluate student's progress, it is essential for learners going through practices such as presentation, essay, quiz, and interaction between students [9]; [11]. Quiz and discussion in the class was given a high priority by students of Sorani and Koya University. Quiz can erect sustainable development for students on due date in addition discussion will enhance learners ability to gain new skills and promotes to broaden their horizon. These two practices can support students learning in every fields of a material [15]. The finding in the study exposed that students of Sorani university perception got a high percentage towards formative assessment items in section A - questionnaire which was before taking quiz and having discussion in the class whereas the items in section B revealed students semi-positive reactions to their perspective towards quiz and discussion in the class. Although most Sorani University responded agreed and had positive attitudes towards process of learning, Koya university students gained the highest percentages in the survey. The items in section B. had positive values than the items in section A for

Koya university learners. The rating average for Koya University was higher than Soran University. The items in Section B emphasizes on gaining new skills through discussing a subject and taking quiz during the courses in the class however, Q6 had the highest percentages towards practicing and activities in the class. Students valued positively quiz and discussion in their learning study. Formative assessment can fill the gap in knowledge of learning [7]; [18]. This confirms that formative assessment in the present study have sent prominent dispatch to students about their perception towards learning process in a decent potential. Some responded expressed their concerns about the curriculum and the system in higher education. Sometimes, it can cause an obstacle in the learning process to students [14]; [13] However, the finding showed that students accepted the learning process (quiz and discussion activity) in their materials; it is suitable for obtaining new skills in their academic systems. The finding shows that responded value daily activity and practicing in the class each lesson also they were influenced by assignments and exams during the courses [1]. The responded from both universities (Soran &Koya) reported that they have technological problems in the university and student's education background was inferior due to the system of the curriculum in the whole university in Middle East [10]. Though the universities have obstacles, students compete to come up with it. Generally, formative assessment in this study can give a dispatch to students in the future. The findings in this research paper investigated student's perspective towards formative assessment and whether the elements of quiz and discussion raise student's awareness, to utilize learning system in the university. The purpose was providing students with good assessment to enhance their language proficiency especially EFL students and to increase their thinking skills inside and outside the university. Based on the study results, it is it would be acceptable to shift the teaching pedagogy in the curriculum according to students' accurate interpretation of process of learning (quiz and discussion in the class). As a teacher in the university, it is essential to reflect on teaching system under consideration of students finding in the present study.

The finding of the present study supplies information about students view towards formative assessment, it gives teachers a gesture of choosing good curriculum for their learners. The use of quiz and discussion in the class could be identifying through students perception to questionnaire items that is distributing sheet of papers to take quiz and having discussion with group of learners before and after in the class. The survey was established by questionnaire responses of 119 students from both universities (Soran & Koya). The purpose of this treatise was to find out students reaction and their effects to process of learning in the class. The finding of the study was beneficial as students verify the effectiveness of quiz and discussion in the class and how it handled by teachers upon receipt of the survey. The result showed that Soran and Koya universities students have positive reactions to formative assessment (Quiz and discussion), but the highest rating average got from the items were Koya University. Further research needs to work in different aspects of formative assessment practice to utilize it in academic standards.

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Appendix

Section A

The purposes of this research are to audited and discover the effect of formative assessment and its sorts on student's performances therefore, students are required to complete the following items.

Background information

Date of Birth: day/ month/ year: ----- /----- / -----

Gender: Female -----, Male -----

Stage: 1st --- 2nd ---- 3rd ---- 4th -----

Degree: undergraduate -----, graduate -----

Put a tick in the appropriate box for the following statements.

Strongly agree: 5, agree:4 , neither agree nor disagree:3, disagree:2 , strongly disagree:1

N.	Questionnaire items	Strongly agree	agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1-	I value formative assessment and feedback.					
2-	The quizzes are a way of process to preparing me for the final exam.					
3-	The quizzes helped me to figure out the subject in a better way.					
4-	I study from exam to exam.					
5-	I often take notes in the class.					
6-	Formative assessment gives me a chance to review the subject before the exam.					
7-	Discussion is another way of process which improves student's language in a better way.					
8-	Peer assessment helped my learning process in the class.					
9-	My teacher's assessment enhances my learning.					
10-	I benefit from quizzes and discussion in the					

	class.					
11-	Quizzes per week are necessary.					
12-	Formative assessment or feedback is beneficial to be achieved in the lesson every week.					
13-	I value group working and review of drafts.					
14-	I value exams during the course more than final exams.					
15-	I learn useful knowledge's during the course.					
16-	Final exams aim on degrees rather than success.					
17-	I focus on degrees only.					
18-	I focus on learning through formative process.					
19-	Daily assignments enhance our performances.					
20-	Teacher's judgment about our progress will help me to develop my thinking skills.					
21-	Discussing a project or a topic with peers in the class produces proactive learning process.					
22-	I prefer exams each month.					
23-	I prefer final exams.					
24-	I value daily activities in the class.					
25-	I get bored from quizzes.					
26-	I value the final product of a work.					
27-	I focus on grades only without learning process.					
28-	Formative assessment aims to develop students thinking skills individually and in peers.					
29-	Grading in quizzes will affect learners negatively.					
30-	My background education is bad.					
31-	The standard system in our university is developed.					
32-	My university depends on technology system mostly.					

Section B

In this section, the questionnaire items are completed by students after class quizzes and discussion.

	Questionnaire items	Excellent 5	Good 4	Neutral 3	Bad 2	Low 1
1-	After the discussion, do you feel confident?					
2-	Did the discussions topic help you to learn well?					
3-	Did you improve your language through discussion?					
4-	Did Verbally discussion enhance your English language?					
5-	Did you enjoy the topic?					
6-	Did you learn new skills?					
7-	How was today's quiz?					
8-	How do you feel when you have a quiz each week?					
9-	How do you feel to have quizzes at the beginning of each class?					
10-	How do you feel after making the test?					
11-	Do quizzes affect you positively?					
12-	Do quizzes strengthen your level day by day?					