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A Teacher's Formative Assessment Perceptions and Practices in Oral Intermediate English Courses at the Université de Montréal

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Résumé

Au cours des dernières années, les pratiques de l'évaluation comme aide à l'apprentissage (c'est-à-dire l'auto-évaluation, l'évaluation par les pairs, la rétroaction) dans la salle de classe ont été de plus en plus considérées comme des éléments essentiels (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Harlen & Winter, 2004; van de Watering & van der Rijt, 2006). Cependant, dans le domaine de l'apprentissage d'une langue seconde la recherche sur ce sujet est plutôt limitée. En nous fondant sur les études de Colby-Kelly et Turner (2007) et de Lyster et Ranta (1997), nous avons mené une recherche exploratoire visant à combler ce besoin. L'objectif général était de comprendre comment l'évaluation formative se réalise dans deux cours d'anglais intermédiaire à l'Université de Montréal, et de comparer comment ces pratiques sont perçues et vécues par la professeure et ses étudiants.

Trois questions de recherche étaient posées:

1. Quelle est la nature de l'évaluation formative dans une salle de classe d'anglais langue seconde?
2. Est-ce que les pratiques de la professeure reflètent ce qu'elle pense de l'évaluation formative?
3. Quels sont les correspondances et différences entre les croyances de la professeure et les perceptions de ses étudiants quant aux bénéfices de l'évaluation formative pour l'apprentissage de l'anglais langue seconde?

La collecte de données comprend des observations en classe, des entrevues auprès de la professeure et des questionnaires pour les étudiants.

Pour répondre à notre première question de recherche, nous avons analysé la rétroaction donnée par la professeure pendant une production orale réalisée par ses étudiants à partir de la typologie de feedback et de uptake de l'étude de Lyster et Ranta (1997). En ce qui a trait à la deuxième question de recherche, nous avons fait des entrevues avec la professeure en vue d'expliciter ses

perceptions relativement à l'évaluation formative. À la fin du trimestre, nous avons comparé ses réponses avec sa pratique à partir des enregistrements vidéo produits en classe. Finalement, pour répondre à notre dernière question de recherche nous avons comparé les réponses données par la professeure aux entrevues avec les réponses des étudiants à un questionnaire adapté à partir de celui de Colby-Kelly et Turner.
Finalement, nous présentons et discutons les résultats les plus significatifs obtenus dans cette étude qualitative Nous concluons cette thèse en proposant de avenues pour des recherches futures.

Mots-clés : évaluation formative, évaluation sommative, rétroaction, perceptions, pédagogie universitaire, anglais langue seconde

Abstract

During the last twenty years, assessment practices for improving student learning (i.e., self-assessment, peer assessment, feedback) in the classroom has been considered as essential (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Harlen & Winter, 2004; van de Watering & van der Rijt, 2006). In the field of second language learning, however, research in this area is quite limited. In order to address this gap, an exploratory research , based on Colby-Kelly and Turner's (2007) and Lyster and Ranta's (1997)studies has been conducted . The general objective was to understand how formative assessment is practiced in two Intermediate Oral English courses at the Université de Montréal and to compare how these practices are perceived and performed by the teacher and the students.

Three research questions were pursued:

1. What is the nature of formative assessment in a second language classroom setting?
2. Do the teacher's assessment practices reflect what she thinks about formative assessment?
3. What are the coincidences and differences between teacher's perceptions and her students' perceptions regarding the benefits of formative assessment for learning English?

Data collection instruments consist of teacher interview guidelines, students' questionnaire and classroom observation grids. In order to answer the first question, the feedback given by the teacher during the students' oral performance has bee analysed using the types of feedback and uptake in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) report. For the second research question, I interviewed the teacher at the beginning of each session and I elicited her beliefs about classroom-based formative assessment practice. At the end of the session I the teacher's answers have beeb compared and contrasted with her actual performance, which was videotaped during the course. Finally, regarding the

third question, teacher's answers in the interviews have been compared with students' answers on a questionnaire – adapted from Colby-Kelly and Turner's one.

The most significant results of this qualitative research are presented and discussed. In the conclusion, directions for future research are proposed

Keywords: Formative assessment, summative assessment, perceptions, higher education, English as a second language

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A mis padres, con la certeza de que están muy orgullosos del camino recorrido.
A mi esposo y a mis tres niñas cuyo amor incondicional ha sostenido
cada uno de mis pasos.
A mis hermanos y hermanas con quienes, a pesar de la distancia, me siento muy unida.

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The members of my dissertation committee Professor Micheline-Joanne Durand and Professor Ahlem Ammar have generously given their time and expertise to help me better my work. I thank them for their contributions and their kind support. Their feedback for my research proposal was highly appreciated and has greatly enriched this dissertation. I am truly fortunate to having them on my dissertation committee. Their professional and personal qualities have been crucial for the accomplishment of the present study.

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how blessed I feel for having such great people near me. Be sure that I will keep everyone in my heart.

Introduction

In the last twenty years, formative assessment practices in the classroom (i.e., self assessment, peer assessment, feedback) have been considered an essential element to improving student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Harlen & Winter, 2004; van de Watering & van der Rijt, 2006). There is evidence that self-assessment improves learning and helps students become more responsible and more independent (McNamara, 2001; Orsmond & Merry, 1997; Sullivan & Hall, 1997). In addition, research has shown that working with peers in the classroom is an important means of promoting learning (Saito, 2008). Feedback given as part of formative assessment helps learners become aware of any gaps that exist between their desired goal and their current knowledge, understanding or skill, and this guides them through the actions necessary to obtain their goal (Ramaprasad, 1983; Sadler, 1989).

Although these findings are encouraging, in the field of general education some teachers and tutors seem to be indifferent to students' failures; even worse, a number of them have never heard about formative assessment (Perrenoud, 1998). Still, because there has been so much attention on formative assessment lately, most of teachers and tutors now have a rough idea of what it is. If they are asked to explain formative assessment they might answer that it involves testing students in the middle of an ongoing instructional sequence and then using the tests results to improve instruction (Popham, 2008). Nonetheless, this definition is quite superficial and does not express an understanding of the value of formative assessment in the teaching and learning process.

This partial, and therefore incomplete understanding of formative assessment leads teachers and tutors to perceive formative assessment as something different from summative assessment, rather than a logical next step. As a result, formative assessment is perceived as extra work (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003).

Within the context of higher education, even though formative assessment is generally well-acknowledged, its importance in student learning is not well understood (Yorke, 2003). This is also true for the field of second language learning in higher education where large classes are common and where there are few hours of instruction per week. In addition, many students are under to obtain good grades in order to have a competitive dossier that will allow them to qualify for scholarships. These three points could be critical factors that have led to the lack of attention given to formative assessment in the field of second language education.

According to the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT, 2012), formative assessment is integrated with teaching, consequently the teacher is the only person who can initiate formative assessment. Undoubtedly, teachers will initiate formative assessment in their classes only if it is perceived as valuable and useful. This is the starting point for my study and motivates my research questions.

The present study is based on Colby-Kelly and Turner's (2007) study of assessment practices in pre-university English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes. It also draws on Lyster and Ranta's study (1997) of corrective feedback and learner uptake (i.e., responses to feedback) in four immersion classrooms at the primary level. Their results included the frequency and distribution of six different feedback types used by four teachers, in addition to the frequency and distribution of different types of learner uptake following each feedback type. Their findings indicated an overwhelming tendency for teachers to use recasts in spite of its ineffectiveness at eliciting student-generated repair. In the following chapters, I will provide more details about both reports. I will demonstrate how my research is, in certain respects, a continuation of Colby-Kelly and Turner's study.

In the first chapter, I examine formative assessment by presenting the definition of assessment, formative assessment, and feedback as well as the context and challenges that formative assessment in general education faces. In the same chapter, I examine formative assessment in the context of higher education (HE), where there is a predominance of standard psychometric practices, an emphasis on the grading, and limited research on formative assessment. Next, I discuss the general lack of research on formative assessment in second and foreign language learning. In this section, I describe Colby-Kelly and Turner's (2007) study in detail and explain how my study carried their perceptions of formative assessment further. I discuss the purpose of this study, which in brief, was to understand how a second language (L2) teacher put into practice her beliefs of formative assessment and to compare her perceptions and her students' perceptions about the benefits of formative assessment. Finally, I define and explain the importance of studying teachers and students' perceptions of formative assessment.

In the second chapter, I present the literature review, which covers the main concepts, perspectives, and most relevant research results regarding the origins and evolution of formative assessment. More specifically, I present the four major developments in the evolution of the conception of formative assessment: focus on instrumentation; search for theoretical frameworks; studies of existing assessment practices in their context; and the development of active student involvement in assessment. In this chapter, I present Bloom, Madaus, and Hastings' (1971) taxonomy of assessment as well as discuss the relationship between formative and summative assessment. The definition and benefits of formative assessment in general education, higher education, and second language learning are also discussed in this chapter. Finally, I review perceptions that teachers and students have about formative assessment. I established the three research questions for my study from this literature review

of formative assessment: What is the nature of formative assessment in a second language classroom setting? Do the teacher's assessment practices reflect what she thinks about formative assessment? To what extent do the teacher and her students' perceptions differ or converge?

In the third chapter, I present the methodology of the study. In this chapter, I detail the research plan that I envisaged in order to meet each of the objectives. I discuss the participants in addition to the instruments (i.e., questionnaires, class observation grid, interview outlines), which were adapted from Colby-Kelly and Turner's (2007) and Lyster and Ranta's (1997) respective studies.

In Chapter Four, I present the findings obtained from the teacher interview, student questionnaires, and class observations. In Chapter Five, I describe the results in light of the findings of previous research. I also discuss the limitations of this study and justify the methodological preferences in this chapter. Finally, I describe the major conclusions of the study and the recommendations for further research.

Chapter 1: Problem

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I explore formative assessment in several contexts and present the perceptions that certain teachers have regarding formative assessment. I start this chapter describing my motivation for undertaking this study. Then, I turn my attention to formative assessment in the context of general education. In the second section, I look at formative assessment in the context of higher education (HE). In HE, there is predominance of standard psychometric practices, an emphasis on the grading function of assessment, and restricted theorization of formative assessment in HE. Next, I discuss the topic of formative assessment in second language learning, a field in which this type of research is quite limited. I also describe the present situation of English as a second language (ESOL) programs at universities in English speaking countries. Subsequently, I describe Colby-Kelly and Turner's (2007) and Lyster and Ranta's (1997) studies in detail. I demonstrate how my study carries the aspect of perceptions of formative assessment presented in Colby-Kelly and Turner's report further. In this chapter, I also introduce the purpose of this study, which is to understand how an L2 teacher puts into practice her perceptions of formative assessment and to compare the teacher and her students' perceptions about the benefits of formative assessment. I explain the importance of studying teachers and students' perceptions of formative assessment. This chapter concludes with the general objective of this study: To understand how formative assessment is practiced in two intermediate Oral English courses at the Université de Montréal and to compare how these practices are perceived and performed by the teacher and the students.

1.1. Motivation for the Study

As an ESL teacher in higher education, I have experienced the stress of dealing with large classes, a limited number of teaching hours, and an

important amount of content to cover. I have also noticed the pressure students are under in order to get good grades. I realized that this situation had consequences for their learning because my teaching aim had become to help my students to pass exams. As I started reflecting about the importance of assessing, I realized that it should be not only about what students have learned but about making the assessment a tool for learning. I came to understand that the reason why I had not used formative assessment in my classes was because I wasn't aware of its benefits for the students' learning, but also because I did not perceived it as effective or even something possible to do within the context of my teaching. The more I read, however, the more became convinced that every change starts in the way we perceive things. I decided then that it would be interesting to apply what we know about formative assessment to the field of second language acquisition (SLA).

1.2. Formative Assessment in General Education

Before discussing about formative assessment it is necessary to define the concepts that are the object of this research:

For my study, I developed the following definitions, drawing on the work of the Assessment Reform Group (2002), and Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007):

> **Assessment:** Process of seeking and interpreting evidence for making substantively grounded decisions or judgements about the product of a learning task.
>
> **Formative assessment:** Process of seeking and interpreting evidence for making substantively grounded decisions or judgements about the product of a learning task in order to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. (Note: **Formative assessment**

and **assessment for learning** are used interchangeably throughout the chapters).

Feedback: Comment or information that learners receive from a teacher, from other learners, or from themselves upon reflection, on the product of a learning task (including self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher-student, teacher-group, and teacher-class feedback).

Perception of assessment: Act of perceiving the assessment in the course under investigation by students or teachers (van de Watering et al., 2006).

In order to better understand the formative assessment practices in second language (L2) learning in higher education it is important to first discuss formative assessment in general education. Gather Thurler, and Perrenoud (1988) for example, argued that in the field of general education some teachers and tutors seem to be indifferent to students' failures. What is more, a number of teachers and tutors have never heard about formative assessment.

There are different reasons for why "formative assessment is not at present a strong feature of classroom work" (Black et al., 2003, p. 2). Gather Thurler and Perrenoud (1988), for example, considered that this indifference towards formative assessment in general education is related to the little attention given to formative assessment in teacher training programs. Heritage (2007) added that

> Teachers learn how to teach without learning much about how to assess. Moreover, their administrators also lack training in assessment and therefore do not have the skills to support the development of assessment competencies. (p. 1)

More recently Popham (2009) identified teachers' unfamiliarity with the nature of formative assessment as "a huge, must-surmount obstacle" for " if we can't

get more teachers and administrators to understand the innards of formative assessment, then progress on this front is unlikely" (p. 6).

William, Lee, Harrison, and Black (2004) attributed the limited presence of formative assessment in the class to the pressures teachers are exposed to in terms of external standards. They wrote

> While it is generally acknowledged that increased use of formative assessment (or assessment for learning) leads to higher quality learning, it is often claimed that the pressure in schools to improve the results achieved by students in externally-set tests and examinations precludes its use. (p. 49)

In the same vein, Heritage (2007) mentioned that we are in an accountability environment where assessment is not regarded as a source of information that can be used during instruction. Rather assessment

> has become a tool solely for summarizing what students have learned and for ranking students and schools. In the process, the reciprocal relationship between teaching and assessment has been lost from sight. In a context in which assessment is overwhelmingly identified with the competitive evaluation of schools, teachers, and students, it is scarcely surprising that classroom teachers identify assessment as something external to their everyday practice. (p. 14)

Likewise, Black et al. (2003) mentioned that such external assessment practices that are shaped by national and local requirements for certification and accountability usually do more harm than good. Heritage (2007) noted that this has contributed to teachers feeling that formative assessment is yet another extra and external burden that will interfere with their teaching.

Thus, the harmonization of formative and summative assessment constitutes an important challenge for the implementation of formative

assessment (Scallon, 1986). In theory the roles of both types of assessment should be considered as complementary (Lussier & Turner, 1995); in practice, however, that is not the case (Taras, 2008). Boud (2000) argued that summative assessment has dominated thinking in educational institutions and in public policy debates, and thus takes up a large proportion of teachers' time, energy, and resources at the expense of preparing effective learners. As a result, the formative assessment has been neglected. Boud (2000) criticizes summative assessment as

> a device to inhibit many features of a learning society. It provides a mechanism of control exercised by those who are guardians of particular kinds of knowledge—teachers, educational institutions, professional bodies and occupational standards organisations—over those who are controlled by assessment—students, novices and junior employees. It too easily locates responsibility for making judgements in the hands of others and undermines learners' ability to be effective through simultaneously disguising the criteria and standards of performance being upheld, while convincing them that their interests are being served by increasingly sophisticated assessment schemes. (p. 155)

More recently the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) described the consequences of the predominance of summative assessment. These include teachers feeling pressured to teach to the test and students memorizing rather than understanding. Teachers "perceive these external assessments as being in conflict with – or even inimical to – the practice of formative assessment" (OECD, 2005, p. 24).

In addition to the predominance of summative assessment and the difficulty in harmonizing formative and summative assessment, there is also

another factor that explains the limited presence of formative assessment in class. According to Black et al. (2003) it is difficult for teachers to change practices that were closely embedded within their whole pattern of pedagogy. Consequently the implementation of changes in classroom assessment "would call for rather deep changes both in teacher's perceptions of their own role in relation to their students and in their classroom practice" (Black et al., 2003, p. 13). For these changes to take place, teachers must begin to view formative assessment as yielding valuable information about students. This would lead to teachers seeing formative assessment as inseparable from the teaching process (Heritage, 2007).

In Chapter 2, I will go into this in greater detail; for now I will underline the importance of teachers' perceptions as a crucial factor in the implementation of formative assessment in class.

1.3. Formative Assessment in Higher Education

The context of the present study is higher education, a context that has its own characteristics and that differs from the school context. For example, at school, time is arranged and managed for the students. Students learn what is already known and are not expected to extend that knowledge. In addition, they have frequent access to teachers in the classroom. Also there are limited class sizes. In school, students are expected to choose correct answers from among a limited range of acceptable choices; these are often indicated by teachers. Conversely, higher education demands a great deal of independent study from the students outside the classroom. There are also higher expectations of students' critical and analytical thinking; that is, students have to extend and speculate on what is known. University students have less frequent access to academic staff. In higher education there is a range of classes taught in different formats, such as lecturers and tutorials, online learning, laboratory or field work, and in-class and take-home exams. In addition, university classes can be

very large. University students are expected to provide a broader range of responses which include their own critical analyses (University of New South Wales, 2011).

In higher education, there is discussion about shifting away from teacher-centered learning to more student-centered learning, in which students can claim more ownership of their education. Not surprisingly, higher education institutions need to support this change and encourage a learning environment that will allow students to take this ownership (Ahmed & Teviotdale, 2007). In the last two decades much work has been done in the area of formative assessment that provides evidence that the use of formative assessment can enhance student achievement. Indeed, formative assessment is very important for higher education since it has many benefits for students, teachers and tutors, and universities as a whole (these benefits are discussed in detail in Chapter 2). However, although formative assessment is generally acknowledged in higher education, its important role in student learning is often overlooked (Yorke, 2003). This is due to three main influences, which I discuss in the following sections.

1.3.1. Predominance of standard psychometric practice

Psychometricians and teachers are concerned with different aspects of education. Whereas the former are concerned with the quantification of individual differences, teachers are interested in bringing about change in students' performance (Biggs, 1998). Nevertheless, the language, actions, and procedures of many teachers and more administrators, and the conceptions of assessment they hold, derive from psychometrics (Biggs, 1998). The problem is that these psychometric conceptions are not in line with those needed to understand and implement formative assessment (Biggs, 1996a, 1996b; Gipps, 1994; Taylor, 1994). The question then is "how can you address change using

concepts and a technology based on the stability of traits, and their normal distribution in the population?" (Biggs, 1998, p. 109).

What the predominance of standard psychometric practice in higher education means for formative assessment is that while the latter may be evident at an abstract high-level, it is not so evident in teaching methods and practices (Allal, Bain, & Perrenoud, 1993; Teasdale & Leung, 2000).

1.3.2. Emphasis on grading function of assessment

As I show in Chapter 2, grading is not really a function of assessment but a means of communicating assessment results. However, certain scholars (Boud, 2000; Crooks 1988; Wood, 1986) have referred to the emphasis on the grading function of assessment as evidence of the need to present a broader view of assessment which is focused on its use to improve teaching and learning.

Crooks (1988), for example, stated that "too much emphasis has been placed on the grading function of evaluation, and too little on its role in assisting students to learn" (p. 468). He claimed that the integral role of evaluation in teaching and learning needs to be understood. Wood (1986) argued that emphasizing the grading function of assessment leads to undesirable effects for the students such as: less intrinsic motivation, increased evaluation anxiety, ability attributions for success and failure that undermine student effort, lowered self-efficacy for learning in the weaker students, reduced use and effectiveness of feedback to improve learning, and poorer social relationships among the students. What is more, the strong emphasis on the grading function of assessment has also led to the overuse of features normally associated with standardized testing, such as very formal testing conditions, tests with strict time limits, a restricted range of item types, and emphasis on the overall score rather than what can be learned about strengths and weaknesses.

In the same vein, Boud (2000) denounced that as a society we have "become obsessed with certification and grading and public measures of performance and accountability" (p. 155). Although this author recognized that accountability and portrayal of accomplishments are clearly important, he criticized that in the process of giving attention to certification, the interest in learning and the necessary assessment processes which need to accompany it have been pushed into the background.

1.3.3. Insufficient theorization in formative assessment

Another reason why the importance of formative assessment in student learning has tended to be overlooked is because it is under-theorized in higher education assessment literature (Yorke, 2003). A few authors, such as Brown and Knight (1994) and Gipps (1994), referred to the need for more theory-building relating to formative assessment. The former, for example, listed a number of assumptions on which formative assessment depends in relation to students, the assessment task, and teachers, while the latter acknowledged the need of theorizing. However, neither made real contributions to the theorizing of formative assessment. It is imperative, nevertheless, to theorize assessment because theory provides a framework for the construction of assessments of various kinds. In addition, untheorized assessment (as is widely used in higher education) increases the risk of partiality and marginalizes important aspects of assessment.

According to Yorke (2003), part of the problem may reside in the duality of meaning of the word assessment.

> On the one hand an assessment is an outcome of the act of assessing: the grade and/or comment attached to a piece of work. On the other hand, it is a process that involves the assessor, the piece of work or behaviour in question, and the student:

> formative assessment is quintessentially process-oriented. (p. 485)

Yorke (2003) suggested that a theory of formative assessment must be epistemologically and ontologically in line with the discipline. In addition, it must include: constructs related to learning and assessment; the professional knowledge of the educator/ assessor (disciplinary knowledge, knowledge of student development, and knowledge of assessment methodology and the psychology of giving and receiving feedback); and theory relating to communication and interpretation. These important aspects will be revisited in the discussion of the results of this study.

Another aspect that may have contributed to the lack of theorization in formative assessment is the fact that formative assessment and summative assessment are not seen as complementary but as contradictory. Thus, texts on assessment in higher education deal predominantly with summative assessment and vary considerably in the extent to which the problems, such as threats to validity and reliability, are acknowledged (Brown, Bull, & Pendlebury, 1997; Brown & Knight, 1994; Heywood, 2000). Likewise, Sadler (1989) wrote that

> authors of textbooks on measurement and assessment published during the past 25 years have placed great emphasis on achieving high content validity in teacher-made tests, producing reliable scores or grades, and the statistical manipulation or interpretation of scores. Only cursory attention has usually been given to feedback and formative assessment, and then it is mostly hortatory, recipe-like and atheoretic. (p. 119)

More recently, Black and Wiliam (2009) argued that while many definitions of formative assessment have been offered, "there is no clear rationale to define and delimit it within broader theories of pedagogy" (p. 5). These authors aimed to offer such a rationale within a framework that could also unify the diverse set

of pedagogic initiatives that have been described as formative, such as cognitive acceleration and dynamic assessment, self-regulated learning, and classroom discourse. Black and Wiliam (2009) added that even though the teacher is seen as responsible for student learning, it is also necessary to take account of the role that the learners and their peers play in this process. Thus, "the responsibility for learning rests with both the teacher and the learner, [and] it is incumbent on each to do all they can to mitigate the impact of any failures of the other" (p. 7).

As it is shown in Figure 1 below, there are three aspects that need to be considered in formative assessment: where the learners are in their learning, where they are going, and what needs to be done to get them there. These three aspects imply the active involvement of the teacher, peers, and individual learners in the development of the 5 key strategies listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Aspects of Formative Assessment

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Where the learner going</th><th>Where the learner is right now</th><th>How to get there</th></tr>
<tr><td>Teacher</td><td rowspan="3">1. Clarifying learning objectives and criteria for success

1.1 Understanding and sharing learning objectives and criteria for success

1.2 Understanding learning objectives and criteria for success</td><td>2. Leading effective discussions and developing tasks that elicit evidence of student understanding</td><td>3. Providing feedback that moves learners forward</td></tr>
<tr><td>Peer</td><td colspan="2">4. Students as instructional resources for one another</td></tr>
<tr><td>Learner</td><td colspan="2">5. Students as owners of own learning</td></tr>
</table>

(adapted from Black & Wiliam, 2009)

Overall, due to the predominance of the above three influences, there is a great need to shift towards more formative assessment in higher education. Specifically, I am interested in the field of L2 learning. However, "assessment, with specific reference to teaching and learning in the language classroom, has remained, until recently, relatively unresearched" (Rea-Dickins, 2004, p. 249). The present study addresses this gap. In the following section I will present some relevant aspects regarding formative assessment in L2 learning.

1.4. Formative Assessment in L2 Learning

Since the late 1960s, language testing scholars have been occupied with the nature of the L2 construct. Recent interest in social-interactional perspectives on teacher-student and student-peer communications is having an impact on formative assessment in L2 learning. It has highlighted learner-directed approaches and the interactive nature of learning situations (Chaloub-Deville, 2003; Leung & Mohan, 2004). For example, Brown (1995), McNamara (1997), and Mohan (1998) have called for attending to the co-constructed nature of talk in the testing of spoken language. In other words, the language used by a student has to be understood in the context of the exchanges between all participants involved. This applies to many forms of assessment that use co-constructed interactions between the assessor and the assessed (whether spoken or written) to evaluate language.

Black (2001) recognized that

> [m]ost theorists emphasize the importance of language in learning. Interaction takes place through language discourse, which is learned and understood in particular social contexts. . . From this perspective language is no longer the property and the product of an individual acting in isolation. Language is taken to mean the use of language as discourse in social interaction. (pp. 15-16)

In addition, since students also bring to curriculum and assessment tasks their own understandings and interpretations of what is to be done in specific contexts (often with others), teachers' assessments have to take into account the agentive aspect in both teacher action and student performance. Indeed, it is important to consider how teachers and students construe their interaction through discourse (Leung & Mohan, 2004).

Another important aspect to mention is that classroom teacher assessment often goes beyond the perspective of standardized assessment. In standardized assessment, student performance is regarded as evidence of individual learning or cognitive processes. For example, student talk is seen as a product of individual psycho-cognitive processes. In this sense, spoken language is taken to represent the externalization of individual thinking. However, this is an incomplete perspective, as Leung and Mohan (2004) pointed out.

> The language in talk is a representation and a manifestation of an underlying language repertoire, however defined. From this view, the assessment of talk taps into a student's current state of language competence or level of proficiency; talk is treated as if it is a form of individual monologue unsullied by any other influence. . . However, if classroom talk is construed as part of social interaction between teachers and students and among students themselves, then one needs to take a more complexified and dynamic view. (p. 339)

Leung and Mohan (2004) warned of the dangers of standardized testing if taken as the paradigm case for classroom formative assessment—as in Brown and Hudson (1998)—and if the model for thinking about formative assessment is simply a teacher giving feedback by telling a student the results of a test, or saying whether the students' answers are right or wrong. When formative

assessment is defined as continuous feedback during a course, versus summative assessment as feedback at the end of a course, it is a seriously inadequate definition for the analysis of classroom interaction data.

Another problem related to the standardized assessment or testing position is the lack of emphasis on students as agents and decision-makers. Historically, language testing has been strongly influenced by behaviourism and this has appeared in the design of language tests and their components. Thus, Clark (1972) used the term 'stimulus' for materials related to the testing task, and the term 'response' for the student's reaction to the stimulus. A slightly move away from the behaviourist roots in testing is Bachman's (1990) substitution of the word 'input' for 'stimulus'. He did, however, retain the word 'response'.

There is, however, some work in testing that gives greater attention to the test-taker as agent, and particularly as decision-maker. Test situations typically require the test-taker to make choices, and in the case of multiple-choice testing to explicitly make a selection from a menu. Attali and Bar-Hillel (2001) discuss how when students are pressured for time towards the end of a test, they adopt a strategy of arbitrary guessing by picking a single answer position to mark for the rest of the test. According to Leung and Mohan (2004), the issue of reasoned decision-making by test-takers, as opposed to guessing, is also of central concern in formative assessment, since

> [i]n a possible world where learners merely picked answers by guessing, test validity would be without meaning; passing an English test, for example, would not be a measure of English knowledge, but a matter of chance. (p. 341)

Consequently, formative assessment cannot have any impact in a context where the learner continues to guess rather than being expected to incorporate guidance into future test decisions. In the field of second language education in

higher education, there is an urgent need to promote the benefits of formative assessment, especially because of the predominance of summative assessment practices. This is due in large part to standardized tests that students must pass in order to study in universities of English speaking countries. In the next section I describe the most common of these tests, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), as an example of how powerful the test is in shaping classroom practices; that is, teachers teach to the test and students take courses specifically to pass the test, rather than for learning.

In Chapter 2, I will return in detail to formative assessment in L2 in higher education. In the next section, I turn my attention to L2 programs at English-speaking universities.

1.4.1. ESL programs at universities in English-speaking countries

Students who do not speak English as a first language, but who wish to study at an English-speaking university, have to demonstrate that their English language proficiency is at an adequate level on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) before they can be admitted to their program (Cheng, Rogers & Hu, 2004). Most universities in English-speaking countries (i.e., the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada) rely on TOEFL scores for admissions, and scholarship and graduation decisions. In fact, over 6,000 colleges, universities, and agencies in 130 countries accept TOEFL scores. Since 1964, more than 22 million people have taken the test. Each institution has its own minimum level of acceptable performance on the TOEFL. The minimum acceptable scores vary depending on several factors: field of study; level of study; whether the applicant will be a teaching assistant; and whether the institution offers ESL support for students (ETS, 2012).

The TOEFL is not only a written test: It consists of Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing sections. The entire test takes about four hours to complete, all on the same day. Thus, part of the entrance requirement for

undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs at English-speaking universities around the world is that students have a certain ability to communicate in English.

In most cases, the TOEFL is administered as an Internet-based test (iBT). Where the iBT is not possible, the paper-and-pencil (PBT) version of the test is still offered. During the test, test takers are allowed to take notes, but these are destroyed upon completion to maintain test security. For the Speaking section, test takers wear noise-cancelling headphones and speak into a microphone. These digital files are sent to ETS' Online Scoring Network for rating: The same is done with the typed responses of the Writing section. Human raters, who are trained and certified by ETS, rate the Speaking and Writing responses. Scores are reported both online and by mail, depending on the version of the test taken (ETS, 2012).

Before taking this examination, many students enrol in short-term TOEFL preparation courses (usually from 2 to 15 weeks long). Researchers have shown that the content and format of the TOEFL heavily influence the assessment practices in TOEFL courses (Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Hamp-Lyons, 1998). Generally, students have completed some extended English programs before enrolling in the preparation courses (Cheng et al., 2004).

In Canada, ESL training is offered by many different institutions, including colleges and universities, high schools, and private language schools. Most of these will offer some kind of initial exam, such as CAEL (Canadian Academic English Language Assessment), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) in order to place students in appropriate skill level classes. After mastering the ESL courses, students can then take English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses, which

are designed to help students gain the skills necessary for academic reading and writing. EAP courses prepare students for different areas of study like business English, conversational English, English for specific purposes (medical, legal, dental, etc.), and university and college preparation (EI Group, 2012). Each year, roughly 3500 students are enrolled in ESL programs in Canada (Cheng et al., 2004). Therefore, it is clear that standardized tests, such as the TOEFL, influence teaching and learning practices and create challenges for teachers to use formative assessment in their classes. With this in mind, in the following section I provide information of the particular context of my research.

1.4.2. Context of the present study

This study took place in two English intermediate oral classes at the Language School of the Faculté de l'éducation permanente de l'Université de Montréal in Quebec, Canada. In Quebec the provincial evaluation system is based on a competency approach. Evaluation is defined in *The Policy of Evaluation of Learning* as "the process whereby a judgment is made on a student's learning on the basis of information gathered, analyzed and interpreted, for the purpose of making pedagogical and administrative decisions" (MEQ, 2003, p. 4). Competency is defined as "the power to act, succeed and make progress by means of the effective mobilization and use of an integrated set of resources to deal with various life situations" (MEQ, 2003, p. 44).

The assessment of learning is considered an essential component of the curriculum. The Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (MEQ) views educational success as characterized by the overall development of a student. This means that the assessment of learning has to cater to students as individuals, with their social and intellectual development in mind (MEQ, 2003). Thus, the policy of assessment in Quebec fosters an environment in which for students can track their progress in relation to the different competencies. Therefore, this provides

a good context in which to examine formative assessment. At this point, I turn my attention to the two studies upon which my study was based: Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007) and Lyster and Ranta (1997).

1.5. Baseline Studies: Colby-Kelly & Turner (2007); Lyster & Ranta (1997)

I decided to base my research on Colby-Kelly and Turner's (2007) and Lyster and Ranta's (1997) studies for several reasons. In particular, I found Colby-Kelly and Turner's (2007) research question regarding teachers and students perceptions of formative assessment in a university L2 classroom setting inspiring and it was the point of departure of my thesis. After reading their article, I started reading more about formative assessment as well as the impact of perceptions in the uses, or misuses, of formative assessment.

Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007) conducted a descriptive, mixed methods study to examine formative assessment practices at a Canadian continuing education program that specializes in pre-university English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes, over three months in 2005. They were interested in the bridge between assessment and curriculum, teaching, and learning, and the usefulness of classroom assessment for learners, teachers, and learning. Their research questions were: "What are teacher and student perceptions of formative assessment in a second language classroom setting?; what is the nature of formative assessment in an oral intermediate second language classroom setting?; and, what evidence can be found that formative assessment benefits learning?" (p. 18). Different instruments were used during different phases of the study to address each question.

Participants in their study were nine teachers and 42 students, who were recruited from an advanced level, pre-university EAP program. Only one teacher and one student from that level declined to participate in the study. The participant teachers were one male and eight female teachers, who reported English as their mother tongue. They had all had at least seven years of

teaching experience at the school. The student participants were in four different classes and were from various mother-tongue backgrounds. Most of the students were in the course with the goal of most of entering an English-language university.

There were pre-, during-, and post-sessions of data collection over an eight-week, intensive EAP course. For example, pre-study teacher questionnaires were administered to the nine teachers. Then, two advanced-level classes, which were team-taught by four teachers, had 17 students each. Classes were observed 16 times during the course. The classes were audio-recorded and field notes were taken. Post-study interviews were conducted with 12 students from four classes. These were audio-recorded and field notes were taken.

Data were collected using a mixed-methods approach and analyzed using interpretational analysis. Whereas frequency counts (i.e., quantitative data) were calculated for data from the questionnaire, curriculum analysis, and observations, there were qualitative analyses of classroom observation field notes and student interviews. The data were triangulated.

Data from the teacher questionnaires answered their first research question. Overall, the teachers did not agree with the idea of formative assessment in the form of feedback or other similar procedures. Nonetheless, their answers reflected positive opinions about formative assessment in their classrooms.

The classroom observation data answered the second research question. The researchers found that the participant teachers favoured and practised a large formative assessment component and generally followed similar formative assessment procedures.

Finally, to address the third research question, student interview data were used, as well as a method for determining assessment usefulness. What

the researchers found was that the perceived success of an assessment procedure may not equal actual success.

Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007) concluded their report by calling "for a move from descriptive studies to this next level of validation of formative assessment methods, in evaluating claims about the usefulness of assessment methods and practices" (p. 33). My study, therefore, seeks to raise the subject of a teacher and her students' perceptions of the usefulness of assessment methods and practices. I have taken up Colby-Kelly and Turner's (2007) question regarding the nature of formative assessment in an L2 classroom setting as well as the teacher and student perceptions of formative assessment. However, my research also focused on the coherence between the teacher's perceptions and her performance regarding formative assessment; in this sense, my study extended Colby-Kelly and Turner's. I am interested in how an L2 teacher puts into practice her perceptions of formative assessment and to compare the teacher and her students' perceptions about the benefits of formative assessment. I am convinced that a teacher's perceptions play a key role in the implementation of formative assessment because I believe that a teacher will only initiate formative assessment in her class if she perceives that it is valuable and useful.

It is important to mention the similarity between Colby-Kelly and Turner's study and mine. Namely, I am interested in the nature of formative assessment in a L2 classroom setting and in the teacher and students' perceptions of formative assessment in an L2 classroom. Where my study differs, however, is that instead of looking for evidence that formative assessment benefits learning as Colby-Kelly and Turner did, I focused on the coherence between the teacher's perceptions and her actual formative assessment practices. I pursued this direction because I am interested in the fact that the teacher and her students may have different perceptions regarding

formative assessment, and in ascertaining if the teacher experiences inconsistency between her perceptions and her actual performance in the class.

The second study that I drew on in developing my study was Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study of corrective feedback and learner uptake (i.e., responses to feedback). Their typology of corrective feedback was used in the present study to look at the nature of formative assessment in a second language classroom setting.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified different types of corrective feedback to see how they were used in classrooms. In addition, they looked at how student uptake differed according to the different types of corrective feedback. Finally, they were interested in what combinations of feedback and uptake would lead to the negotiation of form. Thus, they developed an analytic model to capture the moves in an error treatment sequence in an L2 class. Then, they applied the model to a database of interactions from four primary-level French immersion classrooms in order to document the frequency and distribution of corrective feedback in relation to learner uptake.

The four classes came from two school boards, in the Montreal area. Class size was on average 25 students. In total, there were 104 4th and 5th grade students in the French immersion classes. At the time of observation, French instruction amounted to 60% of their school day. Of the total 27 lessons observed, 17 were in subject-matter classes (science, social studies, mathematics) and 10 were in French language arts lessons, providing more than 18 hours of data in the database. Error sequences were categorized and counted. These sequences began with a student's erroneous utterance, which was followed either by the teacher's corrective feedback or none. If feedback was given, then the student's uptake was recorded. However, there was not always student uptake. Non-responses were also calculated in the analysis.

The study led to the identification of six types of feedback moves: explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, elicitation, repetition of error, and metalinguistic feedback. I describe these here.

When the teacher provides the correct form, using an expression such as "You should say X", this is *explicit correction. Recasts* involve the teacher restating of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error. *Clarification requests*, such as "What do you mean by X?", tell students that they need to either repeat or repair their utterance. There are at least three *elicitation* techniques. First, teachers can say something like "There's a….", and students are expected to complete the utterance. Second, teachers elicit using questions, such as, "How do you say X?". Finally, teachers can ask students to reformulate their utterance, as in, "Can you repeat that?". *Repetition* refers to the teacher's repetition of the student's error, using intonation to highlight the error. *Metalinguistic feedback* includes comments or questions about grammaticality of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correction (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

In addition, Lyster and Ranta (1997) distinguished 9 types of uptake. Uptake is the student's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback; that is, what the student does with the information provided by the teacher. I will define these here.

When a student repeats the teacher's feedback, this is *repetition. Incorporation* refers to when a student not only repeats the correct form provided in the feedback, but then uses it in a longer utterance. *Self-repair* is when the student produces the correct form, if it is not already provided in the feedback (e.g., when the teacher elicits). *Peer-repair* refers to peer-correction provided by a student, in response to the teacher's feedback. When students respond to the teacher's feedback with 'yes' or 'no', this is classified as *acknowledgment*. *Hesitation* refers to a student's hesitation in response to the

teacher's feedback. With *same error*, the student repeats the same erroneous utterance. With *different error,* the students provides another erroneous utterance in response to the teacher's feedback. Finally, *partial repair* refers to when the student corrects part of the utterance, but not all of it (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

In Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study, the feedback types that that led to negotiation of form and student repair were: elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests, and repetition. The first two of these were found to be more powerful in leading to repairs than the latter two.

The present study looks at the nature of formative assessment in terms of the 6 types of corrective feedback proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997). Like Lyster and Ranta, I am interested in their distribution in a communicatively-oriented L2 classroom and the distribution of uptake (repetition, incorporation, self-repair, peer-repair, acknowledgment, hesitation) following different types of corrective feedback.

Because, following Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007), I investigated perceptions of formative assessment, in the next section I turn to describing and defining this.

1.6. Perceptions of Formative Assessment

For the purpose of my study, the definition of perception of assessment is fairly straightforward: It is the students' or teachers' act of perceiving the assessment in the course under investigation (Van de Watering et al., 2006). However, teachers' perceptions of formative assessment can be explored under three different perspectives: Relating to student motivation; extra work for teachers; and encroaching on teaching hours (Scallon, 2000).

With respect to student motivation, some teachers feel that formative assessment does not sufficiently motivate students because they are overly accustomed to graded tasks (Scallon, 2000). Thus teachers fear that students

will ignore or neglect tasks that do not count for their report cards. Indeed, students who are used to continuous reinforcement and extrinsic motivation are not going to feel particularly enthusiastic about having to complete tasks that will not be graded. However, the knowledge and skills demanded from common formative tasks such as exercises and homework can eventually be graded. In addition, in order to motivate students to do the practice tasks (i.e., exercises, homework), they should be intrinsically meaningful (Sambell, McDowell, & Brown, 1997). Certainly, in order to associate 'authentic' formative assessment with student motivation, frequent feedback and high quality of the information that is transmitted to the students are necessary (Scallon, 2000).

The second aspect of teachers' perceptions of formative assessment refers to the 'extra' work it implies for them because of the time they have to commit to correcting student work (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003). Indeed, regulating students' work by feedback implies certain challenges for teachers. For example, feedback is traditionally provided by the teachers who write comments on the students' work (e.g., a composition or an essay), while at the same time grading this work. Correcting exercises and homework and writing comments are the most common complaints expressed by teachers—especially in higher education, known for its large classes—who perceive formative assessment as extra work. Undeniably, the extra work caused by formative assessment cannot be totally avoided. As with any other pedagogical innovation, the constant concern to help students who are experiencing difficulty by frequently regulating their work demands extra effort from the teacher. However, self and peer assessment are strategies that release teachers from the need to solve every learning difficulty in class by themselves. In other words, when teachers choose formative assessment strategies that

engage students this allows teachers to act as resources rather than being responsible for all corrections and assessments (Scallon, 2000).

Finally, teachers tend to feel that formative assessment infringes on their teaching hours. Many teachers view formative assessment as different from the activities of teaching and learning. This is certainly likely when formative assessment is based exclusively on mastery tests corrected by the teacher and graded in order to be used in the final grades. When tests do not provide feedback to the students, corrective intervention is necessary in order to be able to make the link to formative assessment. In short, it is true that formative assessment interferes with teachers' time in this situation. This perception of formative assessment probably stems from the confusion between formative assessment and other functions of assessment (these are discussed in Chapter 3). At this point I pose the question: If teachers are truly interested in students learning, how is it possible for them to consider an assessment practice annoying or inconvenient if it leads to improved learning? It is understandable that teachers already have a lot on their plates, especially in loaded programs in which there is little extra room to backtrack. On the other hand, the practice of assessing all work with the goal of certification or attestation, or where every test is carried out at pre-determined moments in order to produce a report card, also leads to this perception of formative assessment infringing on teachers' time. However, in this case, the assessment is not formative in its strict sense.

The trouble that underlines the above three perceptions of formative assessment is that it is perceived by the majority of teachers as a rigid and strict practice that is managed within a context that leaves little space for regulation activities (Scallon, 2000).

An additional challenge that inhibits the use of formative assessment originates in traditional assessments, which value the concepts of excellence and good grades (Hadji, 1997). Also, there is no real unifying theory in

formative assessment that could inspire teachers. Finally, some teachers might resist changing their teaching practices, a step which is necessary for formative assessment (Hadji, 1997).

As Scallon (2000) argued, all these reasons to hesitate engaging in a practice of formative assessment must be taken seriously. The perceptions that certain teachers have regarding formative assessment are due in part to insufficient training in assessment, but also to the body of knowledge in which formative assessment is too similar to other functions of non-formative assessment. Thus, it appears that there is some confusion surrounding what formative assessment really entails. For example, supervision of a group of students that is experiencing certain difficulties cannot be considered as encroaching on teaching hours, yet this is one type of formative assessment. Moreover frequent practice that provides the student with corrective feedback cannot be excluded from teaching. Training students to assess and regulate their learning is not a marginal aspect within a formation system. It seems that the hesitations, the inhibitions, and the difficulties discussed above correspond to other functions of assessment rather than formative assessment itself (Scallon, 2000).

Overall, it is clear that teachers perceptions play an important role in the integration of formative assessment into the teaching and learning process. This, therefore, provides rationale for investigating teachers' perceptions of formative assessment in relation to their actual practices. Thus, I have chosen to study a teacher and her students' perceptions of formative assessment for two main reasons: First, there is the fact that implementing formative assessment calls for deep changes in teachers' perceptions of their own role in relation to their students and to their classroom practice (Black & Wiliam, 1998); and second because it is clear that perceptions can largely impact the teaching and

learning processes. I return to these two points in Chapter 2. First, however, I state the objective of the present study.

1.7. General Objective

Given:

- the large number of students who find it necessary to study EFL or ESL in higher education;
- the influence of external high-stakes testing on English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching and learning;
- the central role that formative assessment plays in the teaching and learning process;
- the limited research in formative assessment in L2 learning in higher education; and
- the impact of formative assessment perceptions on its implementation as well as on the teaching and learning process;

the main objective of this study is to understand how formative assessment is practiced in two Intermediate Oral English courses at the Université de Montréal and to compare how these practices are perceived and performed by the teacher and her students.

1.8. Contribution of this Research Project

As I have stated previously, although the importance of formative assessment for student learning is generally acknowledged, it is not well understood across higher education (Yorke, 2003). This is due to the predominance of standardized testing, an emphasis on the grading function of assessment, and a lack of theory about formative assessment. In the field of second language learning, research about formative assessment is still quite limited even though there has been a rise of interest in assessment for learning

practices (i.e., self assessment, peer assessment, feedback). In the past 20 years, these have increasingly been considered as essential elements to improving student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Harlen & Winter, 2004; van de Watering & van der Rijt, 2006).

Even though the present study is inspired by Colby-Kelly & Turner's (2007) report, I carry the aspect of perceptions of formative assessment further by looking at how an L2 teacher's practice is influenced by her perceptions of formative assessment and to compare the teacher and students' perceptions about the benefits of formative assessment. This is one of the major contributions of this study.

I expect that the impact of this study will result in a better understanding of formative assessment practices in L2 in higher education. Although this is a case study of a specific context (two intermediate oral English classes at the Université de Montréal and one teacher), I believe that it will increase ESL/EAP teachers' awareness of the importance of perceptions of formative assessment in broader contexts. In addition, I anticipate that the findings will shed light on how students and their teacher can have different perceptions regarding formative assessment, and—what may be more challenging—on how a teacher might experience inconsistency between her perceptions and performance in the classroom.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2. Introduction

In order to reach the general objective stated in the previous chapter, in this chapter, I review relevant literature to establish the relationship between formative and summative assessment. I also review studies pertaining to teachers' and students' perceptions of assessment in L2 classrooms in higher education. In this regard, I rely in particular on Colby-Kelly and Turner's (2007) report, which inspired my research project. Finally, I discuss the nature of formative assessment and its evolution in the context of L2 classrooms in higher education and provide evidence of the benefits of formative assessment to learning through feedback and self/peer assessment. Finally, I state the three research questions that emerged from the literature review.

2.1. Origin and Evolution of Formative Assessment

Understanding assessment as a tool in order to promote student learning is not a particularly new idea. Since the beginnings of formal education, teachers have sought to assess students for their benefit, rather than for the benefit of the system. This emphasis on student learning is precisely the core of formative assessment (Perrenoud, 1998).

Allal and Mottier Lopez (2005) provided a concise overview of the evolution of formative assessment, which I synthesize here. Scriven (1967) first introduced the concept of formative evaluation in relation to the evaluation of curricula, methods, and instructional material. Formative evaluation would allow beneficial changes to be made during the development phases of a new programme as well as in its implementation. It did not take long for this idea of formative evaluation to be applied to student learning. Bloom's (1968) model of mastery learning distinguished several successive phases in an instructional unit, beginning with activities related to the objectives, followed by a formative assessment. The results of this assessment guide what happens next and can

help the teacher identify which students need some additional guidance. The teacher is in charge of each phase of teaching, assessing, and correcting and the goal is for all students to master the unit objectives. In Bloom's model, the aim of formative assessment is the *remediation* of learning difficulties. Bloom et al. (1971) emphasized that students' mistakes should be considered as part of the learning process and not as condemnable weaknesses; in so doing, they placed formative assessment of learning outcomes in the educational process.

In the English-language literature on formative assessment, the term evaluation has over the years been replaced with assessment when the focus is on student learning in the classroom. In this thesis, I use the term assessment. In contrast, the word *évaluation* is used in French to refer to both student assessment and program evaluation (Allal & Mottier Lopez, 2005). However, French-language research has provided the concept of *regulation* of learning (feedback and adaptation), in place of *remediation* (feedback and correction). *Regulation* refers to the adaptation of the way of functioning, especially to external conditions (*Le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique,* 1990). Just as a central heating system must be regulated when it is manual, but not when it is an automatic system, in the regulation of learning, there are moments in which the teacher must intervene constantly, but there are also instances in which students ensure their own regulation and there is no need for the teacher to intervene (Scallon, 2000).

Allal (1979) distinguished *interactive, retroactive,* and *proactive regulation* as types of formative assessment. *Interactive regulation* involves continuous observation in the classroom and does not require any particular measuring instrument. This type of regulation comes from learners' interactions with other learners and the teacher or from self-regulated activities. The many different forms of interactive regulation during a task allow for ongoing feedback, guidance, and adaptations during each step of the learning process.

On the other hand, *retroactive regulation* refers to when a formative assessment is conducted at the end of teaching sequence. This allows teachers to identify the objectives that have or have not been reached by each student. In this sense, it is similar to Bloom's (1968) notion of remediation. Retroactive regulation involves instrumental tasks and observations about the product, rather than the process of learning. Finally, *proactive regulation* refers to when teachers use information about individual differences in students to prepare tasks that lead to enriched learning. This type of regulation focuses on individuals' strengths, rather than on the remediation of weaknesses.

In Bloom's (1968) initial conception of formative assessment, the teacher was responsible for planning and managing all the assessments and deciding on the best remediation. This has shifted however, so that how external regulation (by the teacher, test, or remedial material) has been redefined as scaffolding students to develop their own self-regulation. No longer is the teacher solely responsible for assessment: Students are engaged in formative assessment using strategies such as self-assessment, peer-assessment, and teacher-student assessment (Allal, 1999). Formative assessment seeks to find qualitative differences among students and then uses these to develop individualized assessment tasks and regulations in class (Allal & Mottier Lopez, 2005).

In the following sections I will present four major developments in the evolution of the conception of formative assessment identified in the French-language literature based on the work of Allal and Mottier Lopez (2005).

2.1.1. Major developments in the evolution of formative assessment

Each new development in the evolution of formative assessment has attempted to overcome certain limitations of prior perspectives. It is important to mention that these new developments have led to successive re-conceptualizations of formative assessment, integrating prior contributions,

rather than to the disappearance of earlier viewpoints (Allal & Mottier Lopez, 2005).

2.1.1.1. The first development: focus on instrumentation.

The first phase of development was characterized by a focus on instrument development. Bloom et al.'s (1971) *Handbook on Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning* was used by French researchers to develop formative assessment instruments complete with learning objectives and corresponding formative and remediation tasks. The computer-based item banks that were later developed have allowed for diagnostic error analysis.

Buck and Tatsuoka (1998) provided a significant step in the development of assessment instruments in the field of second language learning. They were the first to apply rule-space methodology to language testing. This is methodology provides diagnostic information on individual test-takers on cognitive and linguistic attributes such as their knowledge, skills, abilities, and strategies. Their study suggested attributes underlying performance on language tests can be identified. This has been a significant contribution to the development of assessment instruments.

2.1.1.2. Search for theoretical frameworks.

The second development emphasized the search for theoretical frameworks. The most significant theories that have influenced assessment and language teaching - behaviourism, Krashen's theory of SLA, cognitive and sociocognitive theory - are discussed below.

Bloom's (1979) conception of assessment was based on a behaviourist model of learning (Allal & Mottier Lopez, 2005). According to behaviourists change in an individual's behaviour occurs as a result of extrinsic motivation, which can come from incentives, rewards, and punishments. Thus, the focus of behavioural instruction is on goals that can be measured and controlled. These

are determined by the teacher, who verifies that students have met the objectives when they respond appropriately to controlled stimuli (Vienneau, 2005).

Skinner (1957) believed that learning a language has to do with forming the right kinds of habits, and these are shaped by positive reinforcement. This theory of language learning has greatly influenced the field of language teaching (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). The audio-lingual method, for example, is rooted in behavourism. It emphasizes using drills to encourage the development of the right language habits. The idea is that correct responses are rewarded, thus learned, whereas errors are pointed out and thus not added to the language repertoire (Gaonac'h,1987). Behavourism also favoured the use of contrastive analysis of languages, which is based on the idea that similar areas of languages would be easily acquired, whereas areas that are different would present more difficulties for students.

Accordingly, behaviourist approaches to language teaching saw errors as obstacles to learning and as needing to be avoided. Errors were evidence of failure on the part of the teacher and the learning. The way to correct errors was to provide the correct form, by means of drills (Amigues, 1990).

However, this behaviourist perspective shifted by the end of the 1960s, when it was argued that errors were not obstacles, but evidence of learning and progress (Corder, 1967). Corder argued that learner errors could signal to the teacher how close to the learning objectives the learner was moving. In addition, they could help researchers understand the process of language acquisition. Finally, errors could be useful to learners themselves if they are encouraged to learn from them.

Selinker's (1972) theory of interlanguage also considered errors to be evidence of L2 learning. Making an error signals that learners are formulating and testing hypothesis. Consequently, research has shown that contrary to what

behaviourists believed, errors should not been avoided because they are an important aspect of the learning process. Nevertheless, correcting errors is something that must be undertaken with care. On the one hand, if the teacher corrects every error, learners might end up not wanting to produce any language at all. On the other hand, if the teacher ignores all errors, this can lead to the fossilization of errors (Selinker, 1972).

The effects of this new approach of the error are especially evident in the communicative approach and in Krashen's monitor hypothesis. I discuss this in the next section.

Krashen (1985) criticized behaviourism for neglecting the psychological aspect of learning a language. He developed a theory of second language acquisition that has five main hypotheses, which I discuss here.

First, the acquisition-learning hypothesis of L2 performance contains differentiates between acquisition and learning. The former is a subconscious process, such as when children experience learn their mother language. On the other hand, the latter is a result of formal teaching of lessons about the language and grammar rules (Krashen, 1985).

Second, Krashen proposed the monitor hypothesis, which explains the connection between acquisition and learning. The acquisition system is responsible of the production of the words, while the learning system acts like an editor by correcting errors according to grammar rules that the learner had already learned. Usually shy and less confident learners rely heavily on their monitors, inhibiting their overall output. On the other hand, more confident learners tend to under-use their monitors, often resulting in greater output, but often with more errors.

Third, according to the natural order hypothesis, the acquisition of grammar rules follows a natural order. This implies that not all learners can acquire grammatical structures in the same way; rather, acquisition depends on

the age and background of the learner and the type of exposure (classroom or outside classroom). Therefore, some grammar rules are more easily picked up and thus acquired earlier for some learners, but not for others.

Fourth, is the input hypothesis, which is concerned with acquisition not learning. This hypothesis proposes that learners need to be exposed to input that slightly above their current level. The input needs to be relevant to the learner and there needs to be a sufficient quantity of input for acquisition to occur. Thus, the input hypothesis has been very influential in supporting communicative language teaching. Because not all learners have the same level of linguistic competence, Krashen suggested that language teaching curricula need to include natural communicative input so that each learner will receive some input that is just above their current level of competence (i.e., i + 1).

Finally, Krashen proposed the affective filter hypothesis. When the affective filter is low, learners are more confident, they have no anxiety and they are motivated (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Therefore, it is argued that they can more easily acquire language. Those with less confidence and lower motivation would have a higher affective filter, which blocks input from being acquired. However, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient for acquisition to take place (Krashen, 1982).

Krashen's hypotheses have been criticized on several ground by many researchers, however (e.g., Doughty & Varela, 1998; Gass & Selinker, 1994; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Long, 1991, 1996; Lyster, 1990; Swain, 1985, 1996; White, 1987). Krashen's critics argue that although exposure to input is a necessary condition for acquisition, it is insufficient. In addition, they argue that it is important for learners to be taught formal aspects of a language and be given corrective feedback in order to avoid linguistic fossilization.

Whereas Krashen saw acquisition as a subconscious process, cognitive theories of language acquisition propose that features of a language have to be

consciously registered for acquisition to occur, thus giving the learner a more active role in the process. It involves a deliberate use of learning strategies, which allow for information processing. This in turn leads to comprehension and learning. Changes in behaviour reflect what is going on in the learner's mind. Thus, cognitive theory is interested in mental activities, such as thinking, memory, knowing, and problem-solving and tries to understand how people learn by tapping into these inner processes of the human mind (Bertrand, 1998).

However, Stern (1983) pointed out that not only cognitive skills could lead to language acquisition; rather, he credited the importance of the affective aspect. In other words, an individual's attitude towards learning is an important predictor of achievement. He argued that language learners need positive communicative experiences with the language and that this sense of success would increase their self-confidence. Developing competence in a language entails an internalization of the criteria for success, which are fostered by teaching that encourages the learner's self-assessment, both alone and with peers in cooperative learning groups. Therefore, self-concept and self-esteem are important characteristics that contribute to successful second language learning because learners have to be tolerant of ambiguity and have the confidence to take the risks necessary to learn a language: This involves being comfortable making errors (Stern, 1983).

There is strong support from researchers in different disciplines for Stern's (1983) claim concerning the impact of the affective component in language learning (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Skehan, 1989; Spolsky, 1989; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). As a result, affect (emotion) now has a significant place in cognitive theory. However, Stevick (1999) warned against a pendulum swing too far in the direction of affect because success in language learning cannot be attributed to only one factor.

There are two theoretical perspectives of learning that have informed cognitive theory: constructivism and socio-cultural theory.

According to constructivism, knowledge is constructed by individuals through active cognitive processes (Gray, 1997). Constructivism has made significant contributions to the field of education and is associated with scholars such as Jean Piaget, Lev Vigotsky, John Dewey, and Jerome Brunner (Matthews, 2003). There are four main principles of constructivism: (1) learning is cumulative; that is, it depends on prior knowledge; (2) new ideas require adapting and changing old ideas; (3) learning involves invention, not simply accumulation of facts; (4) meaningful learning occurs in the process of rethinking old ideas and coming to new conclusions (Twomey, 1989).

A constructivist classroom, therefore, is learner-centered, meaning that the teacher facilitates activities that require students to hypothesize, make predictions, ask questions, and use their imaginations. Because constructivists believe that learning is an active, rather than a passive process (e.g., Piaget, 1977), when students encounter new information that differs from their present way of thinking, they enter into a state of imbalance. There are two ways to resolve this disequilibrium. First, learners can change their thinking by assimilating the new information. Or, they accommodate the new information by restructuring their present knowledge (Gray, 1997).

A constructivist approach in L2 learning can help teachers overcome some of the challenges they face, such as large class sizes, where students can help each other through discussions and other peer-peer activities. This student-centered approach fosters creativity and autonomy in learners. In addition, and particularly relevant to my study, certain aspects of the constructivist perspective, such as the identification of learning processes and strategies that account for observed responses, have received renewed treatment in the light of contemporary theories of cognitive psychology which has implications for two

major aspects of assessment: the development of diagnostic models of formative assessment and the investigation of the role of metacognitive processes in formative assessment as well as in self-assessment (Allal & Mottier Lopez, 2005).

The socio-cultural theory teaching and learning has also contributed to the evolution of formative assessment. Learning, according to this theory, occurs through appropriation of tools. Students are guided by their more experienced teachers on how to use, or appropriate, these tools (Rogoff, 1990). However, it is not simply through the interaction that individuals learn; rather, as the tools for interacting (e.g., language) are appropriated, the tools are internalized, and thus are added to the individual's cognitive processes (remembering, thinking, etc.) (Wertsch, 1985). This notion of appropriation is key for socio-cultural theory (Renshaw, 1992).

Vygotsky argued that learning occurs in the process of internalization. That is, as individuals interact with others (especially more experienced peers), they use language which is socially situated. This situatedness allows the learner to later reflect on their experience, which leads to learning. (Renshaw, 1992).

Socio-cultural theory emphasizes social interaction and agency in the learning process. Therefore, it has been a critical aspect of the evolution of formative assessment.

2.1.1.3. Studies of existing assessment practices.

The third development in the evolution of formative assessment is characterized by studies of existing formative assessment practices. The main contributions of current study fit into this phase of the evolution of formative assessment. Discussions of theoretical frameworks alone could lead to an increasingly abstract vision of formative assessment cut off from the realities of

classroom practice; therefore, in this section I look at how theoretical frameworks have been put into practice in formative assessment in the classroom.

Studies regarding how assessment is actually practiced in the classroom have dealt with several phenomena: the interplay between instrumentation and intuition in teachers' practices of formative assessment (Allal & Mottier Lopez, 2007); the fundamental incompatibility between certain instruments of formative assessment and the everyday assessment practices of teachers (Weiss, 1984); the forms of teacher-student negotiation of assessment rules and norms (Chevallard, 1986); the institutional factors affecting teachers' attitudes toward inequalities of students achievement and the effect on assessment practice (Grisay, 1988); and the pragmatics of actually doing formative assessment without worrying about policies (Perrenoud, 1991).

For formative assessment to succeed in a class, there has to be a climate that is conducive to informal questioning and observation, and sharing of ideas. In addition, students need to feel safe taking risks and giving and receiving feedback. Perhaps most important, teachers need to give students a clear message that learning is more important than test performance (Sadler, 1989; Turner et al., 2002). Formative assessment requires that students feel comfortable debating and defending their viewpoints and answers, incorporating the feedback of others, and sharing ideas openly with another; classroom norms need to promote social interaction and collaboration, as well as respect, trust, honest communication, and an appreciation of acceptance of student differences (Keeley, 2008). In a classroom context, the criteria used to assess student work should be public and examples should be available to all students. It goes without saying that the classroom environment must be student-centered, with students actively engaged in applying evaluative criteria

to improve their work (Stiggins, 2008). In these types of classrooms, teachers and students are partners in learning (Andrade & Cizek, 2010).

However, teachers can provide learners with different types of learning goals in their classes; that is, mastery or performance goals. These are often both present in a classroom (Dweck, 1996; Linnenbrink, 2005). When the goal structure of the class is primarily performance-oriented, students compete with others and strive for achievement. Their performance is evaluated using summative assessments, which are often designed with normative standards. In contrast, mastery goals focus on developing competence and improving learning, based on self-referenced standards (Pintrich, Conley, & Kempler, 2003). Formative assessment is most effective in classrooms that emphasize mastery goal orientation (Allal & Mottier Lopez, 2005). This kind of environment encourages students to seek help (Butler, 1988), to work harder (Farrel & Dweck, 1985) and to have a willingness to accept and use feedback to promote learning. In a mastery goal oriented class, the teacher is more willing to provide helpful feedback and suggest additional activities for further learning. Accordingly, the student accept this feedback not as criticism but as information that is needed to improving competence. As students become more competent, teachers can transfer more of the responsibility of learning to students, resulting in more peer assessment and feedback, self-assessment, and self-reflection (Turner et al., 2002). These practices can replace teacher-directed student activities, extrinsic motivation, and a performance-oriented environment (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

My study connects to this body of literature because I am interested in the nature of formative assessment practice in the classroom and in the perceptions that the teacher and her students have about formative assessment.

2.1.1.4. Development of active student involvement in assessment.

Finally, the fourth development in the evolution of formative assessment has to do with the development of active student involvement in assessment. The role of the teacher remains essential for the practice of formative assessment since it is the teacher who decides what place will be given to formative assessment. Also, the teacher's attitudes and implicit theories of teaching and learning have a significant impact on how formative assessment is put into practice. Nevertheless, there is increasing recognition of the importance of encouraging active student involvement in formative assessment (Allal & Mottier Lopez, 2005).

Two important skills for the development of active student involvement in assessment are *metacognition* and *self-regulation*. Metacognition involves monitoring understanding, being aware of and reflecting on strategies used for learning, and directing thinking (Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001). It also refers to the ability to recognize when learning goals have been met. Metacognition focuses on the process of learning more than the product. It encourages students to develop self-appraisal and self-management skills that enhance self-directed learning. Students learn how and when to request feedback. They also become adept at error detection and correction skills (Andrade & Cizek, 2010).

On the other hand, self-regulation is a broader construct that includes metacognition and self-assessment. Self-regulation is also proactive, in the sense that students set goals, select learning strategies and processes, and monitor their progress (Zimmerman, 2008). Self-regulating students make decisions about what and how they will learn and they actively devise learning strategies to improve performance. When teachers emphasize self-regulation, this helps students realize that they are responsible for their learning and that they have the skills they need to take an active role in monitoring and

evaluating their own performance. This leads students to gaining deep understanding (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

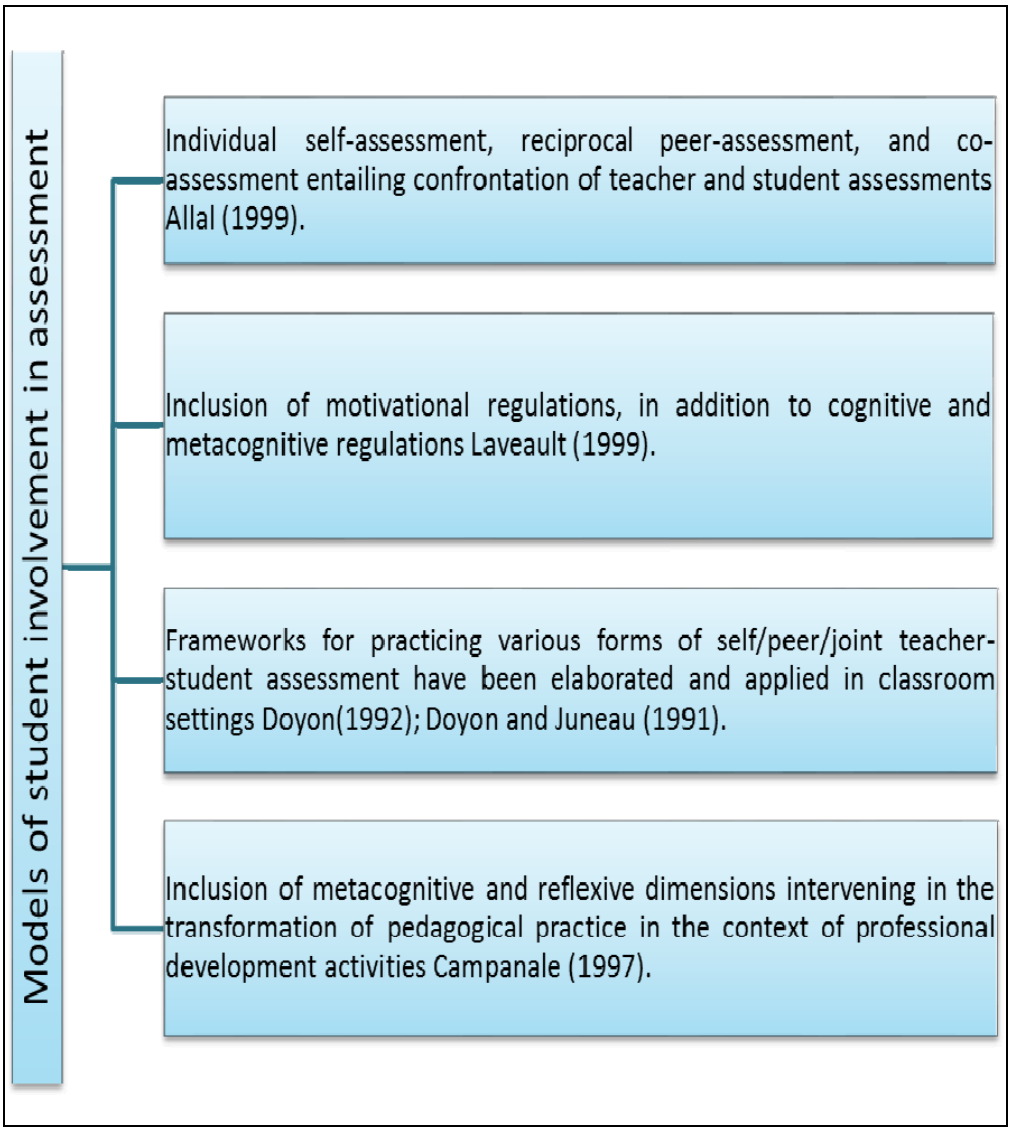
Self-regulation is not limited to the classroom (Andrade & Cizek, 2010), but influences and is influenced by a variety of factors, all which reciprocally influence each other. These include personal characteristics (e.g., temperament, self-efficacy, motivation), social circumstances (e.g., family and cultural values, peer pressure, teacher expectations), and physical conditions (e.g., online or face to face) (Winnie, 2001; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2004).

Several scholars (Nunziati, 1990; Doyon & Juneau, 1991; Doyon, 1992; Vial, 1995; Campanale, 1997; Laveault, 1999; Allal, 1999) have studied and developed models of active student involvement in assessment. For example, Nunziati (1990) and Vial (1995) developed models of the student's role in formulating assessment goals and criteria, in conducting interactive assessment, and in constructing shared understandings of what assessment means. Also, Allal (1999) proposed three different but interrelated forms of student involvement in assessment: individual self-assessment; reciprocal peer-assessment; and, co-assessment, which involves teacher and student assessments. Campanale (1997) also developed a detailed model of self-assessment, which included metacognitive and reflexive dimensions which intervene in the transformation of pedagogical practice in the context of professional development activities. In addition, Laveault (1999) expanded the conceptualization of self-assessment by including motivational regulations, in addition to cognitive and metacognitive regulations.

A common theme in the French-language literature is that interactive formative assessment, between peers and between teacher and students, constitutes a framework of social mediation that fosters the student's increasing capacity to carry out more autonomous self-assessment and self-regulated learning. In this context, frameworks for practicing various forms of

self/peer/joint teacher-student assessment have been elaborated and applied in classroom settings (e.g., Doyon, 1992; Doyon & Juneau, 1991). Figure 2 below summarizes some of these forms of active student involvement in assessment.

Figure 2: Models of Student Involvement in Assessment



2.2. A Taxonomy of Assessment

It is important to place formative assessment within a more global perspective, that is, the assessment of students. It has always been problematic to establish a logical and complete classification of student assessment. The internal-external assessment dichotomy, for example, lacks fine distinctions that can help categorize the teachers' assessment actions (internal assessment) that have to respond to diverse (external) assessment demands (for example, to sanction or orient the learning activities or to inform the parents of the student's performance).

In their *Handbook on Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning* Bloom, Madaus, and Hastings (1971) distinguished three types of assessment: diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment. Each type is discussed in detail in the following three sections.

2.2.1. Diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic assessment often takes place before students start a course or a program of studies. However, it also can take place during a course or program. This type of assessment provides the teacher with an idea of individual students' prior knowledge. It can also tell the teacher about the strengths or weaknesses of a group students relative to the learning objectives. When diagnostic assessment takes place at the beginning of course or program period it has a function of prevention; that is, it can prevent students from being placed in the program. It is useful for identifying difficulties during a learning sequence, however, looking at pedagogical solutions or problems alone is not sufficient: Teachers must also take into consideration factors such as the student's health, family context, interests, and motivation. The corrective function of the diagnostic assessment may consist making decisions regarding

measures that are not of a pedagogical nature (e.g., meeting the parents, taking the student out of the class for a moment, etc.).

However, the term diagnostic as described above is not recognized everywhere. A number of European researchers (e.g., Allal, 1979, 1991; De Ketele, 1983, 1993; Hadji, 1997) have referred to a pronostic function of assessment, where the concern is to determine that the students' characteristics are compatible with those of a program of studies. This terminological choice is appropriate if the focus is on assessment at the beginning of a program. However, Airasian and Madaus (1972) made an important distinction between two different moments for diagnostic assessment: before and during. The notion of pronostic assessment is a different concept that does not take into account the role that diagnostic assessment can play when a student experiences persistent difficulties. Because of this confusion of terms, Scallon (2000) advised against using the term diagnostic assessment when referring to practices that are formative in function. This brings me to formative assessment.

2.2.2. Formative assessment

In this taxonomy, formative assessment has the exclusive function of regulating learning during a program of studies, a course, or a sequence of learning. Specifically, the regulating action that characterizes formative assessment means that every difficulty is treated immediately (Bloom et al., 1971). This can be done by slowing down or speeding up the pace of an activity or by adjusting the pedagogical context itself in order to benefit all the students. The regulation function and the *moment* (when it takes place during a learning sequence or a program) are two key indicators of formative assessment actions in a typology of learning assessment.

I already discussed the notion of regulation in section 2.1. Here I would like to add that every assessment, whether pronostic, diagnostic, or summative (i.e. certificative) is followed by an adjusting regulation. An example of

regulation is when a teacher provides meaningful situations to get the attention of students who are not motivated. It is the regulating function of formative assessment that distinguishes it from other types of assessment. Regulation in formative assessment aims for precise learning or specific aspects of development and it depends on one or more pedagogical interventions. Besides, regulation in formative assessment refers to two objectives: one concerns the specific context of teaching and learning frequently determined by pedagogical objectives; the other objective is the progression of the student (Scallon, 2000).

2.2.3. Summative assessment

Summative assessment refers to assessments that are used at the end of a course or program and for grading and evaluating a student's progress (Bloom et al., 1971). It also includes examinations of a curriculum or course of study. A summative assessment aims to measure to what extent the objectives of a course or program have been achieved. Summative assessment leads to decision making based on the acquired knowledge. This can lead either to promotion (e.g., moving to the next level) or sanction of studies (e.g., failing or having to repeat a level). There are three main conditions of summative assessment: a judgment of the degree of mastery of the learning objectives; a judgment of the whole course or a terminal part of the course; and finally, the decision to grade the learner.

Summative assessment ideally appears at the end of a long teaching and learning process in order certify the extent to which pedagogical objectives have been reached by each student. Recently, however, the traditional practice of the terminal assessment has been replaced by continuous summative assessment in which the partial results obtained are (added) in order to constitute a summative report. This practice risks altering the sense of formative assessment when there is overlap in the functions of summative and formative assessment. This poses a problem, as I explain in the next section,

especially regarding the need of to clearly distinguish formative and summative assessment (Scallon, 2000).

In Europe, there is the tendency to use the term certificative assessment in place of summative assessment (e.g., Scallon, 2000). The origin of the term is attributed to Weiss (1979), who stated that certificative assessment should be related to the end of a learning process. Tourneur (1985) mentioned two types of certificative assessment: external for the professional skills and internal for the skills necessary for pursuing studies.

The term summative has various difficulties due to the idea of addition. Summative assessment was borrowed from Scriven's (1967) typology for the assessment of the means of teaching as it conveniently denotes the idea of a finished product; as such, summative assessment has made its way into the domain of learning assessment. However, this is problematic because the certification of a competence, at the end of a learning process, cannot be accomplished solely by adding components that have been processed individually (Scallon, 2000).

In the next section I will provide the definition of formative assessment that I used for my study.

2.3. Definition of Formative Assessment

There have been numerous definitions of formative assessment. For example, Scallon (2000) defined formative assessment as a

> processus d'évaluation continue ayant pour objectif d'assurer la progression des individus engagées dans une démarche d'apprentissage ou de formation, selon deux voies possibles : soit par des modifications de la situation ou du contexte pédagogique, soit en offrant à chaque individu l'aide dont il a besoin pour progresser, et ce, dans chacun des cas, pour apporter, s'il y a lieu, des améliorations ou des correctifs appropriés. La

> « décision action », c'est-à-dire la régulation a pour objet soit la situation d'apprentissage, soit l'individu lui-même. (p. 21)
>
> [a process of continuous assessment, the objective of which is to ensure the progression of individuals engaged in a learning process either by modifying the situation or pedagogical context, or by offering to help each individual so they can progress. The aim, in each case, is to ensure, if possible, improvement or appropriate corrections. The object of "decision-action", that is regulation, is the learning situation or the individual himself.] (translation mine)

Scallon argued that the decision-action should take place immediately rather than be deferred, as it is in summative assessment. In addition, the correction is limited to a precise teaching and learning context; it cannot be compared to the remedial activities planned for a large period of time that follow a diagnostic assessment, for example. Teachers and learners are both involved in the process of regulating learning in formative assessment. On the contrary, the decisions-actions associated with summative assessment go beyond the scope of the class context and exclude students' participation.

Sadler (2009) defined assessment as any appraisal (or judgment, or evaluation) of a student's work or performance. The meaning of *formative* is associated with forming or shaping something, usually to achieve a desired end. Formative assessment implies using the information derived from student responses to assessment tasks in order to shape or improve student achievement. Generally, the teacher makes the definitive judgments about the quality of student responses.

Although the above definitions are useful, for the purpose of this study, I took the definition of formative assessment from Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007). Namely, formative assessment is

> the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for making substantively grounded decisions or judgements about the product of a learning task in order to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there (p.11).

2.4. Relationship between Formative and Summative Assessment

The rise of continuous summative assessment has created difficulties in distinguishing summative and formative assessment because the two often overlap, in terms of when they are conducted. However, it is critical for the distinction between the two to be preserved; otherwise, formative assessment could become a practice of micro-summative assessment (Bain, 1988). This refers to a series of short tests and assessments, which is a significant deviation from the primary function of formative assessment. In the following sections I review the literature regarding the relationship between formative and summative assessment.

Sadler (1989) argued that formative assessment is concerned with how judgements about the quality of student responses (performances, pieces, or works) can be used to shape and improve their competence. If the information gleaned from an assessment cannot lead to appropriate action—for instance, it becomes a summative grade—then it is not formative (Sadler, 1989). If the judgements are used by the learner, this is formative assessment; otherwise, the judgement stands alone and is summative assessment. Hence, the learner's uptake of feedback is an important distinguishing feature between summative and formative assessment.

Similarly, Taras (2008) stated that the need for feedback is implicit in formative assessment, and learners use it in their subsequent work. In addition

she affirmed that a cycle of work or assignments is required for students to build up expertise. In other words, learners need more than one isolated assignment as formative assessment for learning to occur.

Biggs (1998) argued that formative assessment and summative assessment should be seen as mutually exclusive. He saw formative assessment and summative not "up close as two different trees" (p. 108), but from a conceptually wider angle. He argued that the effects of summative assessment on learning, referred to as washback (Alderson & Wall, 1993) or backwash (Biggs, 1996a), are usually seen as entirely negative, and interestingly, as stronger than the positive effects of formative assessment (or feedback). This suggests clearly that significant gains can occur by mitigating or reversing backwash and by enhancing feedback. The strong interaction between formative and summative assessment could be incorporated into an overall synthesis, so that both the backwash from summative assessment and the feedback from formative assessment are conceptualized within the same framework. In such a framework, the effects of backwash from summative assessment would be *positive;* in other words it would *support* the feedback from formative assessment, instead of nullifying it (Biggs, 1998).

According to Biggs (1998), whether summative and formative assessments are mutually exclusive or not depend on how inclusive the model of assessment is. For example, the backwash from summative assessment is generally agreed to be negative, since they are often related to non-task priorities (i.e., standardization) and thus engage a low level of cognitive activities and encourage only surface learning. The feedback from formative assessment, on the other hand, facilitates learning, providing the information needed for deep learning, by deploying cognitive activities that are appropriate to the level required by the task. Feedback is aimed to guide students towards the desired position in a teaching episode whereas backwash is interested in

where the students are when teaching concludes. Nevertheless, the students' approaches to learning mediate the effects of both feedback and backwash on performance, so that the difference between the two is more a matter of timing than a matter of principle (Biggs, 1998).

On the other hand Sadler (2009) stated that the primary distinction between formative and summative assessment relates to purpose and effect, not to timing. Sadler (2009) argued that many of the principles associated with summative assessment are not necessarily transferable to formative assessment and that a distinct conceptualization and approach is required for formative assessment. In addition, even though it is possible to do both formative and summative assessment at once in the class at a technical level (i.e., it should be possible to put the same information to different uses), at the practical and human level (students' perceptions and reactions), this must be avoided because summative subverts the formative function for two reasons to support: summative assessments are conducted too long after a particular situation, and the next task to which the specific feedback could apply may be different in type, and a full semester away.

The problem is that in many higher education contexts, teachers think that everything *must* count, or students will not take it seriously. Teachers may think students *deserve* the marks and reward all their students' efforts or activities with marks; students now expect this and teachers meet that expectation. However, "by definition, summative represents high stakes for grading which significantly reduces the stakes for learning. Formative assessment needs to be high stakes for learning and zero stakes for grading" (Sadler, 2009, p. 1).

Although there is no general consensus regarding the relationship between formative and summative assessment, I agree with Lussier and Turner (1995) that the terms are not necessarily contradictory; they designate

complementary methodologies and particular practices of assessment. Summative assessment imposes strict requirements on the development of instruments and the uniformity of their administration because it has serious decision-making implications. Formative assessment, however, can make use of both formal procedures (e.g., a test) as well as informal ones (e.g., non-systematic observation). During the school year, formative assessment is seen as a pedagogical aid seeking the regulation and progression of learning. Consequently, during the learning process, the judgments and decisions of the teacher are transmitted through formative assessment. At the end of the learning process, the teacher's decisions must consider the data of formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative and summative functions of assessment are essential and their harmonization within the practice of the teachers is an important goal for teachers to try to reach (Lussier & Turner, 1995).

2.5. Functions of Assessment

While the typology discussed above (diagnostic, formative, summative) is useful, it does not mention of certain uses of assessment that have been recognized over the years. Other functions of assessment are motivation, regulation, information, placement, certification, selection, and program assessment. The first two are related to formative assessment. In fact, regulation is the essential component of formative assessment (Laurier, 2003; Scallon, 2000). The other functions of assessment are associated more closely with summative assessment. Another limit that is important to highlight is that the above typology is founded on the classification of decision-actions; hence it is not clear whether it covers all the goals set by the assessment practices in the school context (Scallon, 2000).

2.6. Characteristics of High Quality Formative Assessments

At whatever level formative assessments are conducted and used, there are some basic requirements that they should meet in order to provide accurate information. Herman and Baker (2005) discussed six criteria that determine the validity and effectiveness of formative assessments. These criteria are as follows:

1. alignment to standards, which define the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should learn at each level;
2. provision of diagnostic information on not only students' academic performance but also why the students are performing at certain levels and what to do about it. This aspect of performance assessment is of paramount importance for English language learners since their level of proficiency in English determines their success in content-based learning. Such information can help teachers to facilitate student learning in the English language and reduce unnecessary linguistic complexity of the instructional materials with which students have difficulty;
3. fairness for students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. However, variables such as unnecessary linguistic complexity and cultural factors may introduce bias into the formative assessment outcomes. Such biases may have a more profound impact on English language learners than any other subgroup of students (Abedi, 2010). To provide a fair assessment for all students all sources of biases should be identified and controlled;
4. reliability and validity, meaning that they provide accurate information about what students know and are able to do. To ensure the validity of formative assessment for English language learners, all sources of measurement error, including biases due to linguistic and cultural

factors, should be identified and controlled. For example, if the items on a mathematics practice have a complex linguistic structure, then the practice measures not only the construct relevant to the purpose of the practice (mathematics), it also measures a construct that is irrelevant to the purpose of the practice (language). Thus, linguistic factors may seriously affect the validity of inferences drawn using this assessment;

5. utility; that is, formative assessment should provide useful information for teachers, students, and parents;
6. feasibility of formative assessment. As discussed in Chapter 1, many teachers perceive formative assessment as extra work and they claim that there is no time to do formative assessment in class. However, high quality formative assessment informs, and is integrated to, instruction; it provides useful information for teachers and curriculum planners necessary to the design of effective instruction (Abedi, 2010) .

If formative assessment meets these characteristics previously described, then it will have important benefits for students learning.

2.7. Benefits of Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is critically important for student learning both in higher education and education in general. Formative assessment not only helps students to appreciate the standards that are expected from them (Yorke, 2003), but it is effective in promoting student learning across a wide range of educational settings (disciplinary areas, types of outcomes, levels).

Formative assessment helps teachers and students identify what students can do with help and what they can do independently. Participating in formative assessment leads to active learning since it keeps students on task and focused on learning goals. Formative assessment, especially peer-and self-assessment, helps students with the social construction of knowledge. Finally, formative assessment allows students to receive feedback precisely the points they need to

concentrate on and it shows them what to do next to improve (Brookhart & Nitko, 2008).

In the following sections I provide evidence of the importance of formative assessment by looking at literature on self-assessment, peer assessment, and feedback.

2.7.1. Self-assessment

Before referring to its benefits, I offer the definition of self-assessment that I used in this study.

> Self-assessment is a process of formative assessment during which students reflect on the quality of their work, judge the degree to which it reflects explicitly stated goals or criteria, and revise accordingly. The emphasis here is on the word formative: Self-assessment is done on drafts of works in progress in order to inform revision and improvement. The primary purpose of engaging students in carful self-assessment is to boost learning and achievement. It does so by serving as a readily available source of feedback about the students' own understanding and performances (Andraded & Cizek, 2010, p. 92).

From the definition above, self-assessment is not a matter of determining a grade as a part of the final grade on an assignment or for a class (Sadler & Good, 2006).

Learner self-assessment has the goal of making learners more reflective, more aware, more responsible, and more independent. For example, interviews and conferences with learners might help them become more self-aware of their development in the speaking skill (McNamara, 2001). What is more, students with learning disabilities who are taught to use self-monitoring strategies related to their understanding of reading and writing tasks also show performance gains (Sawyer, Graham, & Harris, 1992).

Actively involving students in self-assessing their work has been associated with noticeable improvements in performance. For example, McCurdy and Shapiro (1992) reported on elementary school students who had learning difficulties. Their oral reading rates improved after they were given verbal and visual feedback by the teacher, by peers, or by self-assessment. Significantly, it was the last group that made the largest performance gains (measured in pre- and post-test scores). The teachers in the study remarked that they liked the peer and self-assessments best because these freed up their own teaching time.

Likewise, Sawyer, Graham and Harris (1992) reported benefits of self-assessment in their study of the composition skills of fourth and fifth grade students. As with McCurdy and Shapiro's study, these researchers found that the group of students who were explicitly taught self-regulating skills did better than those who were not.

Self-assessment is intricately related to self-reflection. Research across fields of education has shown improved performance when students engage in self-reflection (e.g., Baird, Fensham, Gunstone, & White, 1991; Griffiths & Davies, 1993; Merrett & Merrett, 1992; Meyer &Woodruff, 1997; Powell & Makin, 1994). In visual arts, for example, Ross, Radnor, Mitchell, and Bierton (1993) reported on students who were engaged in 'assessment conversations', which were essentially articulations of their reflections on their work. They found that these reflective assessments not only deepened students' learning of aesthetics, but also allowed the teacher more creativity than with traditional assessment practices. Edwards and Sutton (1991) found similar positive outcomes in their report on an undergraduate course in which all assessment was self-assessment. The initiative led to a marked increase in the students' engagement in their work.

Additionally, self-assessment is helpful to those students who are less confident and do not actively seek help or not engage in learning because they feel that their self-esteem might be threatened (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). By doing self-assessments, students engage in the important processes of reorienting themselves to the goals of an assignment and determining how to make improvements, without the threat of negative feedback from a peer (Andrade & Cizek, 2010). The eg99o-protective feature of self-assessment may be especially important for some students. This might explain, in part, why students typically report that they value it as long as it does not count toward a grade (Andrade & Du, 2007).

The benefits of formative assessment have not only been studied with respect to self-assessment. In the next section I provide a definition of peer-assessment and present evidence of its benefits to learning.

2.7.2. Peer-assessment

For the purpose of my study, peer-assessment is defined as "an arrangement for peers to consider the level, value, worth, quality or successfulness of the products or outcomes of learning of others of similar status" (Topping, Smith, Swanson, & Elliot, 2000, p. 150). There is an increasing number of empirical studies on peer involvement in the classroom. Researchers in second language acquisition, mainstream education, and first and second language writing have claimed that working with peers in the classroom is an important means of promoting learning (DiPardo & Freedman, 1988; Liu & Hansen, 2002; Long & Porter, 1985; Saito, 2008; Webb, 1982).

For example, Koch and Shulamith (1991) conducted an experimental study in which college students created and answered their own questions about topics in physics, rather than answering questions provided by the teacher. The students who used peer feedback showed the greatest learning gains. In another study, Higgins, Harris, and Kuehn (1994) asked first and second grade students

to come up with their own criteria for assessment of a group project. Interestingly, as the project moved forward and the peers interacted more, the criteria for the assessment became more and more rigorous. This signifies that peer feedback improved the quality of their work. Also important to note is that the students and teachers tended to come up with similar assessments. This was not the case though when students evaluated other groups' work, suggesting that peer feedback is reliable when it is done for a student's own peer group.

Stefani (1994) examined the reliability of self- and peer-assessments in biology students in college and found high correlations of teachers and self- and peer-assessments. In addition, students reported that the autonomy of the self- and peer-assessments made them think and learn more than they did when assessed by only the teacher. Hughes and Large (1993) also found high correlation between student and teacher assessments in their study of investigated peer-assessment in undergraduate students in pharmacology.

Research has shown that for peer feedback to be truly effective, students have to be taught how to do it. They also need clear objectives and guidelines. For example, in group work, there needs to be a clear sense of whether the students are aiming for better performance of the group as a whole, or of individuals within the group. This raises questions about whether to group students of mixed or similar ability levels (Webb, 1995).

As I have shown in this section, there are demonstrated benefits of peer assessment. However, these benefits are only possible when students have the skills needed to do the assessment (Saito, 2008).

2.7.3. Feedback

Feedback is usually thought of as the key element in formative assessment (Sadler, 1989). It refers to the information provided usually by the teacher, but increasingly by other students, about how successfully something has been or is being done.

Originally, feedback was used to describe an arrangement in electrical and electronic circuits whereby information about the gap between the actual level of the output signal and some defined reference level was fed back into one of the system's inputs. When the gap was reduced, it was called negative feedback, and when the gap was increased, it was called positive feedback (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Ramaprasad (1983) defined feedback as the "information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way" (p. 4). This notion is now a key aspect of L2 teaching and learning theory and practice.

In the area of L2 learning, Rodet (2000) divided the types of feedback in two categories: content feedback and form feedback. Since each learner incorporates new knowledge differently, the content of feedback cannot be uniform, but rather unique to each student and context. However, this content should allow the student to access their own cognitive, methodological, and metacognitive processes. *Cognitive* feedback refers to the learner's conceptual errors. The assessor provides specifications, develops explanations, and underlines the correctness of the learner's proposition. *Metacognitive* feedback allows the student to become his own assessor and encourages his reflection and engagement in his own learning. *Methodological* feedback leads to the learner's progress in the procedural aspect. For example, the assessor reinforces the learner's perception of the relevance of strategies for acquiring new knowledge (e.g., schemes, charts, tables, etc.). In addition, feedback has an unquestionable affective connotation because a learner is never insensitive to what the assessor thinks of his work. Therefore, the assessor has to give a particular importance to the expressions and tone of his feedback (Rodet, 2000).

Concerning the *form of feedback*, Rodet (2000) argued that feedback can be oral, written, or both depending on teacher or program choices or specifications. Both types of feedback have strengths and limitations. The main

advantage of *oral feedback* is that it is interactive and synchronic; that is, the learner is able to ask for precisions. As a result, negotiation of meaning occurs naturally. Since *written feedback* is not synchronic, the assessor has enough time to write and to reflect on the comments they make.

Hounsell and Hounsell (2010) argued that depending on the subject area and the type of work concerned, feedback may be very specific (e.g., notes alongside particular points) or general (e.g., some overall observations). A course is likely to generate feedback of more than one kind and the particular combination of forms it takes will vary from subject to subject. This makes it crucial for teachers to be transparent on how, when, and where students will be given feedback throughout a course.

For the purpose of this study, feedback will be defined as " the comment or information that learners receive from a teacher, from other learners, or from themselves upon reflection, on the product of a learning task (including self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher-student, teacher-group, and teacher-class feedback)" (Colby-Kelly & Turner, 2007, p.11)

Concerning the benefits of feedback it is important to note that feedback *per se* is not formative. It is what is done with the feedback that contributes to whether it is effective in promoting the processes of teaching and learning (Rea-Dickins, 2001). In that sense, feedback should tell students how to improve (and not just in the form of general evaluative comments and/or a grade or mark); facilitate the development of self-assessment in learning; encourage teacher and peer dialogue around learning; help to clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, standards expected); provide opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance; deliver high quality information to students about their learning; encourage positive motivational perceptions and self-esteem; and provide information to teachers that can be used to help shape the teaching (Juwah, et al., 2004). The feedback that comes

in the form of guidance for improving performance is a key characteristic of formative assessment.

Feedback given as part of formative assessment helps learners become aware of any gaps that exist between their desired goal and their current knowledge, understanding, or skill. It then guides them through actions necessary to obtain the goal (Ramaprasad, 1983; Sadler, 1989). The most helpful type of feedback on tests and homework provides specific comments about errors and specific suggestions for improvement, and encourages students to focus their attention thoughtfully on the task rather than on simply getting the right answer (Bangert-Drowns, Kulick, & Morgan, 1991). This type of feedback may be particularly helpful to lower achieving students because it emphasizes that students can improve as a result of effort rather than be doomed to low achievement by some presumed lack of innate ability. Likewise, feedback from the teacher is the means by which learners find out how their work matches up to expectations; that is, to what extent they have met intended goals (Harlen & Deakin, 2002). Without informative feedback on what they do, students will have relatively little by which to chart their development (Yorke, 2003).

In addition, feedback enables university students and their teachers to maximise the effectiveness of learning and teaching by enabling students to learn something that might otherwise be beyond their grasp; accelerating their learning, so that they master something more quickly than might otherwise have been possible; refining their learning; and optimizing the quality of the work in which they are engaged. Feedback can also play an important motivational role in learning because it can help to build students' confidence, encourage them in their efforts to master a field of study, and acknowledge and praise their accomplishments (Hounsell & Hounsell, 2010).

Feedback is necessary because students need more than summary grades if they are to develop expertise intelligently. To achieve improvement, essential conditions are required: the student must come to hold a concept of quality roughly similar to that held by the teacher; must be able to monitor continuously the quality of what is being produced during the act of production itself; and has a repertoire of alternative moves or strategies from which to draw at any given point (Sadler, 2009). In other words, students have to be able to judge the quality of what they are producing and be able to regulate what they are doing during the doing of it. In brief, for success, the learner has to possess a concept of the goal being aimed for, be able to compare the actual (or current) level of performance with the standard, and engage in appropriate action which leads to some closure of the gap (Sadler, 2009).

2.8. Formative Assessment in L2 in Higher Education

Before discussing formative assessment in L2 in higher education, it is important to make reference to the distinction between learning a second language and a foreign language. Learning a foreign language takes place in formal settings for limited use outside of the target culture. Language is taught as a subject matter, not as a tool on which daily survival and academic success depend. On the other hand, learning a second language implies the mastery of the language of the culture in which one lives and studies. Learning in a second language environment means mastering contextually appropriate ways of knowing, understanding and communicating in one's immediate daily context. These ways of knowing, understanding, and communicating are most often substantially different from the ways of the home and of the home culture. My study takes place in Montreal, Quebec, where English is taught as a second (not foreign) language.

Since the 1970s, theory and practice in the field of language education have been largely influenced by the tenets of communicative language teaching

(Ellis, 2003; Savignon, 1997). In response to the fundamental question of what it means to know a language, Hymes' (1972) definition of communicative competence—that is, saying the right thing, in the right way, with the desired effect—has resonated in the language education community since its inception. At the same time, it is widely recognized that such a definition of communicative competence excludes determining competence via traditional means of assessment. Indeed, testing outcomes can only be meaningful in language education if assessment provides directly relevant information on a student's ability to use language effectively in an authentic task and context (Canale, 1988). Language learning assessments, then, should be genuine communication with all the complexities that communication implies: context, production, process, subjectivity, interactivity, and adaptivity (Canale, 1987).

Subsequent proposals and initiatives for assessing language development communicatively can be subsumed under the umbrella term *performance assessment* whereby authentic, contextualized, meaning-centered language comprehension and production are seen as the means through which a learner's current level of proficiency in a second language can truly be determined (Meskill, 2010). Application of observations, checklists, portfolios, interactive journals, peer and self-reviews, and anticipation guides are some of the tools English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) professionals use to undertake ongoing performance assessments (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2004; Genesee & Upshur, 1996).

In the past three decades, the field of teaching a second language has also seen the line between assessment and instruction diminish, with recent emphasis on integrated instruction and assessment practices (Hargreaves, 2005; Lapp, Fisher, Flood, & Cabello, 2001). Assessment has become a tool of instruction, whereby a teacher's instructional moves are calculated to be

responsive to learner comprehension or to production of the target language, and is therefore inseparable from instruction (Meskill, 2010).

The approach to language instruction known as *communicative form-focused instruction* (Ellis, 2003; Lightbown & Spada 2006) uses informed incidental assessment by narrowing the range of what both learner and instructor attend to, thereby encouraging the learner to self-monitor and self-correct. For the instructor, focusing on specific forms during communication also facilitates formative assessment and informs the subsequent instructional moves needed to push the individual student's learning (Meskill, 2010). In recent decades it has been widely accepted within the ESOL professional community that content learning and target language acquisition by English language learners are best accomplished through ongoing, collaborative, and productive interactions that support their gradual appropriation of relevant discourses (Donato, 2000; Meskill, Mossop, & Bates, 1999).

Although L2 teaching literature has long recognized the pedagogical function of assessment, this aspect of assessment has received the least attention in comparison to others. As such, there is not much in the language testing literature about formative assessment (Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000). However, the formative aspect of assessment has received a lot of attention with respect to progress testing. Because there assessments in school have traditionally been those associated with psychometric, or summative, testing, formative assessment has been examined because of teachers feel that there are benefits to teaching and learning, as well as to the individual needs of the students (Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000).

However, the full range of complexities in using formative assessment are not discussed in L2 teaching textbooks. This is quite an oversight, however, because perspectives on formative assessment "may seem very attractive to teachers who wish to be responsive to learner needs, to gather information to

inform lesson planning and teaching and to provide feedback to learners" (Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000, p. 239).

The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) have defined assessment as "a judgment, based on a comparison between what is observed and an established benchmark" (CASLT, 2012, p. 3). In other words, on the basis of a set of data drawn from a student's performance, the teacher or assessor makes inferences about the degree to which the student has mastered the content in order to achieve a direct and positive influence on the student's progress in learning through formative assessment. The teacher uses the assessment information to inform students about their own learning, helping them focus their learning energies where they are likely to be most effective. In formative assessment the teacher provides information early enough in the decision-making process to influence student learning; however, students are also considered crucial decision-makers who have control over their own learning.

Formative assessment then, serves as a mechanism to regulate teaching since it allows the teacher to evaluate the impact of instructional strategies and to take the necessary corrective measures in order to achieve the expected outcomes. The main aim of formative assessment is to ensure quality teaching and not simply assign a mark to a student.

Formative assessment in L2 focuses on the skills necessary to carry out a single task, on the learning conditions upon which the teacher can act, or on the performance of certain students experiencing difficulties. In addition, formative assessment is criterion-referenced in L2, since student results are not compared to each other—to assign a ranking, for example—but rather are interpreted in terms of criteria defined in the statement of desired outcomes. In L2, as in general education, formative assessment is an ongoing process. Therefore, assessment should be systematic, regular, and integrated into the

process of teaching. When teachers observe and collect information on an ongoing basis, they send a message to the student that the language learning process is growing and evolving.

According to CASLT, formative assessment is integrated with teaching, which means it does not take place after the teaching sequence is over. Rather, it is integrated into each task or teaching sequence. This requires a lot of diversity with respect to assessment tools or approaches (e.g., quizzes, worksheets, observations, student interactions, whole class discussions) (Allal & Mottier Lopez, 2005).

Although the teacher is the only person who can initiate formative assessment, the responsibility for assessment is shared by students and teachers because formative assessment is also an important element in developing students' own learning strategies. This is why a process of formative assessment assumes that, at certain times, students will have an opportunity for self-assessment with respect to the expected outcomes. Similarly, students should be given the opportunity to evaluate each other's performance because working with peers is an important motivator for promoting autonomous learning and developing metacognitive strategies and techniques that will allow each student to learn better.

The relationship between assessment and instruction has been researched and interpreted in a number of ways by language testers and second language acquisition researchers following different perspectives. For example Rea-Dickins (2004) refers to: the impact of assessment on classroom instruction; the links between assessment and instruction in terms of the authenticity and congruence of assessment practices in relation to a particular programme of study; the success of a language programme in terms of learner attainment; and the teacher assessment examined from an instruction-embedded perspective.

Although there is an increasing concern at a pedagogical level with formative assessment and instruction-related assessment of achievement, there are few research studies that examine teacher assessment from an instruction-embedded perspective. One of these, is Rea-Dickins' (2001) study on classroom assessment in an ESL classroom setting, using the concept of the assessment cycle. Rea-Dickens identified different stages in the teacher assessment process and presented a working model for the analysis of teacher decision-making in relation to assessment practices. The study also identified distinct facets linked to learning and teaching functions of assessment: bureaucratic (i.e., fulfilling obligations of an external agency); pedagogic (i.e., informing teachers on learner progress); and learner support (i.e., looking at the role of the learner in the assessment process). The author concluded that formative assessment in the classroom requires further detailed analysis with respect to creating opportunities for learning, and whether language learning has actually taken place. In addition, she called for further investigation into what constitutes quality in formative assessment, and investigation into whether ESL teachers can differentiate between learning, special education, and curriculum content needs in the classroom.

In another study, Rea Dickins (2006) explored assessment as a language learning resource. She studied the interaction in assessment to determine the learner's role and the nature of teacher scaffolding, and assessment orientations, focusing on teacher-student feedback. The results of her research suggested that within assessment episodes, formative and summative aspects may both occur causing teachers to be pulled in different directions and that rather than use the learning potential of either, attempts to make assessment either only formative or summative could, without knowledge or intention, limit the learning potential of either.

With respect to the link between assessment and instruction, Spence-Brown (2001) looked at the construct of authenticity in an assessment activity in a university level L2 class. Japanese students of English were asked to interview native English speakers outside the class. The material they gathered was then used for a written report. Spence Brown was interested in how the students interacted both with the task (i.e., how did they interpret it) and with the people they interviewed (i.e., how was this affected by the interpretation of the task). The results showed that the students' interpretation of the task greatly shaped the authenticity and validity of the task. This study thus highlights the importance of making the link between assessment and instruction.

Overall, what the literature reviewed in this section demonstrates is that although formative assessment has received attention at the level of pedagogy and its link with instruction, there is still very little research that has examined teacher assessment from both an assessment and second language acquisition (SLA) perspective. The present study does this. Therefore, in the next sections, I discuss one of the main areas of research in SLA: corrective feedback.

2.8. Feedback in L2

The definition and benefits of feedback in general education were discussed in section 2.3. In the following section I focus on feedback in L2. In particular, I focus on corrective feedback.

2.8.1. Definitions of terms

There are various terms in second language acquisition (SLA) literature that refer to errors and feedback, the most common being corrective feedback, negative evidence, and negative feedback (El Tatawy, 2000; Schachter, 1991). These are often used interchangeably. In order to avoid any possible confusion arising from the use of this terminology, I present a brief review of the definitions of terms and of the different types of feedback below.

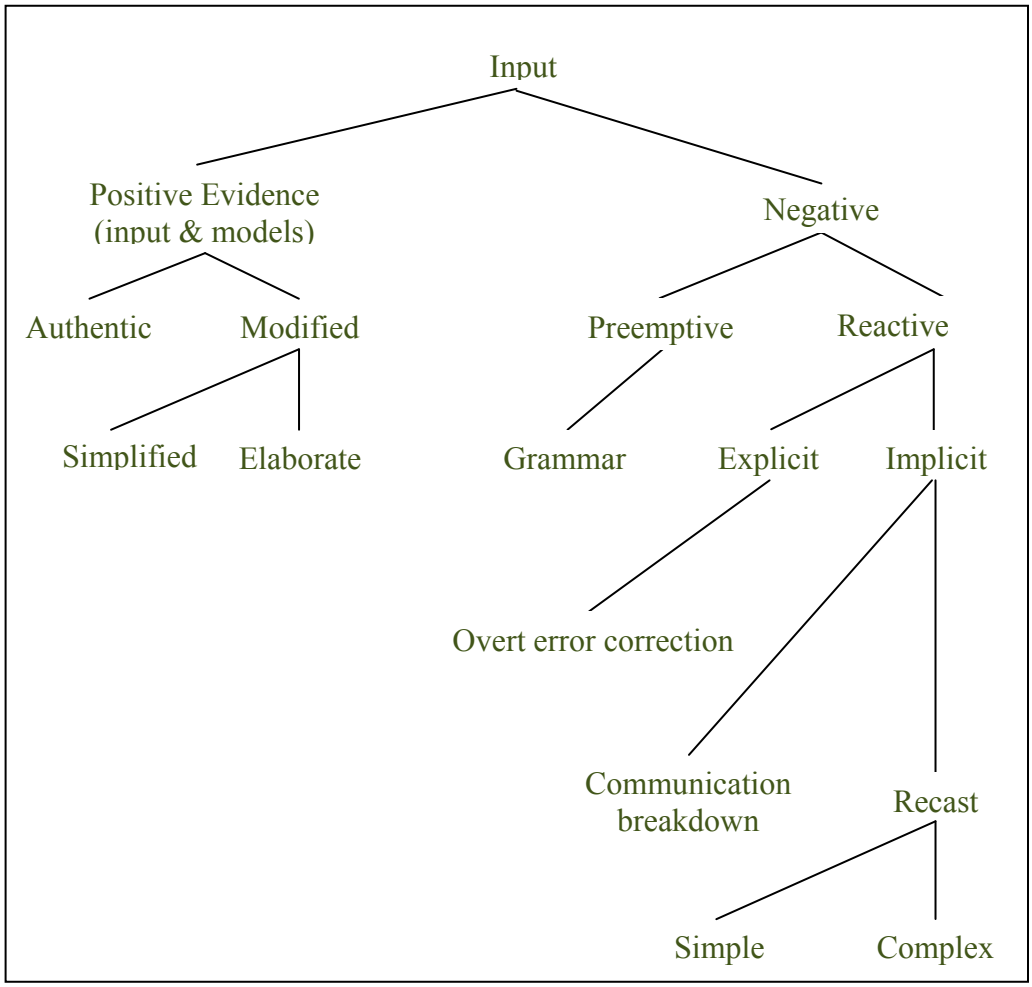
Chaudron (1988) stated that the term corrective feedback has different layers of meaning, such as treatment of error and true correction. He argued that the term "treatment of error" may refer to "any teacher behavior following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error" (p. 150). The treatment may not be evident to the student in terms of the response it elicits, or it may "elicit a revised student response" (p. 150). Finally, there is the "true correction", which leads to a modification of the learner's interlanguage and consequently the error is no longer made.

> Lightbown and Spada (1999) defined corrective feedback as
> Any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect. This includes various responses that the learners receive. When a language learner says, 'He go to school every day', corrective feedback can be explicit, for example, 'no, you should say goes, not go' or implicit 'yes he goes to school every day', and may or may not include metalinguistic information, for example, 'Don't forget to make the verb agree with the subject'. (pp. 171-172)

Explicit feedback involves a grammatical explanation or overt correction. On the other hand, implicit feedback includes confirmation checks, recasts, clarification requests, and silence. Gestures or facial expressions can also provide implicit feedback (El Tatawy, 2000).

Long (1996) distinguished between positive and negative evidence. The former involves demonstrating to learners what is grammatically acceptable, whereas the latter involves telling learners about what is not. Both types of evidence can be provided explicitly or implicitly. In order to demonstrate the different types of evidence in relation to input, Long and Robinson (1998) offered the following figure, reproduced in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Types of Positive and Negative Evidence in Relation to the Linguistic Environment



(Adapted from Long & Robinson, 1998)

For the purpose of this study, I use the definition of corrective feedback (CF) from Sheen (2004) "as an umbrella term to cover implicit and explicit negative feedback occurring in both natural conversational and instructional settings" (p. 264).

2.8.2. The role of corrective feedback in SLA

Considerable attention has been given to corrective feedback in second language acquisition on both theoretical and pedagogical grounds (e.g., Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Doughty & Varela, 1998; Havranek, 1999; Ohta, 2000; Oliver, 2000; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2004). First, I present the arguments of researchers who consider that a comprehensible input is sufficient for SLA, followed by those who think that it is not.

As previously discussed, Krashen advocated that comprehensible input is sufficient for language acquisition. In so doing, he denied the role of grammar teaching and CF. According to his acquisition-learning hypothesis, there is a significant difference between acquiring a language and learning it. The former is a subconscious process; therefore there is no conscious awareness of grammar rules; "Instead, we have a 'feel' for correctness. Grammatical sentences 'sound' right, or 'feel' right, and errors feel wrong, even if we do not consciously know what rule was violated (Krashen, 1982, p. 10). In addition, Krashen likened acquisition to implicit learning, informal, and natural learning, "picking-up a language" (p. 10).

On the other hand, learning is a conscious process and involves knowing and being able to discuss grammar and usage rules; hence it can also be referred to as formal or explicit learning. Whereas acquisition is like "picking-up a language", learning is "knowing about" a language (Krashen, 1982, p. 10). Because Krashen defined acquisition as a subconscious process leading to a subconscious knowledge- one that we cannot verbalise - he argued that corrective feedback does significantly influence acquisition and can even have a negative effect on the affective filter (discussed in section 2.1.1.2) since it can make the learner feel defensive. In other words error correction can interrupt the communicative aspect of an exchange. Krashen maintained that corrective feedback is not of use for acquisition. According to the input

hypothesis (see section 2.1.1.2), acquisition occurs when the meaning of input is understood, meaning that output and focus on form do not play a role in acquisition.

However, Krashen did propose that error correction could affect learning, a more conscious process. By pointing out that a learner's present rule is wrong, teachers help learners modify their conscious understandings of that rule. In addition, error correction is most likely to lead to positive results only if:

> (1) Errors corrected are limited to learnable and portable rules; (2) Errors are corrected under conditions that allow Monitor use [see section 2.1.1.2]. This will give the learner time to reconsider the rule that was violated. (3) Measures evaluating the efficacy of error correction are administered under conditions that allow Monitor use, to allow the learner time to refer to his or her conscious knowledge. (4) Subjects are "Monitor-users" (i.e. they are not under-users of the Monitor). (Krashen, 1982, p. 119)

However, Krashen's hypotheses have been criticized (e.g., Doughty & Varela, 1998; Gass & Selinker, 1994; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Long 1991, 1996; Lyster, 1990; Swain, 1985, 1996; White, 1987). According to these authors exposure to input is necessary, but insufficient. Their respective research has led to several hypotheses, mostly psycho-cognitive, that demonstrated the insufficiency of comprehensible input to lead to a high accuracy level. In addition Krashen's critics highlighted the importance of drawing learners' attention to the formal properties of the second language through form-focused instruction which comprises grammar teaching and corrective feedback. This, therefore, brings me to discussing the literature that argues that comprehensible input is insufficient for SLA.

In response to Krashen's Monitor model for example, many psycho-cognitive theories and hypotheses have been developed. These argue against the idea that comprehensible input is sufficient for SLA and argue for the need to draw learners' attention to the formal properties of the target language.

Here, I present two psycho-cognitive hypotheses, specifically Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (1990, 1995) and Van Patten's (1996) input processing hypothesis. Both hypotheses showed the limits of Krashen's model.

Schmidt (1990, 1995) affirmed that noticing the formal aspects or forms in input is necessary for L2 learning to take place and that this consciousness-raising, or awareness of forms, facilitates language learning. He (1990) distinguished three levels of awareness: perception; noticing; and understanding. Perceptions, situated in the first level of awareness, "imply mental organization and the ability to create internal representations of external events" (Schmidt, 1990, p. 132); however, perceptions are not necessarily conscious (i.e., they can be subliminal).

Noticing is situated in the second level of awareness and implies the subjective experience of the stimuli. However, it does not necessarily imply understanding; that is, an individual can notice "a regional accent without being able to describe it phonetically" (p. 132). There are two types of noticing: noticing the form and noticing the gap and both are necessary for learning. Noticing the form involves any conscious registration of a new form in the input and it takes place in short term memory (Schmidt, 1990). Once a new form is noticed, it is ready for processing, practice, modification and incorporation in long term memory. Consequently, noticing participates in transforming input into intake and once processed, the noticed forms are ready to be integrated in long-term memory. Furthermore, Schmidt argued that without noticing learning cannot happen. He explained that "people learn about

the things that they attend to and do not learn much about the things they do not attend to" (Schmidt, 2001, p. 30).

Noticing the gap occurs when learners notice the mismatch between their interlanguage and the L2 norm after having compared their incorrect interlanguage forms with alternative correct forms in the input. A benefit of noticing the gap is that it provides a way to include a role for feedback, and instruction in general (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). Overall, understanding occurs when the learner notices something and compares it to their current level trying to find similarities and gaps. Schmidt (1995) considered noticing as the most important level of awareness since it is the conscious storage and registration of stimulus like new forms in the input.

Corrective feedback was based on Schmidt's noticing hypothesis as a means to activate learner's noticing of form (Doughhty & Williams, 1998; Lightbown, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998; Lyster, Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Corrective feedback offers a potential solution to the situations in which it is difficult for learners to determine the difference between what they said and what they should have said. In other words, it juxtaposes the learner's form with the target language form and this allows the learner to notice the gap, hence learn.

Van Patten also underlined the importance of attention in L2 learning and did not support the sufficiency of comprehensible input in SLA. Van Patten (1995) proposed the input processing hypothesis. He proposed principles about what the encoding of form entails at the morphological level and argued that conscious attention is necessary but it is not the only factor leading to language acquisition. According to the input processing hypothesis, learners process meaning before form. L2 learners cannot attend to both meaning and form while processing because they "are limited capacity processors and cannot process and store the same amount of information as native speakers can during

moment-by-moment processing" (Van Patten, 2007, p. 116). As a result, it is necessary to draw learners' attention to form at the time of comprehension: corrective feedback is a means to accomplish that end.

Schmidt and Van Patten are not the only authors who argued that comprehensible input is not sufficient for SLA. Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis stated that implicit negative feedback, which is a product of negotiation for meaning, gives learners the chance to focus on linguistic forms. In a similar vein, Gass (1988, 1990, 1991) claimed that corrective feedback avoids fossilization by permitting learners to discover differences between their produced forms and the target language forms. White (1988), also a critic of Krashen's theory, argued that corrective feedback plays an important role in L2 teaching.

The role of corrective feedback in hypothesis testing has also being researched. For example, Chaudron (1988) stated that corrective feedback provides learners with information needed to confirm or disconfirm the rules of their L2 grammars and then make appropriate modifications. Schachter (1991) likewise pointed out that corrective feedback moves learners forward in their acquisition by helping them formulate new and more correct hypotheses of the L2 rules. More recently, Ohta (2001) provided support for this hypothesis testing function of corrective feedback, which allows learners to better understand form-meaning relationships.

In the following section I will present the most relevant research regarding the role of corrective feedback in SLA.

2.8.3. Studies regarding the role of corrective feedback in SLA

Because of the importance of corrective feedback in SLA theory, there is an increasing number of studies that have examined the relationship between feedback and L2 learning. Here I synthesize the most relevant research on this relationship. Certainly each study responds to its authors' interests, but it can be

inferred from the results that the role of corrective feedback in SLA is not always identical. For example, there are studies that have provide evidenced that corrective feedback is beneficial for learning (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Doughty & Varela, 1998). However, another study (White, 1991) showed that although corrective feedback was effective in helping the L2 learners acquire the properties of the target language, learners did not maintain that knowledge.

Other aspects that interest researchers are learners' perceptions of feedback (Mackey, Gass & McDonough, 2000; Carpenter, Jeon, MacGregor & Mackey, 2006); the effect of recasts on the production and the development of question forms in ESL (Mackey & Philip, 1998); and ESL teacher's range and types of feedback and the relationship of these to learner uptake and immediate repair of error (Panova & Lyster, 2002); the potential benefits of recasts and prompts (Ammar & Spada, 2006); benefits of explicit feedback over implicit feedback (Ellis, Loewen & Earlam, 2006; Loewen & Philip, 2006; Lyster & Mori, 2006); a taxonomy of the recasts from communicative ESL and EFL classrooms (Sheen, 2006). Table I below presents a synthesis of the most relevant corrective feedback studies from 1978 to 2010.

Table I: Studies on the Role of Corrective Feedback in SLA [1]

Objective of Study	Type of research	Results
Fanselow (1977) and Hendrickson (1978): error correction in English as a foreign language classes.	Descriptive	Teachers' error correction occurs frequently, but often unsystematically, regardless of pedagogical focus and most L2 learners like to be corrected.

[1] Adapted from El Tatawy (2000)

Tomasello and Herron (1988, 1989): effects of correcting learners' overgeneralizations and transfer from the L1.	Experimental and quasi experimental	Students learn best when they generate a hypothesis and receive immediate feedback.
Lightbown and Spada (1990): effects of CF and form-focused instruction on SLA in intensive ESL programs.	Experimental and quasi experimental	Language skills are best developed through meaning-based instruction with CF and focus on form.
White (1991): effectiveness of form-focused instruction, including positive and negative evidence, in helping L2 learners arrive at the appropriate TL properties.	Experimental and quasi experimental	Both negative and positive explicit evidence is more effective in helping L2 learners acquire TL than just naturalistic positive evidence. However, knowledge was not maintained over time.
Trahey and White (1993): whether positive L2 input that is incompatible with the L1 word order is sufficient to force a resetting of the syntactic system.	Experimental and quasi experimental	Exposure to intensive input led to high levels of acceptance of SAC word order; the SVAO order, was not significantly affected. Positive evidence alone was not sufficient to reduce effects of L1 setting.
Carroll and Swain (1993):	Experimental and	All treatment groups did

effects of different types of negative feedback on SLA to determine whether feedback could help learners acquire the appropriate abstract constraints on an overly generalized rule.	quasi experimental	significantly better than the control group. Implicit and explicit feedback were beneficial, leading to learning. Explicit metalinguistic information was more helpful than simply identifying a learner's mistake or giving the correct response.
Oliver (1995): role of negative evidence in native speaker (NS)- nonnative speaker (NNS) interactions to determine whether or not negative feedback existed, and whether or not NNSs incorporated such feedback into their subsequent production. The study focused on forms and implicit feedback: recasts and negotiation strategies, including repetition, clarification requests, and comprehension checks.	Descriptive	The child NS-NNS dyads interacted in a variety of ways, and implicit negative feedback comprised a substantial proportion of the interaction. The type of NNS error triggered the type of NS response. Negotiations occurred in response to multiple errors, while recasts occurred in response to singular error: Negotiations were used to clarify meaning and recasts to correct form.
Mackey and Philip (1998): effect of recasts on	Experimental	Learners at higher levels who received intensive

production and development of question forms in ESL, comparing learners who received modified input with learners who received the same input containing intensive recasts.		recasts showed a greater increase in structures than those learners who did not. Recasts may be beneficial for short term interlanguage development.
Doughty and Varela (1998): effectiveness of drawing ESL learners' attention to formal features without distracting them from their communicative intent.	Experimental	Use of corrective feedback was more effective than leaving students to their own devices to develop target-like ability in past-time reference.
Panova and Lyster (2002): range and types of feedback of an ESL teacher and their relationship to learner uptake and immediate repair of error. Database was coded using the categories identified in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) model of corrective discourse.	Descriptive	Clear preference for recasts and translation (both implicit and reformulative feedback), thus little opportunity for learner-generated repair and low rates of learner uptake and immediate repair of error.
Ammar and Spada (2006): benefits of recasts and prompts for learners at	Experimental	High-proficiency learners gained equally from prompts and recasts; low-

different levels who are learning determiners his and her.		proficiency learners benefited significantly more from prompts than recasts. Overall, prompts were more effective than recasts.
Carpenter, Jeon, MacGregor and Mackey (2006): learners' interpretations of recasts in videotaped task-based interactions.	Experimental	Learners who did not overhear initial learner utterances were much less successful at distinguishing recasts from repetitions. The difference between a problematic utterance and a recast leads learners to interpret recasts as corrective.
Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006): effects of either recasts (implicit) or metalinguistic explanation (explicit) on low-intermediate ESL learners' acquisition of past tense -ed.	Experimental	Posttests showed a clear advantage for explicit feedback over implicit feedback. Metalinguistic explanation benefited implicit as well as explicit knowledge.
Loewen and Philp's (2006): effectiveness of providing recasts (implicit) or metalinguistic information	Experimental	No statistically significant gains either type of feedback. Learning did not appear to take place in the

(explicit) to elementary L2 students on acquisition of past tense –ed in a computer-mediated context.		computer-mediated communicative context.
Lyster and Mori (2006): effects of explicit correction, recasts, and prompts on learner uptake and repair in teacher-student interaction in French and Japanese immersion in elementary classes.	Descriptive	Many more recasts provided than prompts and explicit correction in both settings, but different uptake and repair patterns in relation to feedback type. The largest proportion of repair resulting from prompts in French immersion and from recasts in Japanese immersion. Authors proposed the counterbalance hypothesis: "instructional activities and interactional feedback that act as a counterbalance to a classroom's predominant communicative orientation are likely to prove more effective than instructional activities and interactional feedback that are congruent with its

		predominant communicative orientation" (p. 269).
Sheen (2006): a taxonomy of recasts in communicative ESL and EFL classrooms, used to examine relationship between characteristics of recasts and learner uptake.	Sheen	Length of recasts (short or long), linguistic focus (pronunciation or grammar), and type of change (substitution or addition) were related to uptake. These features were also related to repair, but so were mode (declarative or interrogative), use of reduction (partial recasts) and number of changes (one or multiple). Explicit recasts led to more uptake/repair because they focused on a single linguistic feature and the reformulated item is salient to learners.

In addition to the studies presented in Table I, there are five meta-analyses on the effectiveness of corrective feedback as well as on form-focused instruction, which I discuss here.

First, Norris and Ortega (2000) looked at studies on the effectiveness of L2 instructional treatments that were published between 1980 and 1998. L2 instruction was found to be either focus on form or focus on forms. Also, instruction could be classified as either explicit or implicit, depending on whether learners' attention was being drawn to linguistic forms. In general, they found that focus on forms instruction was more effective than focus on form and explicit instruction was significantly more effective than implicit instruction. They also found, by calculating effect sizes for some subgroups of the studies in the meta-analysis, that metalinguistic explanations (very explicit) had greater effectiveness than recasts (less explicit). There are two main limitations of this meta-analysis: First, it is now quite out of date as there has been a lot of research in this area in 1998; Second, not all types of feedback were analyzed, so it is not really comprehensive (Li, 2010).

Second, Russell and Spada (2006) examined the effectiveness of corrective feedback in studies published between 1988 and 2003. The articles included those on oral and written feedback, as well as oral or written corrective feedback on written errors. Overall, although both oral and written feedback were found to be effective, oral feedback was less effective than written feedback. However, due to the small number studies, the Russell and Spada warned that the findings might not be generalizable. Additionally, due to the lack of primary research on the effects of individual feedback types, the meta-analysts did not distinguish between feedback types or carry out separate analyses for them. A limitation of Russell and Spada's (2006) meta-analysis is that it did not include computer-delivered feedback (Li, 2010). Also, it is somewhat outdated now.

More recently, Mackey and Goo (2007) conducted a meta-analysis that looked at the effect of negotiated interaction on L2 learning, which for most of the studies means a focus on the effectiveness of feedback (recasts,

metalinguistic feedback, and negotiation). Overall, there was an increased effect for all types of feedback. When analyzed separately, recasts were most effective, followed by metalinguistic feedback, and then negotiation. A strength of this meta-analysis is that it looked at face-to-face and computer-delivered feedback and it examined different types of feedback separately. However, studies of corrective feedback in non-interaction situations (e.g., Carroll & Swain, 1993) were not included (Li, 2010).

Although each of the above meta-analyses have their strengths with respective to the effectiveness of corrective feedback, there were some common weakness. First, they drew exclusively on published studies, thus overlooking potentially important findings in unpublished dissertations. To fill these gaps, Li (2010) conducted a meta-analysis that addressed issues that none of the previous analyses did, such as the mode of delivering feedback and the publication type. Thus, he did include unpublished dissertations in the meta-analysis, but excluded studies on feedback to written work on the grounds that this was a different construct. The meta-analysis focused solely on the construct of corrective feedback in order to develop a clearer picture of this instructional tool. As a more recent meta-analysis, Li's (2010) study is a good complement to those previously mentioned. He found that

> (a) there was a medium overall effect for corrective feedback and the effect was maintained over time, (b) the effect of implicit feedback was better maintained than that of explicit feedback, (c) published studies did not show larger effects than dissertations, (d) lab-based studies showed a larger effect than classroom-based studies, (e) shorter treatments generated a larger effect size than longer treatments, and (f) studies conducted in foreign language contexts produced larger effect sizes than those in second language contexts. (p. 309)

Lyster and Saito (2010) investigated the pedagogical effectiveness of oral corrective feedback (CF) on target language. These authors conducted a meta-analysis that focused exclusively on 15 classroom-based studies . The analysis was designed to investigate if CF was effective in classroom settings and, if so, whether its effectiveness varied according to (a) types of CF, (b) types and timing of outcome measures, (c) instructional setting (second vs. foreign language classroom), (d) treatment length, and (e) learners' age. The results obtained in this meta-analysis revealed that CF had significant and durable effects on target language development. Whereas instructional setting was not identified as a contributing factor to CF effectiveness, effects of long treatments were larger than those of short-to-medium treatments but not distinguishable from those of brief treatments. A simple regression analysis revealed effects for age, with younger learners benefit ting from CF more than older learners.

To conclude this section, it seems that in order for corrective feedback to lead to increases in language proficiency, the following conditions have to be met: Teachers need to be systematic and consistent when giving feedback; the corrective feedback needs to be clear enough to be perceived as feedback; the techniques used should allow for time and opportunity for self- and peer-repair and modified output; there should be as close a match as possible between the teacher's intent, the targeted error, and the learner's perception of the feedback; feedback provided should be consistent (i.e., focusing only on one form at a time) and intensive in nature. Finally, the learner's developmental readiness to process the feedback needs to be considered (El Tatawy, 2000).

2.9. Perceptions of Formative Assessment

The construct of perception constitutes a cornerstone of the present study; therefore in this section I examine literature on perceptions of formative

assessment. There is certainly terminological debate around the terms perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes. For example, Richardson (1996) considered that they are three interrelated concepts which can be grouped as "a set of mental constructs that name, define, and describe the structure and content of mental states thought to drive a person's actions" (p. 102). On the other hand, Gage (1960) distinguished perception as the process by which individuals become aware of objects or events and Legendre (2005) considered perception to be an intellectual ability of interpreting information. Then, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) differentiated between attitude, as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object, and beliefs as the information an individual has about that object, which can be favourably or unfavourably evaluated. However, in this study, I use the term perception to include beliefs and attitudes. Because I am interested in perception of assessment in particular, I define this as the students' act of perceiving the assessment in the course under investigation (van de Watering, Gijbels, Dochy, & van der Rijt, 2008).

In the next section, I examine the literature on student and teacher perceptions of formative assessment.

2.9.1. Student and teacher perceptions of formative assessment

The literature on students' perceptions of assessment is relatively limited. However, some studies have investigated the role of perceptions of assessment in learning processes. Indeed, this area of study is crucial because perceptions shape how students prepare for an assessment and can subsequently lead to positive or negative influences on learning (Boud, 1990; Gielen et al., 2003; Nevo, 1995). That is, perceptions can lead to deep learning if students have to understand the material in order to succeed in the assessment, but if they perceive that the assessment is asking for rote learning of information, they will not likely meet higher level objectives (Maclellan, 2001).

Prosser and Trigwell (1999) found that students' perceptions of not only course or program objectives, but also their overall workload, their teachers, and the independence they have in their learning all influence their experiences of assessment. In another study, Scouller (1998) looked at relationships between students' preferences, perceptions, and performance outcomes. Students tended to perceive the assessment types (e.g., multiple choice, essay) they preferred as requiring higher levels of cognitive processing. Also, students tended to perform poorly on assessment types that they had misinterpreted, or perceived incorrectly.

In a related study, Sambell, McDowell, and Brown (1997) examined student perceptions of assessment on learning, of the authenticity of the assessment, and of the fairness of the assessment. Students reported that traditional assessments (e.g., written tests) negatively affected their learning and that summative assessments were inauthentic and irrelevant. In addition, they felt that their perspectives of assessment fairness were rarely addressed. The students in this study valued their participation in tasks, receiving feedback, and engaging in relevance tasks. When these three aspects were met, assessment had a positive effect on their learning.

With respect to teacher perceptions of assessment, Neesom (2000), on behalf of the England Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCA), investigated teachers' perceptions of formative assessment in order to explore ways to support the teachers' use of formative assessment to subsequently raise students' performance. Through a questionnaire, Neesom explored what aspects of formative assessment teachers feel are valuable, how often it occurs in the classroom, and how much support they felt from administrative staff. The results revealed that teachers identify a variety of benefits of effective formative assessment for learning (reflects a high quality of teaching), teachers (fosters team work, creates partnerships with students,

tracks progress), and students (improvements in motivation and self-esteem). It appears that the more students are involved in formative assessments, the greater the benefits are to their learning. However, the study results also indicated that teachers are confused about the differences between formative and summative assessment. For example, some teachers perceived formative assessment as something extra, suggesting that they did not see it as an integral aspect to teaching and learning.

Overall, student and teacher perceptions of formative assessment have an significant impact in the learning process; however, there is still little research in this area. The present study contributes to this area of research. In the following section, I look at perceptions in the context of higher education.

2.9.2. Perceptions of assessment in higher education

Many teachers in higher education feel that students do not always perceive assessment in the ways that they are expected to. For example, Maclellan (2001) studied the perceptions of assessment of 80 university faculty and 130 undergraduate students and found a significant difference of perception between the two groups. Teachers perceived formative assessments as positive, but in fact reported teaching practices that made it difficult to proceed with formative processes. Also, although the teachers felt that their assessment practices were assessing the full range of learning, the academic essay was the most prevalent type of assessment given. On the other hand, students did not tend to see assessments as opportunities for them to improve their learning, and overall had very unsophisticated understandings of the purposes of assessment.

A significant contribution to the research on teacher and student perceptions of assessment in higher education is Ahmed and Teviotdale's (2008) currently ongoing project at the University of Huddersfield, in the UK. The aim of the project is to provide more teachers with effective approaches to formative assessment. In order to do this, the researchers explored student and

staff perceptions to formative assessment in university through questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. So far, the results have shown that most teachers see benefits to using formative assessment and claim to use it; yet, they have also reported lack of student engagement in formative tasks, when they are not graded. Some teachers suggested that integrating formative assessment into the curriculum or giving a small percentage of marks for this type of assessment could help solve issues of student engagement. Another aspect of formative assessment that teachers pointed out was the perception of the additional workload it could mean for them. However, other remarked that teachers in fact do more formative assessment than they think they do. It was seen as a useful way to track student progress and also develop teaching materials and curricula.

2.10. Research Objective and Questions

At this point, I can now state the objective of my study: to understand how formative assessment is practised in two Intermediate Oral English courses at the Université de Montréal and to compare how these practices are perceived and performed by the teacher and her students.

The following research questions will guide my results in relation to this objective: In the context of the Direction de l'enseignement de langues et cultures étrangères (DELCE) at the Université de Montréal

1. What is the nature of formative assessment in a second language classroom setting?
2. Do the teacher's assessment practices reflect what she thinks about formative assessment?
3. To what extent do the teacher's and her students' perceptions regarding formative assessment differ or converge?

The results obtained for each research question should allow me to reach a deep understanding of how formative assessment is practised in the two L2 classes.

2.11. Synthesis of Chapter 2

Because my study looks at formative assessment from two perspectives, assessment and SLA, the literature review covered both of these fields. I began by describing the origin and evolution of formative assessment through four major developments: focus on instrumentation; search for theoretical frameworks; studies of existing assessment practices; development of active student involvement in assessment. The present study has been placed in the third development.

Summative and formative assessment were defined and presented as two complementary aspects of assessment. I argued that both functions of assessment are essential and teachers' should aim for the harmonization of these two functions.

I demonstrated that there are significant benefits to learning for students from formative assessment in self-assessment, peer-assessment, and the provision of feedback.

I also discussed formative assessment in the context of language education in higher education and demonstrated that the pedagogical function of assessment has long been recognized in the English language teaching literature but that it has been relatively neglected compared to the detail that other aspects of testing have received.

Turning to the field of SLA, I defined corrective feedback and synthesized the debate around whether it is necessary or even beneficial for language acquisition. Then, I reviewed research on corrective feedback. I concluded that in order for corrective feedback to bring about interlanguage development, certain conditions have to be met.

In the last section of the chapter, I discussed the importance of studying teachers' and students' perceptions of formative assessment because of their impact on teaching and learning. From the research reviewed in this section, I

can conclude that: although teachers value formative assessment, they tend to think of it as a supplementary task; and students tend to have negative perceptions of formative assessment and engage only in graded tasks.

I concluded the chapter by stating the research questions that emerged from the literature review.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3. Introduction

To begin this chapter on methodology, I first explain how I approached answering each of the three research questions stated at the end of the previous chapter.

In order to approach the first research question—*What is the nature of formative assessment in an oral intermediate second language classroom setting?*—I described the nature of formative assessment according to Lyster and Ranta's (1997) types of corrective feedback and uptake as well as their distribution in the L2 classes in the study. To reiterate, these are: explicit correction, recast, clarification request, elicitation, repetition, and affective feedback (all corrective feedback); and repetition, incorporation, self repair, pair repair, acknowledge, same errors, different errors, hesitation, and partial repair (all uptake).

For the second research question—*Do the teacher's assessment practices reflect what she thinks about formative assessment?*—I interviewed the teacher at the beginning of each session (fall and winter). At the end of each session I compared and contrasted the teacher's answers to the interview questions with her actual performance – which was videotaped during the two courses.

For the third research question—*To what extent do the teacher and her students' perceptions differ or converge?*—I compared the teacher's answers to the interview and the students' answers to the questionnaires.

In the next section, I will discuss the methodological approach that I used for the study. Then, I describe the context and participants of the study. After this, I provide information of the data gathering process, the instruments used, and the sequence of the data gathering. This is followed by the analysis of the data. I conclude with the ethical considerations to were taken into account for the research project.

3.1. Type of Research Study

To most appropriately address my research questions, I chose the case study methodology. A case study is "an in-depth analysis of one or more events, settings, programs, social groups, communities, individuals, or other bounded systems in their natural context" (McMillan, 2008, p. 288). Yin (2003) suggested that the term case refers to an event, an entity, an individual, or even a unit of analysis. He also stated that "the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (p. 2; also Gummesson, 1991). In a similar vein, Anderson (1993) considered case studies as being concerned with how and why things happen, and allowing for the investigation of contextual realities and the differences between what was planned and what actually occurred. In addition, Patton (1987) argued that case studies are particularly useful when the researcher wants to understand a particular problem or situation in depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information.

In the present study, my goal was to develop a holistic understanding of how formative assessment is practiced in two intermediate oral English classes at the Université de Montréal and how these practices are perceived and performed by the teacher and her students. Case study, therefore, forms part of my research methodology because it enables me to understand the complex, real-life activities that take place in a L2 class. In addition, case study methodology typically involves several types of data collection instrument: In this study, I used questionnaires, interviews and observations.

Nevertheless, case studies have been criticized for their lack of scientific rigour and reliability, and for not leading to generalizable results because of their inherently small sample size (Johnson, 1994). However, for the purposes of my study, the strengths of case study justify this methodological choice,

especially because it allowed me to gain a holistic view of the formative assessment perceptions and practices in the L2 classes.

Other strengths of the methodology used in this study are: (1) the fact that the instruments were adapted from previous research (Colby-Kelly & Turner, 2007) meaning that their instruments have been validated by all the participants of the previous research; (2) the fact that the data gathering took place during the oral English courses implies that no extra-curricular time was demanded from the student participants, and not much from the teacher; (3) the use of the video instead of solely taking notes allowed me to record the assessment episodes with more precision; (4) the use of different instruments to gather data (class observations, interviews and questionnaires) increased the credibility and validity of the results.

Yet another strength in the methodology came from the teacher: Since she is very interested in L2 research, she facilitated my work sharing with me the information on webCT, her blog, and the student list. A final methodological strength is that I observed the teacher with two different groups of students (Fall and Winter sessions). This increased the reliability of my understanding of her formative assessment practices. Using a case study approach fostered these important methodological strengths.

Finally, I believe that the present investigation, which is based on a single case will allow me to extend the existing theory of formative assessment in L2 in HE by determining whether current theoretical propositions regarding formative assessment in L2 in HE are applicable to the observed reality or whether some alternative set of explanations might be more relevant.

In the next section, I describe the context of the study in detail.

3.2. Context: The Language School

The Language School of the *Faculté de l'éducation permanente,* the site of this study, has offered English courses in conversation, reading, and writing

at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels for more than 30 years. The Language School has been offering English courses in conversation, reading, and writing at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels for more than 30 years. Every year, there are over 1500 ESL students at the Language School. Courses are offered in English for Academic Purposes as well as English for Specific Purposes, such as scientific or technical writing in English, business English, and English for health-care professionals. Students take a mandatory placement test and the test result, which is valid for one year, corresponds to a certain class level. If students have not taken an English course for more than one year, they must re-take the test. In this study, I focused on one intermediate oral English course. It is a 3 credit course and 45 hours of class time. This course is described in the next section.

3.2.1. Information about the course

The goal of the intermediate oral English course is for students to have the opportunity to improve their competence is spoken English. Students gain confidence in their oral skills through class and take home activities, which encourage them to express themselves naturally and appropriately in English. The main objectives of the course, as stated in the course outline, are to improve students' fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. As this is an oral class, the emphasis is on speaking and listening, and with grammar, writing, and reading receiving less attention. Students participate in oral activities that are designed with particular grammar problems in mind; they often do pair or small group work. For listening comprehension, students are exposed to materials from a variety of sources, such as radio, television, and podcasts.

Textbooks and workbooks for the course are: *Understanding and Using English Grammar Interactive*, a software available in the language lab (Azar, Betty); the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* or any other English-English dictionary; and a Clairefontaine vocabulary notebook.

Summative assessment for the course is broken down as follows: 2 grammar quizzes, worth 20% and 25% each; 15% for in-class speaking activities; 15% for written work; a final oral evaluation, worth 25%.

3.3. Participants

3.3.1. Procedure for participants' recruitment

In order to recruit participants, first, I contacted the *Direction de l'enseignement des langues et cultures étrangères (DELCE)* at the Université de Montréal. Then, I met with the head of the English department in order to explain to her the goals and instruments of the research. After receiving approval at this level, I contacted participants (teacher and students) from two intermediate oral English classes at the DELCE at the Université de Montréal. The first course was the intermediate oral English course in the Fall 2009 term (ANG 1968). The course was scheduled on Monday mornings (8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.) from September 14th to December 14th. The second course was the intermediate oral English course in the Winter 2010 term (ANG 1968 B). The course was scheduled on Friday afternoons (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) from January 12th to April 20th. Both courses were taught by the same teacher.

I chose the conversation courses because my research targets, in particular speaking tasks and feedback, pertain to speaking tasks. These types of courses aim to help students with oral communication through activities that encourage student interaction. Therefore, I was able to observe the various approaches that the teacher uses to help the students to express themselves clearly and accurately in English.

3.3.2. Participating students

The participating students were from various mother-tongue backgrounds and took the English courses because they wanted to improve their

English not because it was a requirement of their programs. However the course grade they obtain counts towards their average as in every 3-credit university course.

There were 34 students registered in the fall course. Eighteen students were female and 16 were male. Twenty-five agreed to answer the questionnaire (15 female and 10 male). There were 26 students in the winter session. Twenty were female and 6 were male. Twenty students agreed to answer the questionnaire (15 female and 5 male).

3.3.3. Participating teacher

The participant teacher was one female teacher who was observed during both sessions. Her mother tongue is English and her field of expertise is English Language Learning, particularly with reference to the incorporation of cultural, and specifically literary, material in the second-language classroom. She has a Ph.D. (1986) and an M.A. (1982) in *Littérature comparée* from McGill University. She holds a B.A. in *Littérature française/Langue russe* from the Université du Manitoba (1979). Since 1986, she has taught courses such as: Advanced Conversational English Advanced English Grammar, Intermediate Oral English 1 and 2, Advanced Oral English 2, Contemporary American Culture, Contemporary Canadian Culture, English Composition 2 and 3, English Grammar 1, Intermediate Reading, Introduction to English Fiction 1, *Lecture de l'anglais scientifique, Lecture de l'anglais en arts et lettres,* New Canadian Novel, New Canadian Short Story, Practical English Writing 2, Scientific Writing 1, Twentieth-Century Short Story.

She has also won important teaching awards: the 3M Teaching Award (2008); and the *Prix d'excellence en enseignement*, from the Université de Montréal (2005 and 2001). In addition, she has been a member of different committees at the University, such as the *Comité local d'intégration pédagogique*, the *Comité du premier cycle* at the *Département d'études*

anglaises (2005-2007), and theComité des usagers des laboratoires de langue and the *Comité de gestion des laboratoires de micro-informatique* (1998). The teacher also presented at conferences such as: Podcasting: A Canadian Perspective (University of Leeds, UK, 2007), *Pour mieux planifier votre cours en ligne* (Program *SUITE : Soutien à l'utilisation de l'Internet et des technologies dans l'enseignement, Université de Montréal, 2001);* and *Utilisation de WebCT dans le cours ANG 1023 (Program SUITE : Soutien à l'utilisation de l'Internet et des technologies dans l'enseignement, Université de Montréal*, 2001).

3.4. Data Gathering

In this section, I describe the development, selection, adaptation of the research instruments, the protocols established for each instrument, and the piloting process used to validate the instruments.

The instruments were adapted from Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007).

3.4.1. Observation

Observations, in addition to interviews and questionnaires, are a primary source of data in qualitative research. In fact most of the research of formative assessment in L2 mentioned in the previous study used observation as a research tool. Observation is a research tool when "it is systematic, when it addresses a specific research question, and when it is subject of the checks and balances in producing trustworthy results" (Merriam, 2009, p. 118).

Gold's (1958) classic typology distinguished four degree of participation of the observer: complete participant; participant as observer; observer as participant; and complete observer. In the case of the first, the observer is already a member of the group being studied and does not announce their role as an observer in order to allow activities to proceed naturally. In the second situation, the observer is an active member of the group and actively

participates in the group's activities and interactions, but the observer's research role is known by all members. In the third, the researcher's observer activities are known to the group and participation in the group is definitely secondary to the role of information gatherer. Finally, the complete observer is not a member of the group and does not participate in the group's activities.

In addressing the first research question, I adopted the role of complete observer since I did not participate in the group's activities. I observed and videotaped the classroom interactions in two intermediate classes as shown in Table II below.

Table II: Number of Observations

Fall 2009		Winter 2010		Total	
Observations	Hours	Observations	Hours	Observations	Hours
4	12	4	12	8	24

All observed classes were videotaped and thus all participants were aware that I was doing the observations. The entire duration of each class was observed and recorded, with the exception of the fifteen minute break. I did not interact with the students in order not to disturb their usual behaviour. I tried to be friendly and honest but not overly technical or detailed in explaining what I was doing.

In addition to the video-taped observations, I also took detailed descriptive field notes concerning the time, date, location, and length of observations, detailed descriptions of participants, interactions, activities, and settings, and verbatim conversations and direct quotes.

I divided the process of collecting data though observation into three stages: entry, data collection, and exit (Merriam, 2009). In the entry phase, I explained my research project to the teacher in order to obtain her permission to

be observed and to participate in the research. I explained the purpose of the study to her but did not inform her of the specific research questions. Once the teacher agreed to participate, I followed the same protocol with the students.

On the first day of observation, the teacher introduced me to the students. I explained the general objective of the research to them and told them that I would be in the class holding a video-camera and filming their teacher and some of their interactions with each other and the teacher. At this point, I asked the students for their informed the consent to participate. The consent form (see Appendix 9 and 10 for teacher and student consent forms) also made it clear that they had the right suspend their participation at any time.

In the data collection phase, I observed and videotaped the classes. This was described above. The final exit phase took place on the last day of observation, when I thanked the students for having participated in the research study. I reminded them that their identities would be kept strictly confidential and that the results would be forwarded to the teacher and used exclusively for research purposes.

3.4.2. Interview

Most qualitative research includes interviews. An interview is basically "a purposive conversation with a person or a group of persons" (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2006, p. 121). The most common type of interview is the semi-structured interview, which is guided by a set of questions and issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of questions is predetermined (Merriam, 2009).

I conducted a semi-structured interview with the teacher at the beginning of each session in order to address the second research question. In both interviews I followed the same protocol. I started by meeting the participant teacher, greeting her, and explaining the characteristics of the

interview (i.e., a semi-structured interview). I also told the teacher that the interview would be recorded.

Following interview guidelines adapted from the student interviews in Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007), I elicited her perceptions about classroom-based formative assessment practices. The same interview was administered twice interviews because I was interested to see if the teacher's perceptions might have changed over time. I discuss these results in Chapter 4.

The guidelines for the teacher interview addressed the same issues as the student questionnaires, but from a teacher-centred perspective. The focus of the interview was oral feedback as well as peer- and self-assessment. There were 25 questions, an example of which is, I would like to know what you think about formative assessment and learning. In your opinion, does formative assessment foster learning? Why? (See Appendix 7 for complete interview protocol).

I used the data from the interview at the end of each session to compare the teacher's answers (i.e., her perceptions) with her actual performance during the courses.

3.4.3. Questionnaire

I adapted Colby-Kelly and Turner's (2007) questionnaire to elicit the teacher and her students' perceptions about classroom-based formative assessment practices in order to answer the third research question. Whereas Colby-Kelly and Turner's questionnaire elicits teachers' perceptions about classroom-based formative assessment practices, I adapted it for the teacher interview (discussed above) and the student questionnaire. Colby-Kelly and Turner's questionnaire had 51 items which were rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree). The items fell into four categories

relating assessment to students, teachers, learning, and course needs. Finally, the questionnaire included six open-ended questions.

The student questionnaire in my study had 30 items in 3 categories relating assessment to students, teacher, and learning. An example of an item from the *assessment and students* section is 'Student self-evaluation fosters learning' (see Appendices 1, 2, and 3). In order to process the data and to report the findings, I collapsed strongly disagree and disagree into one category of general disagreement; likewise, agree and strongly agree were collapsed into a category of general agreement. I also added a third category of *not applicable (N/A)* for the data processing and reporting for questions that were not answered by the students.

Regarding the protocol followed for the student questionnaire, it was applied the last day of classes in both groups. I started by reminding students of their right to withdraw from participation in the research as well as the confidential nature of the information they provided. Then, I gave the instructions for the questionnaire and clarified the terms that students were not sure about, for example, self-evaluation, peer review, and comprehension-check questions. Students were asked to raise their hands in case they needed supplementary information regarding the meaning of any of the questions.

By comparing data from the teacher interview and student questionnaires, I was able to identify similarities and differences between the teacher and her students' perceptions regarding the benefits of formative assessment.

In Table III below, I present the sequence of data gathering.

Table III: Sequence of Data Gathering

Research phase	Stage	Means	Task
Pre-Experimentat-ion process	Adaptation of instruments	Research ethics certificate and consent form	Request permission to collect data from *Comité Déontologique* July, 2009
		Student questionnaire	Precision of the content Determine the format Order the themes
		Teacher interview guidelines	Precision of the content Determine the format Order the themes
	Selection of participants		One teacher from the DELCE at Université de Montréal Students registered in the fall session (2009) and winter session (2010)
Experimentat-ion process	Data Gathering	First teacher interview	Contact participant teacher Ask for an appointment Interview (August, 2009)
		Consent form 4 observations 3 hours each	Contact participant teacher Set schedule for observations Videotape observed classes (Fall Session: August-December 2009)
		Student questionnaire	Administer the questionnaire to the 25 participant students (December, 2009)
		Second teacher interview	Contact teacher Ask for appointment Interview (January, 2010)

	Consent form 4 observations 3 hours each	Contact participant teacher Set schedule for observations Videotape observed classes (Winter Session: January-April 2010)
	Student questionnaire	Administer the questionnaire to the 20 participant students (April, 2010)

In the next section I discuss the different stages of the data processing and analysis.

3.5. Data Processing and Analysis

The qualitative analyses consisted of examining and reporting on the classroom observation videotape, the data from teacher's interviews and the students' questionnaire.

3.5.1. Observation

For the data analysis of the videotape data, I adopted a qualitative approach of interpretational analysis using the software program QDAMiner[2]. Student turns were coded when they presented an error. Following Lyster and Ranta (1997), I classified errors as phonological, lexical, or grammatical. I did not include content errors, such as:

T: Where will the next World cup take place?

St: In Brazil.

T: No, actually it will be in Africa.

[2] QDAMiner is a mixed-model qualitative data analysis software package for coding, annotating, retrieving and analyzing small and large collections of documents and images.

I was interested in the teacher's feedback on linguistic errors. I used the types of feedback and uptake that Lyster and Ranta (1997) defined (see Chapter 1). Feedback types are: explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, elicitation, repetition, and metalinguistic feedback. Uptake types are: repetition, incorporation, self-repair, peer-repair, acknowledgment, same error, different error, partial repair, and hesitation. It is important to note that in the analysis, I coded feedback as clarification requests only when these moves followed a student error.

In order to increase the reliability of the coding, I asked a second researcher to analyze the type of errors as well as the feedback and uptake techniques. We each analyzed interactions during three hours of observations. Our coding showed an agreement of 90% for the type of errors and 87% for the feedback and uptake techniques. We then discussed the cases where there was disagreement. Next, I completed the coding of the remaining 24 hours of data.

Finally in order to establish the relationship between the teacher's feedback and the students' uptake I used the coded data from QDAMiner and transferred it to an Excel document, where I reported the types of uptake for each type of feedback. For example, there were 40 teacher turns coded as elicitation feedback. I identified the type of uptake for each teacher turn, as shown in Table IV below.

Table IV: Frequency of Types of Uptake for Elicitation

Types of Uptake	**Number of Student Turns**	**% of Total Student Turns**
Acknowledgement	1	2.5
Different error	4	10
Same error	9	22.5
Hesitation	1	2.5
Off target	1	2.5
Partial repair	2	5
Uptake repetition	0	0
Incorporation	1	2.5
Self-Repair	14	35
Peer-Repair	0	0
No uptake	7	17.5
Total	**40**	**100**

I added the category of *No uptake* to refer to when the student remained silent after receiving the teacher's feedback.

Once again to assure the reliability of the process, I asked another researcher to transfer the data from QDAMiner to Excel. Independently, we transferred 50 teachers turns of feedback types (28.9%) with their corresponding students' uptake types, reaching a 98% of agreement. We then discussed the cases where there was disagreement. I completed the transfer of the rest of the data consisting of 128 teacher turns.

3.5.2. Interviews

I transcribed the interview data and then listened to the audio file again while comparing it to the transcript to ensure that I had not overlooked any meaningful information. Then I did a content analysis to classify the data according to the following 11 categories:

(Interview excerpt 9; 24/02/2010)

I want them to use the language, I call it negotiation, I want them to negotiate in the language of the classroom Next, with the purpose of being able to operationalize the teacher's perceptions regarding formative assessment as accurate, inaccurate, and neutral, I created three kinds of comment connotations.

For accurate comments, I used (+). In these comments, teacher's perceptions were aligned with the constructs regarding formative assessment techniques expressed in the study literature review. For example, in the category of peer correction benefits learning, the teacher said "I want them to be able to discuss with each other and say: 'I think this is a mistake because...'" (Interview 24/02/2010).

I marked inaccurate comments with (-). In these cases, teacher's comments did not align with the constructs of formative assessment expressed in Chapter 2. An example from the same category above is: "I say (to my students) 'work with a partner and look at your writing' and sometimes they try to correct each other. . . . often they are unable to do that because they have made a mistake in the first place" (Interview 24/02/2010).

I used (+/-) for neutral comments, which were those that were not in the scope of the constructs regarding formative assessment expressed in the literature review. Again, in the category of peer correction benefits learning, and example is: "I would be interested to see what the students think about peer-assessment" (Interview 24/02/2010).

I used the same 11 categories when analyzing and coding the questionnaire data in order to be able to compare and contrast the teacher and her students' responses and discern to what extent the teacher and her students' perceptions regarding the benefits of formative assessment differ or converge.

As in the case of the observations, I did the content analysis of the interviews. using the QDA Miner software. Once again, I had a second researcher code the teacher's interview into accurate, inaccurate, or neutral categories. We independently analyzed 15 minutes of interview data from each interview. Our coding was 95% reliable. We discussed the cases where there was disagreement. I completed the rest of the interview data coding (2 interviews = 50 minutes).

3.5.3. Questionnaires

The guiding questions for the interview and the items in the questionnaires reflect the same categories to allow the comparison of the results of both types of data. Table V below shows the questions that were asked in the students' questionnaires, as well as the questions that were posed during both interviews for each of the 11 categories. In addition, the questions that were not taken into account for the purpose of this study are also presented in Table V.

Table V: Questionnaire and Interview Questions According to Each Category

Category a: Formative assessment fosters learning	
Student questionnaire	**Teacher interview guidelines**
(9) I believe formative assessment contributes to learning	(8) Do students believe assessment contribute to learning?
(24) Formative assessment may have an impact on the course of students learning	(18)Can formative assessment have an impact on the course of students learning?
(31) Formative assessment can contribute to student learning	(25) Can formative assessment contribute to student learning?
(23) Assessment focusing directly on student development is best	
Category b: Self-assessment benefits learning	
Student questionnaire	**Teacher interview guidelines**
(1) Self-evaluation fosters	(1) Does self-evaluation foster (promote)

(benefits) learning	learning?

Category c: Teacher feedback promotes learning

Student questionnaire	**Teacher interview guidelines**
(13) Teacher-student conferences are effective in fostering learning	
(14) Teacher feedback is effective in promoting student learning	(11) Is teacher feedback effective in promoting learning?
(27) Teacher comments to me are important in my learning	(21) Are teacher comments to students important in their learning?

Category d: Peer feedback promotes learning

Student questionnaire	**Teacher interview guidelines**
(2) Peer review feedback is useful for learning.	(2) Is it useful for learning when students correct other students' work?
(3) I consider that peer feedback is important for learning.	(3) Do you value peer feedback in learning?

Category e: ***Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals***

Student questionnaire	**Teacher interview guidelines**
(4) I should be actively involved in my assessment	(4) Should students be actively involved in their assessment?
(5) It is important for me to have input on how my work is assessed	
(11)It's good for me to brainstorm what successful tasks should `look like`	(9) Is it good for students to brainstorm what successful tasks should `look like`?
(22) Asking students 'What do you think I want you to learn from this lesson?' benefits learning	(17) Is it useful when the teacher asks students what they think she wants them to learn from the lesson?
(28) Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals	(22) Should teacher and students share an understanding of assessment goals?
(29) Evaluation forms aid in communicating specific evaluation	(23) Do evaluation forms aid in communicating specific evaluation

criteria to students	criteria to students?

Category f: Error analysis is effective feedback

Student questionnaire	**Teacher interview guidelines**
(15) Error analysis in general (grammar, pronunciation, etc.) is effective feedback	(12) Is error analysis in general (grammar, pronunciation, etc.) effective feedback?
(16) Error analysis of specific grammar points is effective feedback	(13) Is error analysis of specific grammar points effective feedback?

Category g: Positive feedback is effective feedback

Student questionnaire	**Teacher interview guidelines**
(25) I need to receive positive feedback in order to progress	(19) Do your students need to receive positive feedback in order to progress?

Category h: Negative feedback is effective feedback

Student questionnaire	**Teacher interview guidelines**
(26) I need to receive negative feedback in order to progress	(20) Do your students need to receive negative feedback in order to progress?

Category i: Graded activities have an impact in students' engagement

Student questionnaire	**Teacher interview guidelines**
(12) It is helpful to know activities' worth towards final grade.	(10) Is it helpful for students to know activities' worth towards final grade?

Category j: Varied assessment methods should be used continually

Student questionnaire	**Teacher interview guidelines**
(30) Varied assessment methods should be used continually.	(24) Should varied assessment contribute to student learning?
(6) I prefer to be assessed by varied methods	(5) Do students prefer to be assessed by varied methods?
(7) Varied assessment methods give more students a chance to do well	(6) Do varied assessment methods give more students a chance to do well?

Category k: One primary assessment method should be used continually

Student questionnaire	Teacher interview guidelines
(8) I prefer to be assessed by one primary method	(7) Do students prefer to be assessed by one primary method?
(10) Using one primary assessment method allows students to perfect their performances	

Questions that were not taken into account for the purpose of this study

Student questionnaire	Teacher interview guidelines
(19) Comprehension-check questions are useful to confirm student understanding	(14)Are comprehension-check questions useful to confirm that students have understood?
(20) Short-answer comprehension-check questions are useful	(15)Are short-answer comprehension-check questions useful?
(21) Audio-recording student speech is useful in correcting pronunciation.	(16) Is audio-recording your speech useful in correcting pronunciation?
(18) Teachers need to be aware of how a skill/L2 competence develops	

I used Excel to record and analyze the frequency of the students' answers to the questionnaires as in the example in Table VI below (see Appendices 4 and 5 for the complete results).

Table VI: Frequency of Student Answers to Questionnaire Items

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Self-evaluation fosters (benefits) learning.			19	6
2. Peer review feedback is useful for learning.			14	11
3. I consider that peer feedback is important for learning.			14	10
4. I should be actively involved in my assessment.		4	11	9

As I discussed earlier, for data processing and analysis purposes, I collapsed the options of strongly disagree and disagree into one category (disagree) and did the same for agree and strongly agree (collapsed into agree). I also added a not applicable (N/A) category for questions that were not answered by the students. Table VII shows an example of the three categories of agreement for analysis (see Appendix 6 for all collapsed data).

Table VII: Disagreement and Agreement to Questionnaire Items

	Disagree	Agree	N. A.	Total Number of Students
1. Self-evaluation fosters (benefits) learning.		25		25
2. Peer review feedback is useful for learning.		25		25
3. I consider that peer feedback is important for learning.		24	1	25
4. I should be actively involved in my assessment.	4	20	1	25

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations of the present study were undertaken according the demands of the Université de Montreal, which are:

- Participants must be notified of the goals, methods, anticipated benefits and potential hazards of the research, their right to abstain from participation in the research and their right to terminate at any time their participation, and the confidential nature of their replies.
- No individual shall become a participant unless he/she is given the notice referred to in the preceding paragraph and provides a freely given consent that he/she agrees to participate. No pressure or inducement of any kind shall be applied to encourage an individual to become a subject of research.
- The identity of individuals from whom information is obtained in the course of the project shall be kept strictly confidential. At the conclusion of the project, any information that reveals the identity of individuals who were subjects of research shall be destroyed unless the individual concerned has consented in writing to its inclusion beforehand. No information revealing the identity of any individual shall be included in the final report or in any other communication prepared in the course of the project, unless the individual concerned has consented in writing to its inclusion beforehand (University of Montreal, 2011).

Chapter 4: Results

4. Introduction

In this chapter I present the results of my study. These results will lead allow me to answer the three research questions:

1. What is the nature of formative assessment in an oral intermediate second language classroom setting?
2. Do the teacher's assessment practices reflect what she thinks about formative assessment?
3. To what extent do the teacher and her students' perceptions differ or converge?

4.1. Results Regarding First Research Question

The results that respond to the first research question are those that came from the observation videotape transcripts. In this section, I present results of the number of student errors, types of feedback, and types of uptake.

4.1.1. Number of students errors

Student errors were classified as phonological, lexical, or grammatical. Table VIII below shows the number of student errors students during the 24 hours of observation.

Table VIII: Number of Student Errors

Type of student errors	**Number of errors**	**% of total student errors**
Phonological	53	28.96
Lexical	52	39.34
Grammatical	78	31.7
Total	**183**	**100**

It is important to mention that during the 24 hours of observation there was a higher proportion of teacher talking time (33.75%) in relation to student talking time (27.64%). As Table IX below shows, this had an impact on the number of students errors and consequently in the number of teacher turns providing feedback. I come back to this issue in the next chapter.

Table IX: Teacher Talking Time vs. Student Talking Time

Date	Theme	Teacher talking time	Student talking time	Silent activity time (reading, writing, video, lab.)	Break and class manage-ment time	Total hours
26/10/ 2009	Fluency activities Video	40 min.	1h. 20min.	40 min.	20 min.	3h.
9/11/ 2009	Grammar review Fluency exercise Writing	1h. 20 min.	34 min.	46 min.	20 min.	3h.
16/11/ 2009	Grammar exercises Oral Presentat-ions	50 min.	1h. 30 min.	25 min.	15 min.	3h.

30/11/ 2009	Oral presentatio ns Writing activity	25 min.	1h. 30 min.	45 min.	20 min.	3 h.
26/01/ 2010	Grammar: error correction Laboratory	1h.10 min.	32 min.	53 min.	25 min.	3 h.
16/02/ 2010	Grammar: Error detection Video Laboratory	42 min.	22 min.	1h. 36 min	20 min.	3 h.
13/04/ 2010	Presentat- ion and revision of grammar points	2h.10mi n.	25 min.		25 min.	3h.
20/04/ 2010	Grammar review In class writing Oral report of a book	49 min.	25 min.	1h. 26 min	20 min.	3h.
Total hours (%)		8h. 6 min. (33.75)	6 h. 38 min. (27.64)	6 h. 31 min. (27.15)	2 h. 45 min. (11.46)	24 h. (100)

In the following section I will present the types of feedback that the teacher provided to her students.

4.1.2. Types of feedback

The types of feedback are based on Lyster and Ranta (1997): explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, elicitation, repetition, and metalinguistic feedback. These were defined in Chapter 1.

The results showed that *explicit correction* was the most common feedback type provided by the teacher (53.4%). The teacher gave precise information about the student errors and offered the correct information as in the following examples:

(Class observation excerpt 1; 26/10/2009)

S: How long have you been there?

T: Not have I been there, because if you say how long have you been there it means I still there.

(Class observation excerpt 2; 26/10/2009)

S: The north of Africa is more European...

T: Ok, before we go on let's take a look to some of the vocabulary, if you say the north of Africa or south of Africa it sounds as if you were talking about something that is out of the continent of Africa, so we can say northern Africa and then northern Africa will be anywhere in the northern part, southern Africa will be I guess it will be from maybe the Equator or down and it doesn't confuse with south Africa which is a country called South Africa. So let's use the words northern and southern. So northern Africa is different from southern, eastern from western and even in the countries, for example Botswana is different from South Africa.

The teacher complemented the explicit correction moves with the *elicitation* of the right answers (22.5%).

(Class observation excerpt 3; 13/04/2010)

S: Did you fly, how long?

T: How would be the question? What's a good question? You want to know: me/plane/how many hours. Ok. What's the question?

(Class observation excerpt 4; 26/10/2009)

S: climbing

T: climbing, so the person who does it is a ....

S: climber

T: yes, there you have something, so it is to climb, climbing, to bomb, bombing, so that will help you with the pronunciation.

The teacher provided *metalinguistic feedback* (18.5%) in her class through comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form, as in the following example:

(Class observation excerpt 5; 20/04/2010)

S3: (/) after his father died

T: *not his father she's a woman*

S3: ...

T: *she is a woman, so it's*

S3: her

T: *after her father died, why do we say, why did I correct her?, she said: after his father died*

S2: because this is for the boy

T: That is right; it's a man, her father. That is one of problems some languages have, because in French, father is male, so we say *son pere*, so after her father died...

S3: after her father died she decided to open a detective agency.

There was a small frequency of *recasts* (3.9%) used during the observed classes. The teacher reformulated the students' utterances minus the error, as in the following examples:

(Class observation excerpt 6; 26/10/2009)

S: yes, and I started with Senegal and it was a shAck

T: it was a shOck eh? Why?

S: because I was, I was so white no? In the middle of the crowd I remembered in the customs service, you don't have x-rays for your luggage.

In regard to *clarification requests* the teacher used these the least often (1.7%). In these cases, the teacher asked for a repetition or a reformulation of student utterances when it presented problems of comprehensibility or accuracy or both, as in the example below.

(Class observation excerpt 7; 13/04/2010)

T: for one year and a half, and when you first came, was it easy? What was it like?

S1: it was funny

T: funny like strange? Or how was that?

S1: funny like strange and exciting

No *repetition feedback* at all was found during the analysis of the class observations.

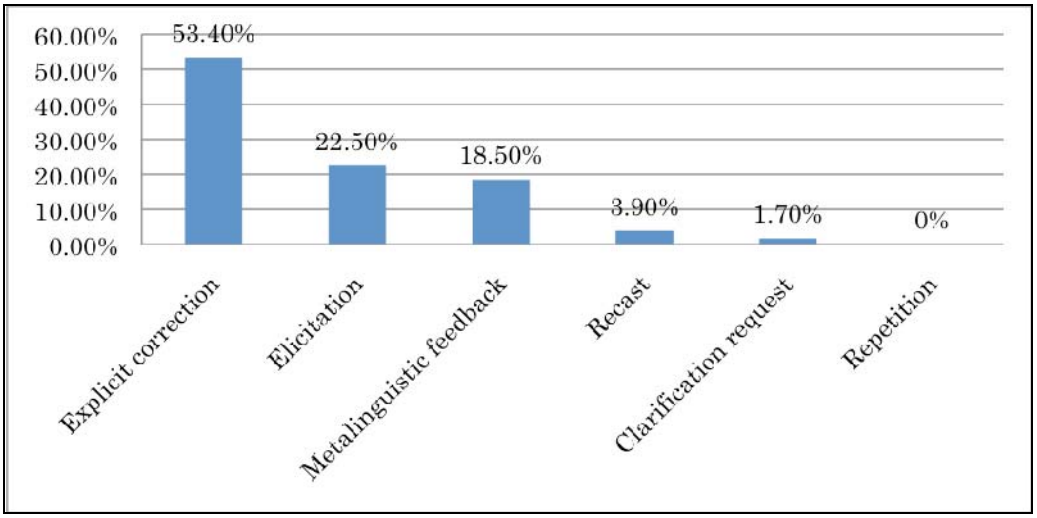
Table X below shows the types of feedback provided by the teacher, as well as the number of teacher turns and the percentage of the total teacher turns.

Table X: Frequency of Feedback Turns

Feedback Type	**Teacher Turns**	**(% of Total Teacher Turns)**
Explicit correction	95	53.40
Recast	7	3.90
Clarification requests	3	1.70
Elicitation	40	22.50
Repetition	0	0.00
Metalinguistic feedback	33	18.50
Total	**178**	**100.00**

As Figure 4 below shows, there is a predominance of *explicit correction* (53.4%) and *elicitation* (22.5%) in the frequency of distribution of feedback types. There is also a strong presence of metalinguistic feedback (18.5%). Less frequent are *recasts* (3.9%) and *clarification requests* (1.7%). There is no *repetition feedback* during the class. I discuss the possible implications of this distribution in Chapter 5.

Figure 4: Types of Feedback (% of Total Teacher Turns)



In the next section I present the results regarding the types of uptake students performed during the observed classes.

4.1.3. Types of uptake

The second part of the first research question is related to the way students respond to the feedback provided by the teacher. As with the types of feedback, the types of uptake have been taken from Lyster and Ranta (1997). These are defined in Chapter 1.

The most common type of uptake noticed in the class was *acknowledgement* (20.9%). Students listened to the teacher's feedback and expressed their agreement with the teacher's comments as in the examples that follow:

(Class observation excerpt 8; 26/10/2009)

T: You decided to go *to* Africa

S:*yeah*

T: to Africa

S: *yes,* and I started with Senegal

(Class observation excerpt 9; 10/2010)

T: Yes it is important to be able to pronounce that, do you know what kind of fish it is

S1: salmon

T: saumon, we don't say the l

S1: *ok*

T: we don't say the l

S1: *yeah that's right*

Incorporation (14.7%) and self-repair (14.7%) were the second most common types of uptake observed in the class. With respect to incorporation, students listened to the teacher's feedback and integrated the correction in their production of the new utterance, as in the following examples:

(Class observation excerpt 10; 26/10/2009)

S: This will be the first time it will happen so I think it is a big joy for all the continent and all the countries hope to participate *to* this World Cup

T: to participate *in* the World Cup

S: The countries want to participate *in* the World Cup and unfortunately there are only six places (...) I really think it will be a very special moment for the country

Self-repair occurred when the student self-corrected. Here are some examples of self-repair:

(Class observation excerpt 11; 26/10/2009)

S: How long have you been there? *How long were you there?*

T: I don't remember

(Class observation excerpt 12; 9/11/2009)

T: Have you seen it?

S: yes I play it, I have played it? *I have played it many times*

T: OK explain the game to us

The third most common type of student uptake was *same error* (13.2%). This means that the students do not correct their wrong answer but continue to make the same errors after their teacher's feedback, as in the following example:

(Class observation excerpt 13; 26/01/2010)

T: See the difference? If he says I've been living in Morocco, he is not in Morocco today, so he has to say: I have lived in Morocco, it means before now but I don't know when. I want to know when, ok? How will I ask the question?

S2: *How long have you been living in Morocco?*

T: How long have you been living in Morocco? If I say how long have you been living in Morocco; first of all: is it possible to ask that question in English? Sure! How long have you been living in Morocco? But, that means the he is still living in Morocco. Ok? So, let's imagine that you are living in Montreal now, what question will I ask with how long?

S2: OK, *how long have you been living in Morocco?*

Repetition was the fourth most common type of uptake (12.4%). The student repeated the teacher's feedback that included the correct form as in the following examples:

(Class observation excerpt 14; 9/11/2009)

T: I want you to say, *how long have you lived in Montreal?*

S1: *How long have you lived in Montreal?*

T: Very nice

(Class observation excerpt 15; 9/11/2009)

T: Ok? How about you?

S2: I haven't *rid* it too

T: no no no, *I haven't read it yet*

S2: *I haven't read it yet*

T: or: I haven't started to read it yet

S2: *I haven't started to read it yet*

T: or I haven't started to read it yet

S2: I haven't started to read it yet

T: Ok it is important to start reading because we are going to be talking about it, how about you?

S3: I only read one chapter

T: Ok, so they haven't read it at all, so why don't you tell them about the first chapter, bring them to the book, convince them why should they read it.

Different error was also present in the observed classed (10.9%). The students' response to the teacher's feedback neither corrected nor repeated the initial error but they made a different error instead, like in the examples below:

(Class observation excerpt 16; 20/04/2010)

T: He used to play tennis, and now?

S1: *He didn't play anymore*

T: not didn't but

S1: *he don't*

T: he doesn`t

T: You don't play tennis anymore? You don't play tennis now?

S2: No, I do some sports but I don't play tennis anymore

T: Do you play tennis?

S3: I used to play tennis in high school but I don't anymore

T: You don't anymore and why did you stop?

S3: I stopped played tennis

T: No, I stopped playing tennis

(Class observation excerpt 17; 20/04/2010)

T: so you would say?

S1: *I am used to live here*

T: No. Let's say, let's use: I've got use to, I've got use to

S1: *I've got used to being living here*

T: Now keep practicing I will come back

A less frequent type of uptake is *partial repair* (5.4%), which included a correction of only part of the initial error like in the following example.

(Class observation excerpt 18; 26/1/2010)

T: So what I'm going to say? By the time…

S: I arrived

T: the plane, what?

S: the plan *was landed*

T: uh uh

S: *The plane had already...*

T: had already landed

Off target is one of the three least frequent uptake types (3, 9%). Students clearly responded to the teacher's feedback, but it missed the teacher's linguistic focus altogether, without including any further errors.

(Class observation excerpt 19; 26/1/2010)

T: Any questions? She used to weigh 50 pounds more, did you know that?

S2: Yes, *I saw the difference*

T: You've already seen the difference

S2: *Yes because we are all in the same program*

Students also produced *hesitation uptake* type (2.3%) during the class. In other words, they showed indecision in response to the teacher's feedback, like in the following examples:

(Class observation excerpt 20; 26/1/2010)

T : Ok with yet you don't say "didn't" but you are going to say ...

S1 : *I don't?*

T : No

S1 : *I haven't?*

(Class observation excerpt 21; 19/01/2010)

T: What is that word? There is a very good word we can learn, when you move through the air like a bird, when a bird flies like this, without moving its wings

S1: *injured?*

Finally, the least frequent type of uptake is *peer repair* uptake (1.6%), which was when a student other than the one who made the initial error provided the correction, as in the following example.

(Class observation excerpt 22; 9/11/2009; Two students were looking at the answers they got wrong in the exam)

S1: I think it should be started and not have started

S2: yes yes

S1: it is not settled, I wanted to put is happening

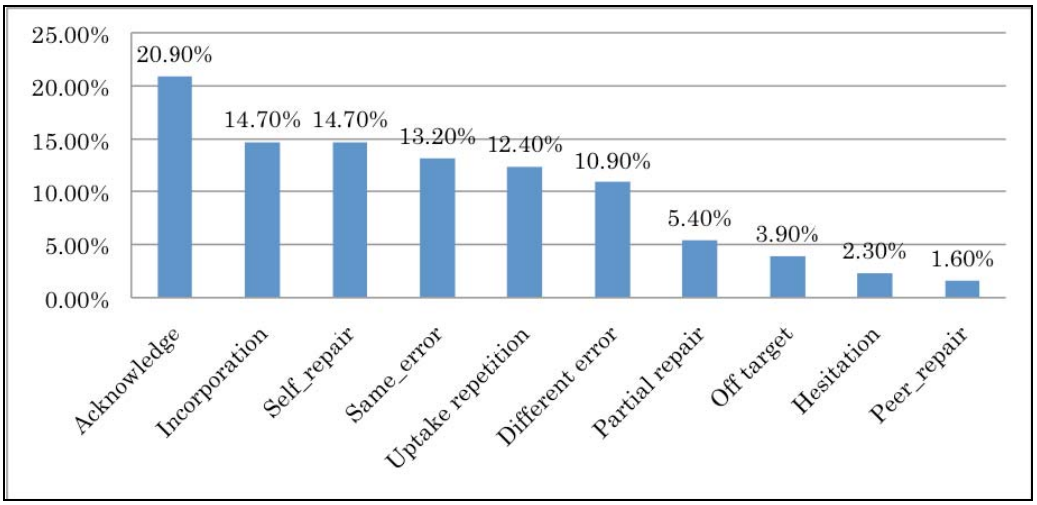
S2: Ok maybe it is not the right meaning of the word

I summarize the frequency of uptake types in Table XI and Figure 5 below.

Table XI: Frequency of Types of Uptake

Types of Uptake	**Number of Student Turns**	**% of Total Student Turns**
Acknowledgement	27	20.90
Different error	14	10.90
Same error	17	13.20
Hesitation	3	2.30
Off target	5	3.90
Partial repair	7	5.40
Uptake repetition	16	12.40
Incorporation	19	14.70
Self-repair	19	14.70
Peer-repair	2	1.60
Total	129	100,00

Figure 5: Types of Uptake (% of Total Student Turns)



In terms of the relationship between the teacher feedback types and the students' uptake types the following Table XII shows each type of uptake that follows each type of feedback.

There were 95 teacher turns in explicit correction, 29 of them did not lead to any type of uptake and 24 did. The least frequent types of uptake from explicit correction were: hesitation, off target, self-repair and peer-repair.

The second type of feedback that the teacher provided the most was elicitation feedback with 40 teacher turns. Elicitation led to 14 turns of self-repair and to 9 turns of same error. There was no uptake repetition turns and no peer-repair turns leaded by elicitation feedback.

The third most frequent type of teacher feedback was metalinguistic feedback (33 teacher turns). Eleven teacher turns in this type of feedback did not lead to uptake. Metalinguistic feedback led to 5 turns of same error uptake and 4 turns of different error and self-repair, respectively. In this type of feedback there was no acknowledgement and no repetition uptake.

In the case of recasts, the distribution of feedback is more homogenous; that is, 1 turn for each of the following uptakes types: acknowledgement, different error, off target, uptake repetition and incorporation uptake.

There were only 3 teacher turns of clarification request feedback which led to 2 turns of different error uptake and one of acknowledgement.

There was no repetition feedback and consequently no uptake was derived from this type of feedback.

Table XII: Distribution of Types of Feedback and Uptake Moves

Types of Feedback / Types Of Uptake	**Explicit correction**	**Elicitation**	**Metalinguistic**	**Recast**	**Clarification Request**	**Repetition**	**Total**
Acknowledge-ment	24	1	0	1	1	0	27
Different error	3	4	4	1	2	0	14
Same error	3	9	5	0	0	0	17
Hesitation	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Off target	1	1	2	1	0	0	5
Partial repair	2	2	3	0	0	0	7
Uptake repetition	15	0	0	1	0	0	16
Incorporation	15	1	2	1	0	0	19
Self-Repair	1	14	4	0	0	0	19

Peer-Repair	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
No uptake	29	7	11	2	0	0	49
Total	**95**	**40**	**33**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**178**

It is important to note that the total number of student turns was 129. However, when establishing the relationship between the types of feedback and uptake I included the category of 'no uptake' to represent the cases in which students remained silent after the teacher provided the feedback (N=49 turns).

Overall, the results obtained from the data analysis allow me to answer the first research question: What is the nature of formative assessment in an oral intermediate second language classroom setting?

First, in terms of teacher feedback, there was a predominance of *explicit correction*. The second most common type of teacher feedback was *elicitation.* There was also a strong presence of metalinguistic feedback. Less frequent were *recasts* and *clarification requests*. There was no *repetition feedback* during the class.

In terms of student uptake, there was a predominance of acknowledgement followed equally by incorporation and self-repair. Same error, repetition, and different error could be grouped as the third most common type of uptake in the class, followed by partial repair, off target, and hesitation. Peer-repair was the least frequent uptake type.

Finally, regarding the relationship between the teacher feedback types and the students' uptake types, the most frequent types of student uptake followed explicit correction. In order from most frequent to least frequent, these were: acknowledgment, repetition, and self-repair.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the implications of these results.

4.2. Results Regarding Second Research Question

In order to understand what the teacher thinks about formative assessment, I administered an interview in each session of the course. Although the same interview was administered twice, it is possible that the first interview might have drawn the teacher's attention to some ideas and her answers in the second administration might have been different from the first one. Below I present the results.

In response to the question: Do you think that formative assessment fosters learning?, the teacher answered in the first interview that she would hope that formative assessment would help the student, but in an ideal world.

> (Interview excerpt 1; 11/11/2009)
>
> We hope so, in an ideal world I think so, but there are many times, when I've seen for example in written papers I give back the writing and I see them turn at the last page to see what the grade is and then I've said to them: "When you do your next writing take the previous writing and use some of the errors to correct them in your next writing" I don't know how many of that actually do that, so we will hope that yes formative assessment and feedback will help the student but I think that in the real students life, you know they've got four or five courses and each week they've got I don' t know how many assignments and they are really ...to see where are they to accumulate those number of points that they need in order to pass or do very well or for example be accepted to another program or get a scholarship, I mean, they look at grades and learning differently.

In the second interview she expressed that she did not think that students take formative assessment seriously and that for formative assessment to be effective, students ought to be receptive.

(Interview excerpt 2; 24/02/2010)

I think that the formative assessment that it takes place in class I would hope, but I think students need to be receptive.

I think that (…) summative assessment is more a wake up for them, but I don't think they take the other type of assessment (formative) really all that seriously.

(…) language learning is completely divorced from summative assessment (but) in university, in an academic setting, accounting setting, I think it is one thing, but formative assessment in our setting, is different.

(Interview excerpt 3; 24/02/2010)

I think formative assessment, yes, those students who are receptive, that are coming to class because they want to learn.

Regarding the question, Do you think that self-assessment benefits learning?, the teacher expressed in both interviews that in language learning especially in the level that she was teaching, students' ability for self-assessment is very small.

(Interview excerpt 4; 11/11/2009)

I think that if the students know they are weak, students would come and say I have weaknesses in this and that area (…) A lot of times students come and say I need to know more grammar. I don't think that they understand what that means, because it's shown that even if you know grammar structures, it doesn't mean that you can use the grammar structure in a natural conversation or writing. (…) I think of self-assessment a lot of times at the end of the semester when students are assessing me, a lot of times they write things like: "I don't think I've learnt a

> lot in this course, so the teacher is not good." They do that kind of self-assessment but basically what they are doing is blaming the teacher, not blaming, they are attributing their lack of progress to the fact that the teacher method doesn't work (…) I think that language learning especially in the level that I'm doing which is a high intermediate, is very incremental, very very small.

In the second interview the teacher expressed that her thoughts of assessment have changed, however she did not make any explicit reference to self-assessment but to the importance of helping students to think about how language is and to think why it works that way.

> (Interview excerpt 5; 24/02/2010)
>
> I think that, what is really interesting is to help them to think about how language is, what the complications of language are. That is what I'm trying to do in this class, that's why I print out the errors and the mistakes, I want them to be able to discuss with each other and say: "I think this is a mistake because..." My thoughts of assessment have changed quite a lot and the idea is not just to say "Here this is wrong and this is right" but, "let's struggle to think about why works this way in this language.

In response to the questions, In your opinion does teacher feedback promotes learning? and Do you consider that peer feedback promotes learning?, the teacher expressed in both interviews that what students really value is teacher feedback.

> (Interview excerpt 6; 11/11/2009)
>
> They do appreciate the discussions (…) but I think when the final enounces they raise their hand and they say: "we are trying to discuss, we don't understand this. Can you help us?" And

> then comes the teacher for a final answer. (…) None of them are experts, they don't really trust themselves. I imagine in other courses for example like in mathematics, they might be one student that really understands and everyone in the class knows that that student understands and they could go with that student and he would be able to explain the problem to them, but in a language class it doesn't look like that.

(Interview excerpt 7; 24/02/2010)

> I want them to be able to discuss with each other and say: "I think this is a mistake because..." (…) That said, it is certainly that they are going to be some students that are stronger and some students that are weaker, and some students know more about that and others who may not, but I think that when the final enounces the students will look to the teacher as the authority and there are not really clear about you know.. using each other.

In both interviews she stated that she understands peer-feedback as 'negotiations'.

(Interview excerpt 8; 11/11/2009)

> I use peer correction in a very special way. (…) I call negotiations. And that means conversations of anything, could be related to language, could be related to anything at all, but I want those negotiations to take place in the language of the classroom.

(Interview excerpt 9; 24/02/2010)

I want them to use the language, I call it negotiation, I want them to negotiate in the language of the classroom and say "I don't understand what the problem is I don't see the error."

As for the question: Do you think that is important that the teacher and the students should share an understanding of assessment goals? the teacher stated in both interviews that she shares her students' assessment goals.

(Interview excerpt 10; 11/11/2009)

Yes, during the entire course I talk about the three areas fluency, accuracy and pronunciation, those are the three areas that we are looking for.

Those three areas are the ones that I'm focusing on through by this semester and they (the students) know how they will be evaluated at the end

(Interview excerpt 11; 24/02/2010)

I give them 3 goals: fluency, accuracy and pronunciation. I say "these are the 3 areas I want to improve in", then, they think that it's something important.

Regarding the question: In your opinion is error analysis effective feedback? in the first interview the teacher showed more confidence about the effectiveness of error feedback than in the second interview.

(Interview excerpt 12; 11/11/2009)

I feel intuitively....officially, yes I do. (…)Even if I don't like teacher's translation I try to say: " In English it works in this way, it may work in this way in French or Spanish or Chinese or German but for example, here is an example, I know that this will work in English but not in French and that's why you are

making the mistake, it is because you need to get back to the underneath to the system and to have an awareness of how language works, every language shares things in common but every language also has things that are different".

(Interview excerpt 13; 24/02/2010)

Again it is not black and white, I would really be very comfortable personally saying to the students: "this is the perfect present tense, this is how it is used, this is ..." But I think that students have a lot of difficulty with that in fact (…) I think, that analysis is important, to get them have a kind of sense of how a language works, word sense, grammar sense.

Regarding the questions about the effectiveness of positive and negative feedback in both interviews the teacher stated that although the fact psychologically, it has been proven that positive feedback is what works, in her classes she provides negative feedback when, for example, she points students' errors, but she adds that her students are prepared and need that type of feedback.

(Interview excerpt 14; 11/11/2009)

Well, I think that it is psychologically, it's proven that positive feedback is what works however when you do grammatical correction what you are basically doing is pointing out the errors, but I think students are prepared for that, they don't take it personal (…) When I do correction in class they don't say this student this is your errors (...) and in fact because an error that one person has will be the same kind of error that almost the entire class has it's an error of the group at that level.

(Interview excerpt 15; 24/02/2010)

Well psychologically I think that it has been proven that, psychologically positive feedback works. I think that a student who gets a failing grade on an exam (…) this is a negative feedback. I think that this student has to be serious and say "Guess what? It is not an easy class it a class *exigeant*, it is demanding as any of the other subjects and my teacher is going to take it seriously and fine if I don't come to class, I will have to do the work by my own" (…) So, sometimes that kind of student needs some cold water in the face, you know, I mean, I'm not talking in a violent way.

Regarding the question: Do you think that graded activities have an impact in students' engagement? in both interviews, the teacher affirmed that graded activities do have an impact in students' engagement.

(Interview excerpt 14; 11/11/2009)

From my particular experience, here at the university, I would say 99% of the students are taking the courses because they really want to learn the language; but absolutely you have students who would fight for every quart of a point (…) I can see that mark is a kind of currency students are being paid for doing that kind of work and I pay them with grades that is the currency. And I think it is one of the rules that we have been operating under but I'm not sure that it leads to learning so much (…) To be honest, for students any kind of assessment which has a grade attached to it becomes more valuable than formative assessment.

(Interview excerpt 15; 24/02/2010)

I think that their attitude changes and I think in, when you have tasks in class that I can call, I guess learning tasks rather than assessed task they don't think they are so important, they don't realize that that's where the learning takes place (…) That is why (…) on the day of the exam the room is always full of people some of whom I haven't seen for weeks or that I didn't know they were in even in class. (…) They are taking the class because they need the grade, they need the credit, this is the main problem I think with teaching a language in an academic setting in which there is not only the pressure of improving the language, but the pressure to get the 3 credits and that get a good grade. (…) There are several things, let's say *les enjeux*, several things going at the same time. You know you asking what is the role of assessment in learning?, that is one question, but what is the role of assessment in a language course in university, which is kind of accountant, where there is an accountancy going on... you see? So the question is even more complicated than that.

Finally as for the questions: Should varied assessment methods be used continually? or Should one primary assessment method be used continually?, in both interviews the teacher affirmed that varied assessment methods should be used continually.

(Interview excerpt 15; 11/11/2009)

I think that students like all kind of methods because some might be weaker in other areas you know?

(Interview excerpt 16; 24/02/2010)

I think that in every case with feedback or with other aspects, variety is what you want.

Although it was not the purpose of this study to examine the evolution in the teacher's perceptions regarding formative assessment, it was interesting to observe that, in general, the teacher's answers in both interview did not vary. The one exception to this is with respect to the effectiveness of formative assessment and error analysis as effective feedback. In both cases the teacher showed a more extreme position in the first interview.

I now present the results that will allow me to answer the second research question: Do the teacher's assessment practices reflect what she thinks about formative assessment? This is a two-fold question in which I wanted to verify to what extent the teacher's perceptions about formative assessment influenced her practice. As I discussed in Chapter 3, in order to be able to operationalize the teacher's perceptions as accurate, neutral, or inaccurate, I used three types of notations (+; -; +/-). These terms refer to the degree of correspondence between the teacher's perceptions and the constructs regarding formative assessment techniques expressed in Chapter 2.

I now present the results of the frequency of the teacher's turns per category (see Appendix 8 for all the teacher perception data together).

With regard to the teacher's perceptions of formative assessment the results show that there is a predominantly inaccurate connotation (86.67%), as shown in Table XIII below.

Table XIII: Teacher's Perceptions - Formative Assessment Fosters Learning

Category Formative assessment fosters learning	**Number of Teacher Turns per Category**	**% of Number of Teacher Turns per Category**
Innacurate connotation	13	86.67
Neutral connotation	0	0.00
Accurate connotation	2	13.33
Total	15	100.00

The teacher considered that in an ideal world, formative assessment is really effective but in the real world - with large classes and a limited number of hours - formative assessment is unattainable

(Interview excerpt 20; 11/11/2009)

I think that in a language class they would probably want more (feedback) and all the time and individually. Now once again, I have 32 students I see them once a week (...) if I had 5 students in the class I could spend an hour with each one but there is more than that, there is, as you, are aware, the process of learning a language or acquiring a language is always part of the student being able to produce in either writing or speaking, at certain age of the student is obviously much more difficult than in another point, you know, so a lot of work they are asking I think it is maybe not attainable.

The perception about the difficulty of implementing formative assessment is related to the perception about the importance students give to graded tasks (90%). This latter is shown in Table XIV below.

Table XIV: Teacher's Perception - Graded Activities Impact Student Engagement

Category **Graded activities have an impact in student engagement**	**Number of Teacher Turns per Category**	**% of Number of Teacher Turns per Category**
Inaccurate connotation	1	10.00
Neutral connotation	0	0.00
Accurate connotation	9	90.00
Total	10	100.00

The teacher considered that the fact that a task is graded has an impact in students' attitude towards the task.

(Interview excerpt 21; 24/02/2010)

I think that their attitude changes and I think , when you have tasks in class that I can call, I guess learning tasks rather than assessed task they don't think they are so important, they don't realize that that's where the learning takes place, and so that is why I see that there is when students don't come… but on the day of the exam the room is always full of people some of whom I haven't seen for weeks or that I didn't know they were in even in class because they are taking the class because they need the grades, they need a grade, they need the credit, this is the main problem.

The teacher perceived that some of her students were more interested in grades than in learning. On one occasion, for example, she realized she made a mistake calculating students' grades.

(Class observation excerpt 23; 13/04/2010)

T: What I'm going to ask you please is to look over the exam at the break give them back and I'm going to recalculate the marks,

> to be honest, math is not my strong subject, (...) so give me another hour to go to everybody's papers and adjust the grades as I should.

The teacher then tried to make the students understand that their learning was more important than any calculating error.

> (Class observation excerpt 24; 13/04/2010)
>
> T: At this point I want to tell you I don't want to be an accountant, I don't want to be an accountant, I want to make sure that everybody learns and that everyone is successful, so if I made a calculating error that is not a problem.

The teacher's perception that self-assessment promotes learning is not aligned with the constructs of formative assessment; in other words it presents an inaccurate connotation (100%). This is shown in Table XV.

Table XV: Teacher's Perception - Self-Assessment Benefits Learning

Category	**Number of Teacher Turns per Category**	**% of Number of Teacher Turns per Category**
Self-assessment benefits learning		
Inaccurate connotation	4	100.00
Neutral connotation	0	0.00
Accurate connotation	0	0.00
Total	4	100

In fact, the teacher considered that self-assessment is not possible in a language class:

> (Teacher interview excerpt 22; 11/11/2009)
>
> At the very beginning of the session I ask the student to think about their level of language but I don't think that in language learning self-assessment is really possible.

The teacher perceived that students are not capable of identifying the areas that they need to improve.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 23; 24/02/2010)
>
> I think that if the students knew they are weak, students would come and say: “I have weaknesses in this and that area”. A lot of times students come and say “I need to know more grammar”. I don’t think that they understand what that means, because it’s shown that even if you know grammar structures, it doesn’t mean that you can use the grammar structure in a natural conversation or writing.

In addition, she considered that instead of evaluating themselves, students tend to evaluate the teacher. The teacher also perceived that this kind of self-assessment is an occasion to attribute their lack of progress to the teacher:

> (Teacher interview excerpt 24; 11/11/2009)
>
> I think of self-assessment a lot of times at the end of the semester when students are assessing me... a lot of times they write things like: “I don't think I’ve learnt a lot in this course, so the teacher is not good.” They do that kind of self-assessment but basically what they are doing is blaming the teacher, not blaming, they are attributing their lack of progress to the fact that the teacher method doesn't work.

Accordingly, the teacher completely avoided the use of self-assessment in both courses.

In comparison to formative assessment (86.67%) and self-assessment promotes learning (100%), the teacher presented a less inaccurate perception peer feedback promoting learning (60%), as shown in Table XVI.

Table XVI: Teacher's Perception - Peer Feedback Promotes Learning

Category **Peer feedback promotes learning**	**Number of Teacher Turns per Category**	**% of Number of Teacher Turns per Category**
Inaccurate connotation	3	60.00
Neutral connotation	1	20.00
Accurate connotation	1	20.00
Total	5	100.00

The teacher defined peer feedback as negotiations. This differs from the definition used in my study: "an arrangement for peers to consider the level, value, worth, quality or successfulness of the products or outcomes of learning of others of similar status" (Topping et al., 2000, p. 150).

> (Teacher interview excerpt 25; 11/11/2009)
>
> I use peer correction in a very special way. One of the things that I do is I want to make sure that, that students do what I call negotiations. And that means conversations of anything, could be related to language, could be related to anything at all, but I want those negotiations to take place in the language of the classroom,

However, she argued that

> (Teacher interview excerpt 26; 11/11/2009)
>
> Sometimes when I hand back some writing of what the students have done, I say: "Work with a partner and look at your writing" and, sometimes, they try to correct each other.

In class, she promoted pair work, more to give students the opportunity to discuss or to negotiate than to provide feedback. In addition, it is important to mention the strong presence of the teacher during the pair work activities. She interrupted the student-student interaction constantly in order to give feedback

herself. This likely has to do with her perceptions of the efficiency of teacher feedback to promote learning (100%), as in Table XVII below.

Table XVII: Teacher's Perception - Teacher Feedback Promotes Learning

Category **Teacher feedback promotes learning**	**Number of Teacher Turns per Category**	**% of Number of Teacher Turns per Category**
Inaccurate connotation	0	0.00
Neutral connotation	0	0.00
Accurate connotation	4	100.00
Total	4	100.00

She considered that since the teacher is the classroom authority, the students trust more in the teacher than in each other.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 27; 11/11/2009)
>
> It is certainly that they are going to be some students that are stronger and some students that are weaker, and some students know more about that and others who may not, but I think that when the final enounces the students will look to the teacher as the authority and there are not really clear about you know.. using each other.

The following is an example that might reinforce the teacher's perceptions about the students' lack of ability to correct each other and the need for teacher feedback.

> (Class observation excerpt 28; 26/1/2010 Part III)
>
> T: which ones you don't know?
>
> S1: Yeah the 8th one
>
> S2: yeah
>
> S1: b(ea)n
>
> T: bind

S1: sorry bind

T: ok didn't we do this the first week?

S1:yeah but I forget

T: yeah? Let's try that again, so we have bind and wind; but we have a word wind, and then we have wound the past tense, but we also have wound which rhythms with sound and wound that rhythm with....well now the verb bind, do you know the verb bind now? Do you know its meaning? Do you know its form?

S2: no that is the problem, the meaning

T: ok the meaning, anybody knows? Do you know?

S2 Yes they know

T: ok ask them, we are looking for the verb bind

S3: b-i-n-d?

T & S1S2: yeah

S3: I don't know

T: anybody know the meaning?

S1: no

T: ok that is something that we have to work on. (/)Keep going and I'll come back in a couple of minutes.

The results also showed that the teacher is convinced of the importance of sharing the assessment goals with her students (100%), as shown in Table XVIII.

Table XVIII: Teacher's perception - Teacher and Students Should Share an Understanding of Assessment Goals

Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals	**Number of Teacher Turns per Category**	**% of Number of Teacher Turns per Category**
Inaccurate connotation	0	0.00
Neutral connotation	0	0.00
Accurate connotation	5	100.00
Total	5	100.00

(Teacher interview excerpt 29; 24/02/2010)

I make them (students) clear we are now doing this and we are doing this because I want you to work in this. I always say it is like physical exercise, when you go to the gym and you know you are working with this machine because you want to work this part of your body. So, it's the same thing, you know, you are working this part of the language and then, some students need, their fluency is great but their accuracy is terrible, some students' accuracy is great but their pronunciation is horrible, you know, so if I say each student is going to focus on one of these areas.

In her classes, the teacher shared students' assessment goals with her students explaining to them what she expected from them.

(Classroom observation excerpt 26; 20/4/2010)

T: In the handout that I've sent to you I said that there are a number of things you can talk about, I want to explain to you the goal and the purpose of the oral presentation. The idea is for as we say *parler en continu,* speaking continuingly, and the speaking continuingly 5 minutes is really maximum, because we

are going to have, we hope to have 2 groups per day, so that is 10 people, it is at least one hour or more in fact it would probably take a couple of hours. What I mean is: no memorization, nobody memorizes, number 2, no reading a text, you can have notes, you can have little cards, but I don't want you to read to anybody, it's not a thing that you go to Wikipedia you find the information and then you just read it to people, the idea is to do just as I am doing now I'm speaking without notes, I'm trying to explain you something, I'm speaking for 3 to 4 minutes continuingly that is the idea, whether your facts are 100% true or not I don't care.

With regard to error analysis, the teacher had a relatively accurate perception (66.67%), meaning that the teacher's perceptions are aligned with the regarding the fact that error analysis is effective feedback, as Table XIX shows.

Table XIX: Teacher's Perception - Error Analysis is Effective Feedback

Error analysis is effective feedback	**Number of Teacher Turns per Category**	**% of Number of Teacher Turns per Category**
Inaccurate connotation	1	33.33
Neutral connotation	0	0.00
Accurate connotation	2	66.67
Total	3	100.00

The teacher considered that error analysis helps students to understand how language works.

(Teacher interview excerpt 30; Interview 24/02/2010)

It is because you need to get back to the underneath to the system and to have an awareness of how language works, every

language shares things in common but every language also has things that are different".

(Teacher interview excerpt 31; Interview 11/11/2009)

I think, that analysis is important, to get them have a kind of sense of how a language works, word sense, grammar sense

During her classes, error analysis is effective feedback. She devoted time to error analysis in general (pronunciation, intonation, etc.), as well as to error analysis regarding specific grammar points.

(Classroom observation excerpt 27; 20/4/2010)

T: ok as far as grammatical points concern, there are certain areas that I want you to look at. I want to be sure that you know the difference between these two: it is really, really important. So there are lots of cases that I see students who say things like I am used to go, it doesn't exist, you can't say I am used to go, it is either I used to go or I am used to going. I am used to going places by metro, I am used going places by myself.

(Classroom observation excerpt 28; 26/1/2010 Part 1)

T: **re**commend, a lot of people have problem with this; it is: recom**mend**; I'd like to recom**mend** this book to you. The word series, there is no such word like: serie without an s, it doesn't exist, one serie, two series, no. The word is series, singular/ plural. This book is part of a series. Tried, from the word try t-r-y, I'm going to give you some seconds to see your work.

In terms of the usefulness of positive feedback, the teacher had an inaccurate perception (100%), which means that the teacher's comments are not

aligned with the constructs regarding formative assessment expressed in this study. This is shown in the Table XX below.

Table XX: Teacher's perception - Positive Feedback is Effective Feedback

Category **Positive feedback is effective feedback**	**Number of Teacher Turns per Category**	**% of Number of Teacher Turns per Category**
Inaccurate connotation	2	100.00
Neutral connotation	0	0.00
Accurate connotation	0	0.00
Total	2	100.00

The teacher considered that instead of providing explicit positive feedback (for example: very good or bravo! when her students do something good) she preferred to encourage a relaxed atmosphere.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 32; 11/11/2009)
>
> Do I provide that (positive feedback)? Well in written assignments I will try to ... orally I don't really, I don't do that so much, but I think that in my classes we try to do, students are very engaged enthusiastic so they have are having a good time

However, during her classes she provided positive feedback as well.

> (Classroom observation excerpt 29; 9/11/2009)
>
> T: Perfect!

> (Classroom observation excerpt 30; 9/11/2009)
>
> T: Thank you, I think it is very very nice because, and what I appreciate is this kind of close reading that you did of the book and someone else last week did the presentation on the fictional book hum...sorry... hum, about principles of detection, apologies, the idea is that you are reading and you are saying I'm going to

read this as if Mora Ramose was a real person and I what kind I tell you about her life.

In contrast, the teacher's comments regarding negative feedback effectiveness are aligned with the constructs regarding formative assessment expressed in this study; that is, the teacher has an accurate perception (100%) regarding negative feedback effectiveness. This is shown in Table XXI below.

Table XXI: Teacher's Perception - Negative Feedback is Effective Feedback

Category **Negative feedback is effective feedback**	**Number of Teacher Turns per Category**	**% of Number of Teacher Turns per Category**
Inaccurate connotation	0	0.00
Neutral connotation	0	0.00
Accurate connotation	6	100.00
Total	6	100.00

The teacher considered that although it is psychologically proven that positive feedback works, in her class her students are used to negative feedback through grammatical correction.

(Teacher interview excerpt 33; 11/11/2009)

I think that it is psychologically, it's proven that positive feedback is what works, however when you do grammatical correction what you are basically doing is pointing out the errors, but I think students are prepared for that, they don't take it personal, and when I do correction in class they don't say this student this is your errors (...) and in fact because we really can have an homogeneous group more or less I would say that almost 100% of my students have French as their first language if not 100% do speak French and they are more or less same age, same background, so and error that one person has, is pretty well will

> be the same kind of error that almost the entire class has, so the students are don't feel (...) for that predictable kind of errors, It's an error of the group at that level.

In the Tables and presentation of results above, I detailed the different types of negative feedback the teacher provided following the students' errors, with respect to answering the first research question.

Finally, the teacher is convinced that a variety of assessment methods should be used in class.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 34; 11/11/2009)
>
> I think that students like all kind of methods because some might be weaker in other areas you know?

However, the teacher also considered that because of time pressure it is not always possible to use the assessment methods she would like to use.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 35; 11/11/2009)
>
> In a spoken language class is really very difficult to assess just because of the time pressure, for example this semester I had a particular problem because the class is much larger that I usually have. I think we are over 36 and for me a very workable number is about 28. So in fact I'm am thinking (…) I don't know if I will reasonably have the time to do that kind (oral) of assessment so I will have to change somehow my structure of that and some students will complain because the course is high intermediate oral English and they do have written assessment in the class, and they say: "How come?" And, I say: "Well, you know one of our areas of assessment is accuracy, and one of the ways to assess your accuracy is by for example to learn how to conjugate these verbs".

Consequently, the teacher tried to make effective use of time by providing feedback as well as encouraging students to use the target language.

(Teacher interview excerpt 36; 24/02/2010)

> First of all, you don't want your students be bored, and now students get bored more and more (…) So the different kinds of feedback that I use are: first of all when we are working (...) I come and listen and then talk and then I listen to them individually (…) I can't do that for every student in every class but I try to circulate as much as I can. I try to talk with those students that I haven't seen, I try to talk with those students who have more difficulty. The second kind of feedback is the kind I've been doing over the past many years or so and that is, taking the material that they've written, for example and putting it on the board and then they discuss (…) two things are there: one is feedback and in the feedback part they are producing language so it's always these two things going on ... we are making effective use of the time.

Accordingly, the teacher was convinced that a primary method of assessment should not be used in class because students need variety in class. This is shown in the excerpt and in Table XXII below.

(Teacher interview excerpt 37; 24/02/2010)

> I think that in every case with feedback or with other aspects, variety is what you want.

Table XXII: Teacher's Perception - One Primary Assessment Method Should Be Used Continually

One primary assessment method should be used continually	Number of Teacher Turns per Category	% of Number of Teacher Turns per Category
Inaccurate connotation	0	0.00
Neutral connotation	0	0.00
Accurate connotation	1	100.00
Total	1	100.00

To bring this section to an end, I can state that during the Fall 2009 and Winter 2010 courses, the teacher made use of formative and summative assessment. Grades for the course, as established by the teacher, are broken down as follows: 2 grammar quizzes, worth 20% and 25% respectively; writing (15%), in-class speaking (15%), and a final oral evaluation (25%).

In terms of formative assessment, the data for this study come from the feedback provided by the teacher to her students during speaking activities. Although there was a certain variety to the teacher's feedback techniques (five types of feedback were provided as part of formative assessment), explicit correction feedback during the in-class speaking activities was predominant.

Finally, I am able to answer my second research question: Do the teacher's assessment practices reflect what she thinks about formative assessment? The results show that the two strongest inaccurate perceptions (i.e., comments that are not aligned with the constructs regarding formative assessment expressed in the literature review), are related to self-assessment promoting learning and teacher's feedback promoting learning. Both perceptions were mirrored in the classes observed where the teacher did not use any self-assessment at all and provided teacher feedback most of the time (67.6%).

The teacher also referred to negative feedback as effective feedback and during her classes, negative feedback was more frequent (13.6%) than positive feedback (4.7%).

In addition, the teacher explained that it was very important to share the assessment goals with her students. Therefore, she explained to her students what she expected from them in terms of assessment goals (5.2%).

Regarding peer feedback, however, the teacher mentioned that she used it as negotiation of meaning. In actual practice, I observed that peer feedback as it has been defined it in this study, that is as "an arrangement for peers to consider the level, value, worth, quality or successfulness of the products or outcomes of learning of others of similar status" (Topping et al., 2000, p. 150), was not used very often (5%).

4.3. Results Regarding Third Research Question

To obtain the results that allowed me to answer my third research question, I compared and contrasted data from the teacher interviews and the student questionnaires. In the Fall session, there were 25 student participants (15 female and 10 male). In the Winter session, there were 20 students (10 female and 5 male). Thus, there was a total of 45 student participants.

In order to compare the teacher and her students' perceptions regarding formative assessment, I kept the same 11 categories for the questionnaires and the interviews (see Chapter 3).

In the following sections I provide the results of the teacher and her students' perceptions regarding formative assessment.

One of the main differences regarding the teacher and students' perceptions has to do with the perception of the usefulness of formative assessment. In the case of students, 87.22% considered that formative assessment fostered learning as shown in Table XXIII below.

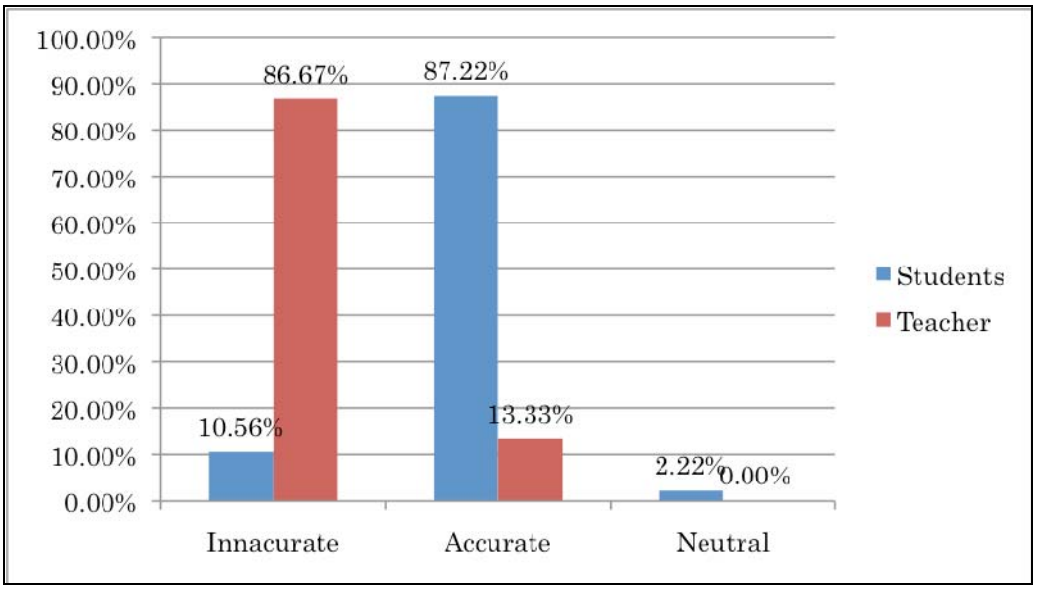
Table XXIII: Formative Assessment Fosters Learning

Number of questionnaire answers

Formative assessment fosters learning	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
(9) I believe formative assessment contributes to learning.	7	38	0
(24) Formative Assessment may have an impact on the course of students learning.	4	38	3
(31) Formative Assessment can contribute to student learning.	3	41	1
(23) Assessment focusing directly on student development is best.	5	40	0
Total	19	157	4
% Total of questionnaire answers	10.56	87.22	2.22

In the previous section, I reported that the teacher had a predominantly inaccurate perception (86.67%) regarding the fact that formative assessment fosters learning. Teacher and student perceptions are compared in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Formative Assessment Fosters Learning



The teacher considered that teachers and students do not share the same perceptions regarding formative assessment; she insisted on the preference that students have towards graded tasks and she considered that time pressure and large classes are obstacles to implementing formative assessment. The teacher stated that because of these complications, teachers may avoid using formative assessment in their classes.

(Teacher interview excerpt 38; 11/11/2009)

> To be honest, I really don't think so (teachers and students share the same perceptions regarding formative assessment), because you see for students any kind of assessment which has a grade attached to it becomes more valuable than formative assessment, and any assessment that doesn't have any grade attached to it hum... the question is: what would the student do with that assessment? that's one thing; another thing is given the fact that we have large groups ... like I say anything over 25 is very difficult to, you know, to assess even if it is spoken language I move around the room, I try to make corrections but if I spend two minutes with each person it is close to an hour, you know, and I think that for a lot of teachers they may think: well, I don't really want to do formative assessment, I just need to have them make this assignment, three, four assignments in the semester and that is it, but not for a formative purpose but for an evaluative purpose.

The teacher considered that students need to be receptive to formative assessment.

(Teacher interview excerpt 39; 24/2/2010)

I think that the formative assessment that takes place in class I would hope (that it has an impact in students' learning), but I think students need to be receptive.

The teacher experienced the tension between theory and practice. She stated that in an ideal world she would give feedback to each of her students, but in reality, it is not possible.

(Teacher interview excerpt 40; 24/02/2010)

What I would like to do, and I was trying to think if it would be possible, here for example to get for example someone - because I don't have the time- to type up everything, or type parts of things and work together on giving feedback in class. I mean, and that would be ideal, the ideal thing would be to make all the corrections (/) the problem is time, do I have time to add to this person? (/) But in the real world I wouldn't be able to edit it and give feedback to every student to check their work.

In addition, the perception the teacher had regarding the feasibility of formative assessment has to do with the fact that she thinks that students only value graded tasks. Actually, the results of the student questionnaire (93.33%) and teacher interview converge on this point.

(Teacher interview excerpt 41; 24/02/2010)

I don't think they take the other type of assessment really all that seriously, and we are talking again if you are saying purely in language learning that is completely divorced from summative assessment in university in an academic setting, accounting setting.

(Teacher interview excerpt 42; 11/11/2009)

For students any kind of assessment which has a grade attached to it becomes more valuable than formative assessment

The teacher based her perception about the importance of graded tasks for students on the fact that students who do not regularly come to classes are always present when there is summative assessment.

(Teacher interview excerpt 43; 24/02/2010)

On the day of the exam the room is always full of people some of whom I haven't seen for weeks or that I didn't know they were in even in class.

The teacher perceived that in a higher education context, students have to deal with the pressure other than those of learning a language.

(Teacher interview excerpt 44; 24/02/2010)

They are taking the class because they need the grades, they need a grade, they need the credit, and this is the main problem. I think that teaching a language in an academic setting implies that there is not only the pressure of improving the language, but the pressure to get the 3 credits and that get a good grade (...) there are several things, let' say *les enjeux,* going at the same time.

Because of this particular context, she considered that formative assessment at university is complicated.

(Teacher interview excerpt 45; 24/02/2010)

You know, you're asking what the role of assessment in learning is. That is one question, but what is the role of assessment in a language course in university, which is kind of accountant, where there is accountancy going on... you see? So the question is even more complicated than that, so I think formative

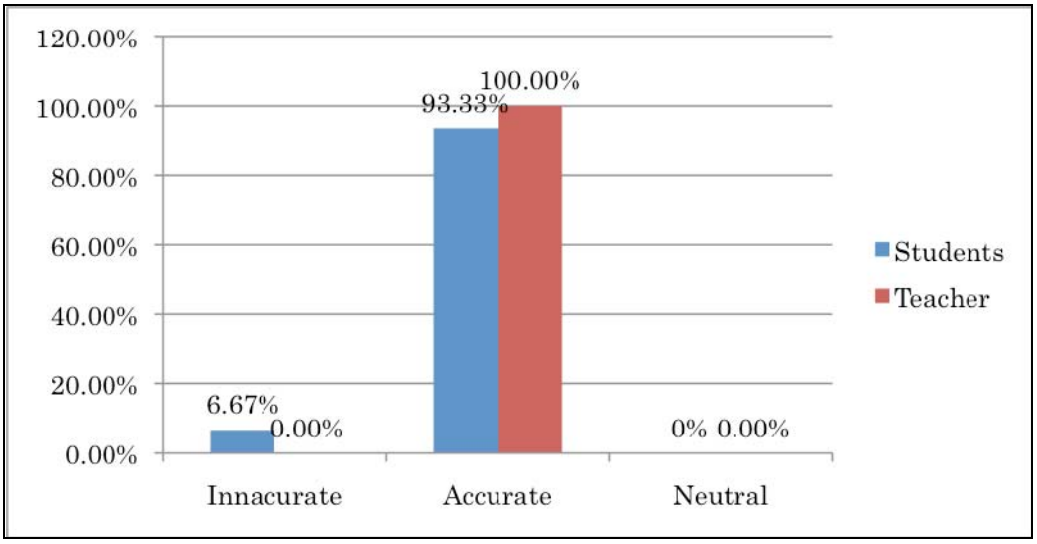
assessment (works with), yes, those students who are receptive, that are coming to class because they want to learn.

Both the teacher and her students agree concerning the impact of graded activities in promoting student engagement, as shown in Table XXIV and Figure 7 below.

Table XXIV: Graded Activities Impact Student Engagement

Number of questionnaire answers			
Graded activities have an impact on student engagement	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
12. It is helpful to know activities' worth towards final grade	3	42	0
Total	3	42	0
% Total of questionnaire answers	6.67	93.33	0

Figure 7: Graded Activities Impact Student Engagement



Nonetheless, the teacher considered that the impact graded activities have on student engagement varies among the type of students and the type of course. Whereas there are students who take the courses because they really want to learn the language, others would fight for every quarter of a point. Interestingly, the teacher doubts that the current operating rules for grading lead to learning.

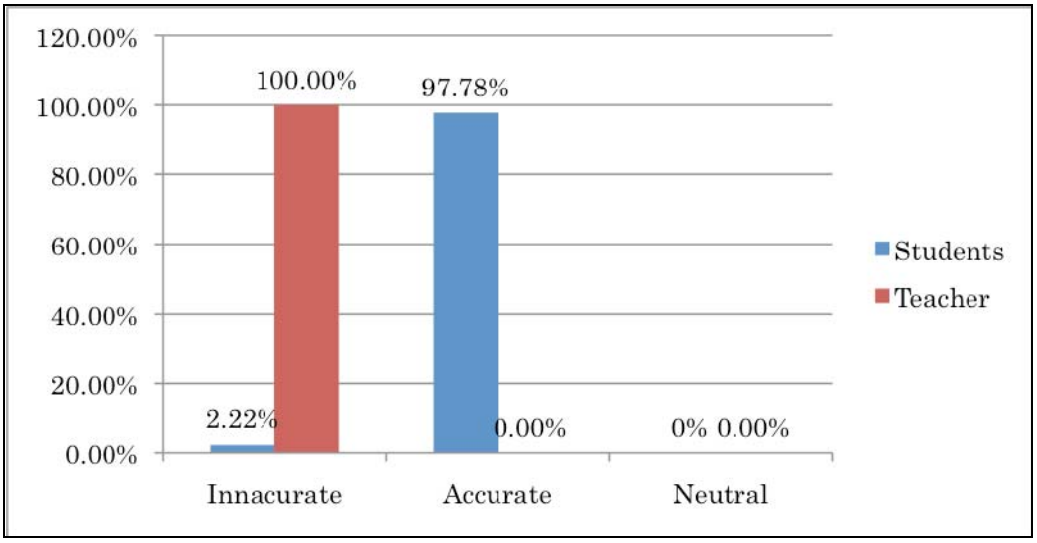
> (Teacher interview excerpt 46; 11/11/2009)
>
> I think it (the impact graded activities have in students' engagement) varies tremendously among the type of students, and the type of course; from my particular experience, here at the university, I would say 99% of the students are taking the courses because they really want to learn the language (/) but absolutely you have students who would fight for every quart of a point (/) I can see that mark is a kind of currency students are being paid for doing that kind of work and I pay them with grades, that is the currency. And I think it is one of, I mean it is one of the rules that we have been operating under but I'm not sure that it leads to learning so much.

A second important aspect of diverging opinion has to do with the perception of the importance of self-assessment for learning. As the following Table XXV and Figure 8 show, 97.78% of students consider that self-assessment fosters learning, in contrast to the 0% of frequency of positive perception obtained from the data analysis in the teacher's interviews.

Table XXV: Self-Assessment Fosters Learning

	Number of questionnaire answers		
Self-assessment fosters learning	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
1. Self-evaluation fosters (benefits) learning.	1	44	0
Total	**1**	**44**	**0**
% Total of questionnaire answers	2.22	97.78	0

Figure 8: Self-Assessment Fosters Learning



As I previously mentioned, the teacher considered that self-assessment is not possible in a language class. I have also made reference to the fact that she feels that students tend to evaluate the teacher instead of evaluating themselves.

(Teacher interview excerpt 47; 24/02/2010)

At the end of the semester when they do their evaluations of me I think what they probably want more, they want the teacher to correct them, they would say things like " I didn't learn enough"

> or “I didn't progress”,” I think that it is because the teacher didn't give us enough feedback”.

In terms of peer feedback, 97.78 % of the students strongly agree or agree that peer feedback is useful for learning, as shown in Table XXVI below.

Table XXVI: Peer Feedback Promotes Learning

	Number of questionnaire answers		
Peer feedback promotes learning	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
2. Peer review feedback is useful for learning	0.00	45.00	0.00
3. I consider that peer feedback is important for learning	1.00	43.00	1.00
Total	1.00	88.00	1.00
% Total of questionnaire answers	1.11	97.78	1.11

Conversely, the teacher considers that even though students enjoy discussion, they trust the teacher more than their peers to find the right answer.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 48; 11/11/2009)
>
> They do appreciate the discussions that I have but I think when the final enounces they raise their hand and they say: “we are trying to discuss, we don’t understand this, Can you help us?” and then comes the teacher for a final answer.

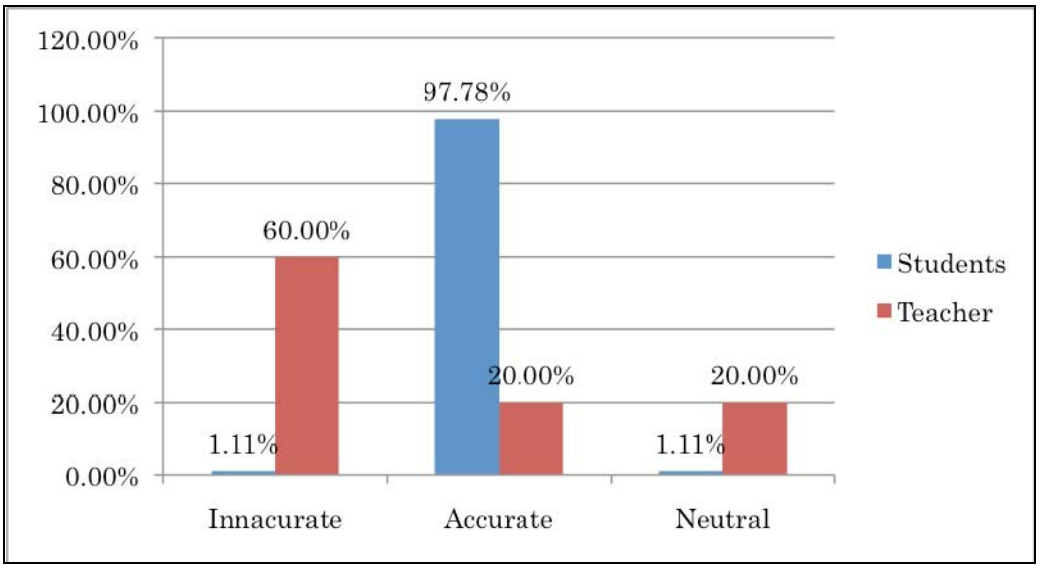
The teacher considers that, in contrast to other subjects in a language class, students do not trust themselves.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 49; 24/2/2010)
>
> None of them are experts, they don’t really trust themselves, I imagine other courses for example like in mathematics, they might be one student that really understands and everyone in the

> class knows that that student understands and they could go with that student and he would be able to explain the problem to them, but in a language class it doesn't look like that.

When I compared the teacher and student perceptions about peer feedback promotes learning, I found that almost every student agreed with that statement, whereas the teacher is not completely convinced of the benefit of peer feedback (see Figure 9 and Table XXVII below). Furthermore, her definition of peer feedback, as I already explained, differs from the definition employed in this study.

Figure 9: Peer Feedback Promotes Learning



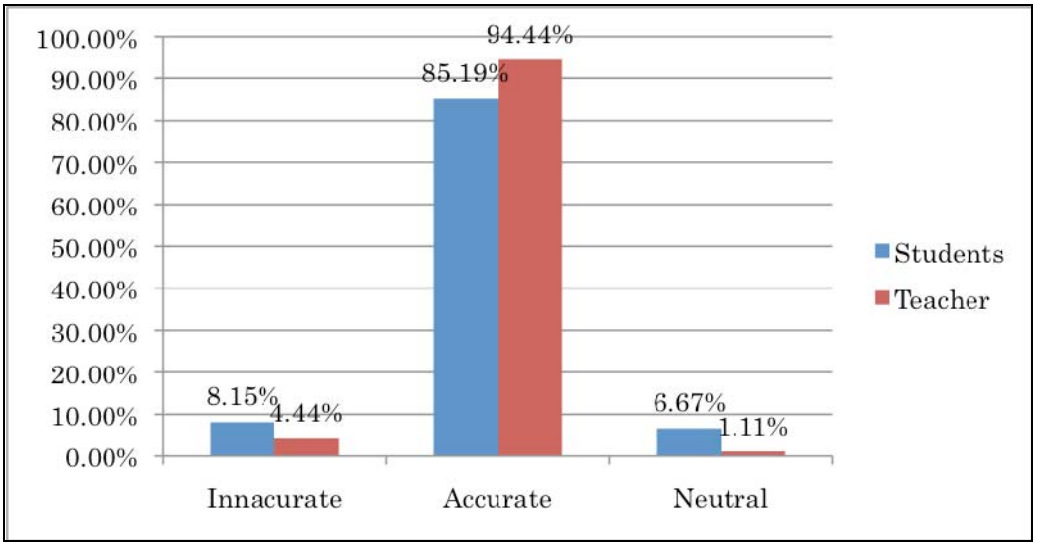
In regard to teacher feedback usefulness, most of the students (85.19%) perceive that teacher's comments are important to improve students' learning.

Table XXVII: Teacher Feedback Promotes Learning

	Number of questionnaire answers		
Teacher feedback promotes learning	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
13. Teacher – student conferences are effective in fostering learning	7	35	3
14. Teacher feedback is effective in promoting student learning.	1	44	0
27. Teacher comments to me are important in my learning	3	36	6
Total	11	115	9
% Total of questionnaire answers	8.15	85.19	6.67

Again, in comparing the teacher and her students' perceptions, it is clear that the teacher and her students agree on the value of teacher feedback. See Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Teacher Feedback Promotes Learning

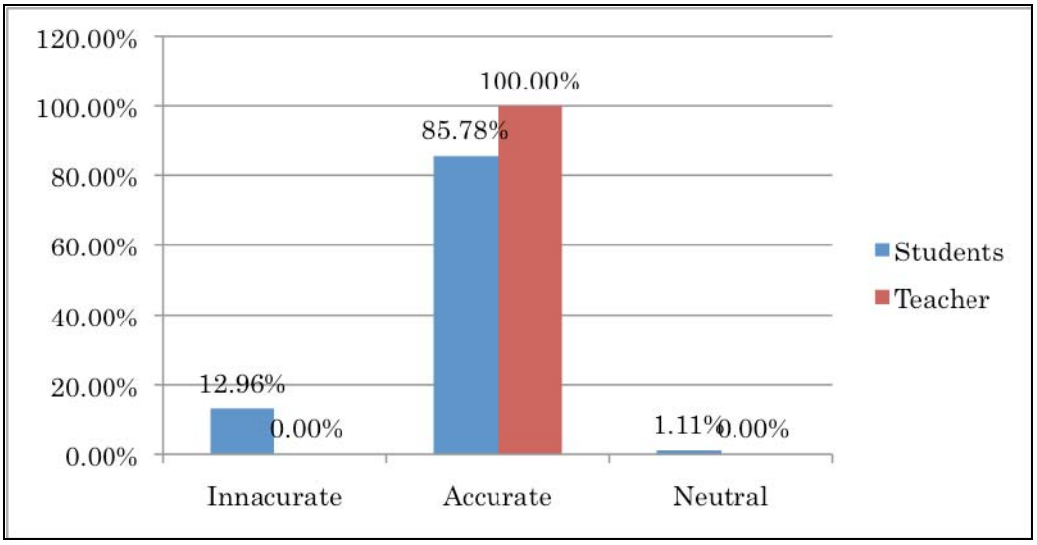


There is also agreement regarding sharing assessment goals. 85.78% of the students agree with the importance of sharing assessment goals, as shown in Table XXVIII and Figure 11 below.

Table XXVIII: Teacher and Students Should Share Assessment Goals

	Number of questionnaire answers		
Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals.	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
4. I should be actively involved in my assessment.	5	39	1
5. It is important for me to have input on how my work is assessed.	3	42	0
11. It's good for me to brainstorm what successful tasks should `look like`	5	40	0
22. Asking students "What do you think I want you to learn from this lesson?" benefits learning	17	27	1
28. Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals.	2	42	1
29. Evaluation forms aid in communicating specific evaluation criteria to students.	3	42	0
Total	35	232	3
% Total of questionnaire answers	12.96	85.78	1.11

Figure 11: Teacher and Students Should Share Assessment Goals



Indeed, the teacher considers that it is important that her students know what is expected of them.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 50; 11/11/2009)
>
> I give them 3 goals, fluency, accuracy and pronunciation, I think that, you know, when you start to break them up in one hundred things is impossible for them to focus, but I think, look if you can achieve these 3 areas, say "these are the 3 areas I want to improve in", then, they think that it's something important.

The students (94.4%) agree that error analysis is useful for their learning, as the Table XXIX shows.

Table XXIX: Error Analysis is Effective Feedback

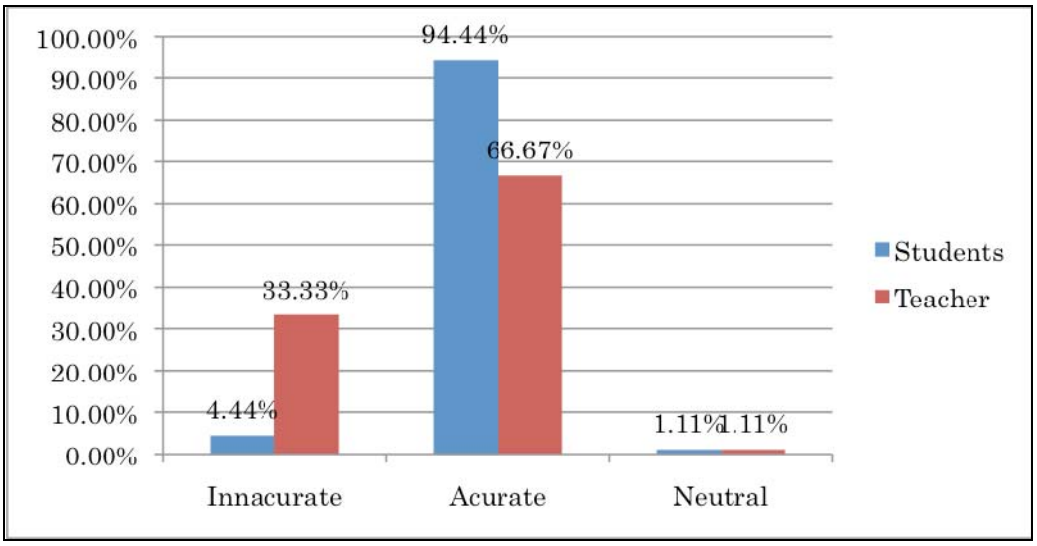
	Number of questionnaire answers		
Error analysis is effective feedback	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
15. Error analysis in general is effective feedback	1	43	1
16. Error analysis of specific grammar points is effective feedback	3	42	0
Total	4	85	1
% Total of questionnaire answers	4.44	94.44	1.11

The teacher, as discussed in the answer to the previous research question, believes that error analysis is useful for learning and devotes an important part of class time in providing this kind of feedback to the students, as the following example illustrates. See also Figure 12 below.

> (Classroom observation excerpt 51; 9/11/2009)
> T: So what is the title of the book? The *capital*, Number, *capital* No 1 Ladie's, *all of these words are capital* Detective Agency". In English the rules are different than in French about capitalization. Now in the book you have ladie's this means belonging to many ladies, in fact, this is not a word L-A-D-I-E-'-S this means belonging to someone whose name is Ladie. So one would be LADY'S and plural ladies' ok? Let's first look at questions of punctuation and capitalization Now, I have started my english class since september. English, You know how many times I got the word English without a capital E even though in

the exam it said in your English class, one of the secrets to writing a good exam, a lot of the answers to the exam are in the exam, you know? September, so names of languages, months of the year days of the week ok, now you can't start a class since September you start a class in September. Is that a specific time we know or we don't know? We know it, so you can`t say I have started.

Figure 12: Error Analysis is Effective Feedback



In regard to positive feedback, 68.89% of the students indicated that they need to receive positive feedback in order to progress, whereas 56.56% of them answered that negative feedback is needed for them to progress. In contrast, the teacher is more attracted by negative feedback (100%) than positive feedback (0%). These results are shown in Tables XXX and XXXI and Figures 13 and 14 below.

Table XXX: Positive Feedback is Effective Feedback

	Number of questionnaire answers		
Positive feedback is effective feedback	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
25. I need to receive positive feedback in order to progress	14	31	0
Total	14	31	0
% Total of questionnaire answers	31.11	68.89	0

Figure 13: Positive Feedback is Effective Feedback

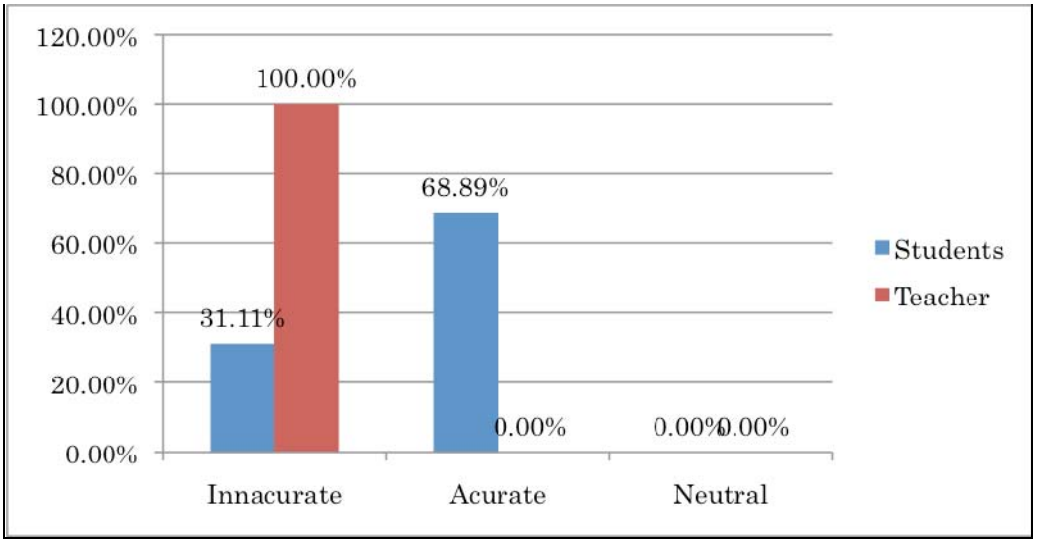
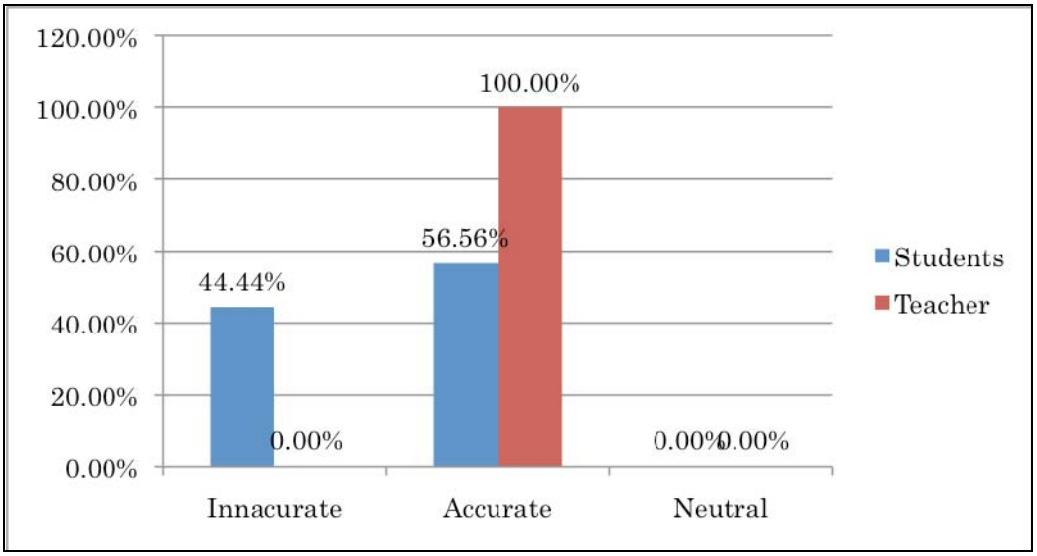


Table XXXI: Negative Feedback is Effective Feedback

	Number of questionnaire answers		
Negative feedback is effective feedback	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
26. I need to receive negative feedback in order to progress	20	25	0
Total	20	25	0
% Total of questionnaire answers	44.44	56.56	0

Figure 14: Negative Feedback is Effective Feedback



The teacher considered that in the case of summative assessment, students get "objective" positive or negative feedback according to their grades.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 52; 24/2/2010)
>
> A student who gets a failing grade on an exam which is essentially, there is no tricks; this is a negative feedback, this is negative feedback. It's the same kind of feedback, it is actually

> the same kind of feedback when a student gets 65 out of 70, it is objective feedback; there is nothing subjective about it; but this student is going to accept it as a positive feedback and this student is going to accept it as a negative feedback, but I think that this student has to be serious and say "Guess what? It is not an easy class it a class *exigeant,* it is demanding as any of the other subject and my teacher is going to take it seriously and fine if I don't come to class, I will have to do the work by my own" and the truth is that with the different methods that I use, e-mail, the blog, the lab, I say: "You don't want to come to class fine but you are responsible for this" and this is the truth.

In terms of formative assessment the teacher considered that negative feedback is useful but that the teacher has to know which errors to correct.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 53; Interview 24/2/2010)
>
> T: I never will say a student, you know: "your accent is horrible", you know, there is nothing you can do about that. Again, I don't question accent because it is like to say to a student "I don't like your clothes". You know, I don't correct accent, I don't have a problem with accent, I have a problem with pronunciation when it interferes with meaning.

Regarding the use of one primary method or a variety of assessment methods in the class, the teacher considers that students prefer a variety of methods in order to get their attention and avoid tediousness:

> (Teacher interview excerpt 54; 11/11/2009)
>
> Yes absolutely, I think that in every case with feedback or with other aspects, variety is what you want. First of all, why, you don't want your students be bored, and now students get more and more, you know, they really have to be, you know, quick, so

> the different kinds of feedback that I use are, first of all when we are working.

The teacher also refers to the different methods she uses to assess her students.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 55; 24/2/2010)
>
> I come and listen to them individually, and you know, I can't do that for every student in every class but I try to circulate as much as I can. I try to talk with those students that I haven't seen; I try to talk with those students who have more difficulty. The second kind of feedback is the kind I've been doing over the past many years or so and that really is, you know, taking the material that they've written for example and putting it on the board and then they discuss that; so two things: one is feedback and the other is that they are producing language so it's always these two things going on ... we are making effective use of the time.

However, the teacher considers that in a language class, it is not always possible to use a variety of methods due to time pressure.

> (Teacher interview excerpt 56; 24/2/2010)
>
> I think that students like all kind of methods because some students might be weaker in other areas, you know? And so that (using a variety of methods) is helpful (because) in a spoken language class is really very difficult to assess just because of the time pressure; for example: this semester I had a particular problem because the class is much larger than I usually have. I think we are over 36 and for me a very workable number is about 28. So in fact I'm am thinking I don't know if I will reasonably have the time to do that kind of assessment (students' presentations).

89.63% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with using a variety of methods in the class. However, 76.67 % of them also agreed or strongly agreed with the use of one primary method. Tables XXXII and XXXIII below show the distribution of students' answers regarding these two aspects. Figure 15 compares these perceptions with the teacher's.

Table XXXII: Varied Assessment Methods Should Be Used Continually

	Number of questionnaire answers		
Varied assessment methods should be used continually	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
30. Varied assessment methods should be used continually	6	39	0
6. I prefer to be assessed by varied methods	3	42	0
7. Varied assessment methods give more students a chance to do well	5	40	0
Total	14	121	0
% Total of questionnaire answers	10.37	89.63	0

Figure 15: Varied Assessment Methods Should Be Used Continually

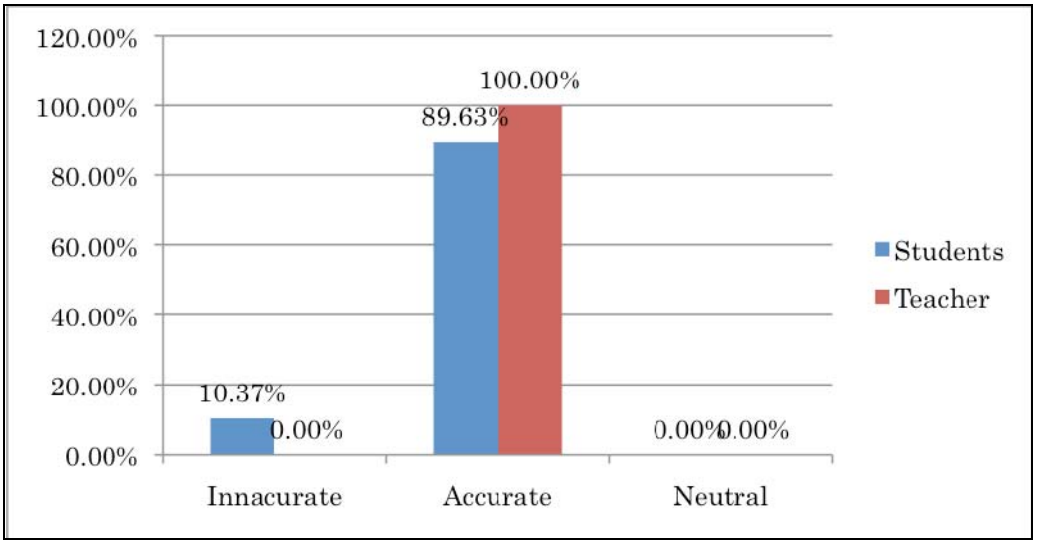


Table XXXIII: One Primary Method Should Be Used Continually

	Number of questionnaire answers		
One primary method should be used continually	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**N.A.**
8. I prefer to be assessed by one primary method	15	29	1
10. Using one primary assessment method allows students to perfect their performances	5	40	0
Total	20	69	1
% Total of questionnaire answers	22.22	76.67	1.11

Finally whereas the 22.22% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the use of one primary method, the teacher was in complete disagreement with that statement since, as she expressed in both interviews, what students need is a variety of assessment methods.

To answer the third and last research question: To what extent do the teachers and students' perceptions differ or converge? Table XXXIV below synthesizes the results regarding the aspects in which the perceptions of the teacher and her students converge and diverge.

Table XXXIV: Teacher and Student Perceptions

Perceptions T-S Disagree	**% T**	**%S**	**Perceptions T-S Agree**	**%T**	**%S**
Formative assessment promotes learning	13.33	87.22	Graded activities have an impact in student engagement	100	93.33
Self-assessment promotes learning	0	97.78	Teacher feedback promotes learning	94.44	85.19
Peer feedback promotes learning	20	97.78	Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals	100	85.78
I need positive feedback in order to progress	0	68.89	Error analysis is effective feedback	66.67	94.44
I need to receive negative feedback in order to progress	100	56.56	Varied assessment methods should be used continually	100	63
One primary method should be used continually	0	76.67			

In Chapter 5, I discuss the implications of the critical differences in the teacher and students' perceptions.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5. Introduction

In the final chapter of this study, I discuss the meanings of the results in the light of previous research. I also present the principles, relationships, and generalizations that came out of the results of my study. Furthermore, I interpret the results obtained and show how they align, or do not align, with previously published work. I conclude the chapter by discussing the limitations of my study.

5.1. Summary and Discussion - First Research Question Results

The results obtained in the previous chapter allow me to answer the research questions. My first research question is: *What is the nature of formative assessment in an oral intermediate second language classroom setting?*

Although I understand the rich and complex nature of formative assessment, for the purpose of this study, I limited my analysis to the teacher's feedback of students' linguistic errors based on the types of feedback and uptake provided in Lyster and Ranta (1997), that is:

- for corrective feedback: explicit correction, recast, clarification request, elicitation, repetition, and affective feedback.
- for uptake: repetition, incorporation, self-repair, peer-repair, acknowledgement, same errors, different errors, hesitation, and partial repair.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) found that recasts were the most common type of feedback, even though they are not effective in eliciting student repair. The feedback types least likely lead to uptake were: recasts (which resulted in uptake 31% of the time) and explicit correction (which led to uptake 50% of the time). Lyster and Ranta (1997) also argued that feedback types that reformulate learners' errors such as recasts and explicit correction create fewer opportunities for negotiation of form and less active learner involvement in the

error treatment process than other types of feedback such as: metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, clarification requests and repetition of error.

In constrast to Lyster and Ranta's results, in the current study explicit correction appeared to be the most common type of feedback (53.4%). This can be explained by the importance the teacher give to tapping into to the language system and to give students an awareness of how language works.

The present study showed that recast was one of the least common (3.90%). This differs not only Lyster and Ranta's study. For example, Lyster and Mori (2006) found show a predominant provision of recasts over prompts and explicit correction. Also, Panova and Lyster (2002) reported that teachers prefer to use recasts and translation types of feedback.

One possible explanation for the teacher's efforts to provide explicit correction feedback rather than recasts has to do with her perceptions of students' difficulty correcting themselves and to the fact that she wants to help her students to think about how the language works, and what the complications of language are.

Elicitation is the second most common feedback type in both Lyster and Ranta (1997) and this study. Nonetheless, in Lyster and Ranta, the frequency of elicitation was only 14%, whereas in the current study, it was 22.5%. From this, I can speculate that although the teacher in this study is comfortable providing explicit correction (as seen in the excerpt below), she is also aware of the limits of this type of feedback. Consequently, she also relies on elicitation.

(Interview excerpt; 24/02/2010)

> I would really be very comfortable personally saying to the students: "this is the perfect present tense, this is how it is used, this is ..." you know? - really technical details- I am personally comfortable doing that but I think that students have a lot of difficulty with that.

Metalinguistic feedback is the third most frequent type of feedback used by the teacher in the current study (18.50%). It is worth mentioning that during the second interview, the teacher stated that her thoughts of assessment had changed and now she is more oriented to metacognition.

(Interview excerpt 5; 24/02/2010)

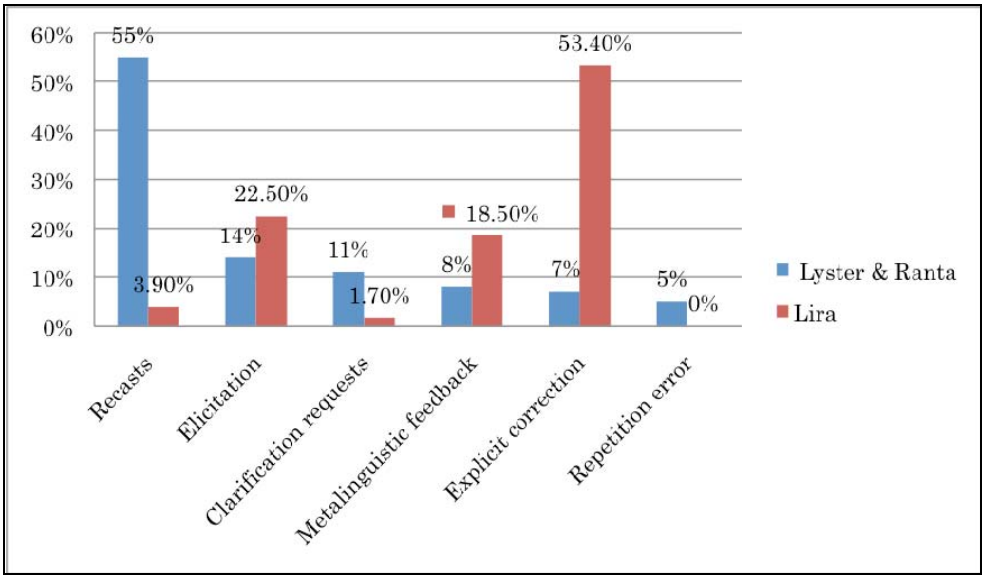
> My thoughts of assessment have changed quite a lot and the idea is not just to say "Here this is wrong and this is right" but, "let's struggle to think about why works this way in this language."

It is possible that during the interviews the teacher had the opportunity to reflect on formative assessment, and perhaps as a result of this reflection, she decided to change some aspects of her practice regarding formative assessment. Perhaps if I had analyzed the two courses separately, there would have been an evolution in the teacher's perceptions regarding formative assessment and consequently an evolution in her actual practice as well.

Carroll and Swain (1993) showed that implicit as well as explicit types of feedback were beneficial, and both led to learning. However, providing explicit metalinguistic information was more helpful than simply pointing out a mistake, or providing the desired response. These results are supported by Lyster and Ranta (1997), who reported that metalinguistic feedback leads to uptake 86% of the time.

Figure 16 below compares the results obtained in Lyster and Ranta (1997) and the present study.

Figure 16: Lyster & Ranta (1997) vs. Present Study



As the figure above shows the types of feedback that differ the most in both studies are recast and explicit correction. These differences could be attributed the different contexts in which the studies took place (i.e., French immersion in primary school vs. ESL classes in university).

In terms of the relationship between teacher feedback and student uptake, my findings show that explicit correction did not lead to any type of uptake in 29 of the 95 (33%) teacher turns for this type of feedback. This result roughly coincides with Lyster and Ranta's study in which explicit correction led to uptake 50% of the time. Although there are reported benefits to explicit feedback over implicit feedback (Ellis, Loewen & Earlam, 2006; Loewen & Philip, 2006; Lyster & Mori, 2006) student uptake is not guaranteed to occur.

Continuing with the relationship between teacher's feedback and students' uptake, elicitation was the second most frequently used type of feedback. Fourteen of the 40 teacher's elicitation turns led to self-repair, 9 to

same error types of uptake, and 7 turns led to no uptake. In Lyster and Ranta's study, elicitation was most likely to succeed type in uptake (i.e., 100%).

Metalinguistic feedback was the third most frequent type of teacher feedback in this study. Twenty-two of the teacher's 33 metalinguistic explanations led to uptake (67%). Likewise, in Lyster and Ranta, metalinguistic feedback was considered a good precursor of student's uptake (86% of the time). Lyster and Ranta also found that elicitation and metalinguistic feedback are two of the feedback types that all allow for negotiation of form and lead to student-generated repair.

5.2. Summary and Discussion - Second Research Question Results

The second research question is: *Do the teacher's assessment practices reflect what she thinks about formative assessment?* The results of this study showed that the teacher's perceptions concerning formative assessment influence her actual teaching practice. This finding is in line with findings of previous studies as well (Boud, 1990; Gielen, et al., 2003; Nevo, 1995). In fact, the teacher's perceptions were mirrored in her practice. For example, the teacher perceived that students are not able to practice self-assessment in a language course; according, there was no self-assessment at all in her practice. Similarly, the teacher perceived that students look for and expect teacher feedback and during the classes this was the type of feedback that was provided most of the time (in comparison to self- or peer-feedback).

The teacher perceived that formative assessment is not a realistic alternative because of the particular characteristics of L2 in the context of higher education (time pressures, large classes, accountability, etc.). This perception of the teacher might be explained by the fact that in higher education formative assessment is not sufficiently integrated into the teaching learning process (Yorke, 2003).

Based on the interview data, I can speculate that the teacher in the current study only partially understands what formative assessment is. It is likely because of this that she did not profit of the advantages that formative assessment carries, especially with respect to self- and peer-assessment strategies. Indeed, self- and peer-assessment release the teacher from the need to solve by herself every learning difficulty in class (Scallon, 2000).

With respect to the teacher's heavy reliance on explicit correction (53.40%), instead of promoting students' involvement in providing feedback, is likely related to the fact that teacher perceived her students as incapable of assessing themselves or their partners. In other words, she perceives herself as the authority in the class.

The teacher's perception about the unfeasibility of using self-assessment in a L2 class is not supported in the literature where the benefits of self-assessment have been reported in various studies (e.g., Baird et al., 1991; Griffiths & Davies, 1993; Maqsud & Pillai, 1991; Merret & Merett, 1992; Meyer & Woodruff, 1997; Powell & Makin, 1994). Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007) also reported that the nine teachers surveyed agreed that students' involvement in their own assessment was a good thing and that self-assessment fosters learning.

Indeed, the teacher's perceptions of peer-feedback influenced her teaching practice. She saw it as "conversations of anything but in the language of the classroom" (Interview excerpt 8; 11/11/2009). In the class the teacher encouraged peer-work, but it does not necessary imply peer-feedback as it is understood in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 (Higgins, et al., 1994; Koch & Shulamith, 1991; Liu & Hansen, 2002; Long & Porter, 1985; Saito, 2008; Topping, et al., 2000; Webb, 1982). Feedback given as part of formative assessment helps learners to become aware of any gaps that exist between their desired goal and their current knowledge guiding them through actions

necessary to obtain the goal (Ramaprasad, 1983; Sadler, 1989). Clearly, the teacher's perception of peer-feedback would not necessarily lead student to becoming aware of the existing gaps and then working to fill them.

The results of this study have shown that the teacher felt that formative assessment in the university context is complicated and unrealistic, but that it is a part of her actual practice. Likewise, Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007) concluded that the teachers in their study fell "short of wholehearted endorsement of formative assessment" (p. 26) in the form of feedback and related procedures, but that their assessment choices reflect a solid formative assessment component in their classrooms. They also reported that the kind of formative assessment the participant teachers used most frequently was teacher-student feedback. When a teacher's formative assessment practice consists primarily of teacher feedback, as in Colby-Kelly and Turner's study, this reduces the possibility using other types of formative assessment (self-assessment, peer-assessment) that imply more student involvement in learning.

One possible explanation of the predominance of teacher-student feedback, and the relative lack of peer-assessment and the absence of self-assessment in this study could be related to the teacher's unfamiliarity with the nature of formative assessment (Popham, 2009). Despite her recognized excellent in teaching (i.e., her teaching awards – see Chapter 3), her educational background is related to literature, not language learning. Another explanation could be that although the teacher is acquainted with the nature of formative assessment it is difficult for her to change practices that are closely embedded within her pedagogy (Black et al. 2003).

5.3. Summary and Discussion - Third Research Question Results

The last research questions is: *To what extent do the teacher and her students' perceptions differ or converge?*

The data showed significant divergences in terms of the teacher and her students' perceptions. These results are in line with what has been found in previous studies (Maclellan, 2001; Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997; Bell, 2005; Brosh, 1996; Schultz, 1996; Eisenstein, Ebsworth, & Schweers, 1997).

The largest difference between the teacher and her students' perceptions has to do with the statement "self-assessment promotes learning". Whereas the teacher stated that she does not think that in language learning self-assessment is really possible, almost all of her students (97.78%) consider that self-assessment promotes learning.

Consistent with her perceptions regarding self-assessment, the teacher does not provide any opportunities of self-assessment in her classes. The question then is, how does this perception and practice of the teacher affect the majority of the students who felt that self-assessment benefits learning?

It seems obvious that if students are not given the opportunities to be actively involved in self-assessing that they will not benefit from the advantages of this important aspect of formative assessment. The literature provides evidence self-assessment not only leads to significant changes in students' commitment to their work, but also some indirect evidence of improvement in their learning achievement (Griffiths & Davies, 1993; Powell & Makin, 1994; Meyer &Woodruff, 1997; Andrade & Du, 2007; Andrade & Cizek, 2010; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

A second important difference between the teacher and her students' perceptions is related to the statement "formative assessment promotes learning" (T: 13.33%, Ss: 87.22%). Whereas students valued active participation in their learning as well as feedback opportunities, the teacher considered that students "do not take the other type (formative) of assessment really all that seriously" (Interview excerpt #2; 24/02/2010).

This difference could be explained by the teacher being more aware of obstacles related to implementing formative assessment than of the benefits that it offers her students. In the case of the students, it is possible that they would like to be more involved in their learning process instead of always listening to the teacher. Recall that in these particular classes, there more teacher talking time than student talking time (33.75% vs. 27.64%, respectively).

The teacher and her students' perceptions converged for the statement "graded activities have an impact in students' engagement" (T: 100%, Ss: 93.33%). It was not unexpected that the teacher considered that students give a great deal of importance to graded tasks: Such findings are also present in the literature (Sadler, 2009; Black et al. 2004; Scallon, 2000).

The teacher's perceptions regarding the impact of graded activities in students engagement could be attributed to the fact that she considers that the role of assessment in learning is "different in a language course in university (…) where there is accountancy going on" (Teacher interview excerpt 45; 24/02/2010). This perception might be a consequence of the current accountability environment where the reciprocal relationship between teaching and assessment has been lost from sight and where, consequently, teachers identify assessment as something external to their everyday practice (Heritage, 2007).

5.4. Pedagogical and Teaching Implications

The following major findings have emerged from the current study: Explicit correction implies less active learner involvement in the error treatment process than metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, clarification requests, and repetition of error. However, I provided evidence of the importance of encouraging active student involvement in formative assessment (Nunziati, 1990; Doyon & Juneau, 1991; Doyon, 1992; Vial, 1995; Campanale, 1997; Laveault, 1999). Therefore, teachers should consider using different models of

active involvement in assessment, such as individual self-assessment, reciprocal peer-assessment, and co-assessment (Allal, 1999).

Another major finding is that the teacher's perceptions strongly influence her practice. This carries significant pedagogical and teaching implications. For example, the teacher in the current study perceived that her students are not capable of engaging in self-assessment and thus decided to avoid using this practice in her classes. Since self-assessment is an intrinsic aspect of reflection on one's own learning (Black and Wiliam, 1998), her pedagogical approach reduces the students' possibilities of becoming more reflective, more aware, and more responsible (McNamara, 2001)

The context of teaching a second language in higher education has particular characteristics and therefore particular challenges (e.g., large classes, limited number of hours, pressure on students to have good grades) that can persuade teachers to avoid formative assessment, especially if they perceive that summative assessment is something quite different from formative assessment, as in the case of the teacher in this study. However, as I demonstrated in the literature review, formative assessment is not only possible but also inseparable from the teaching process. Nevertheless, the implementation of formative assessment implies deep changes in a teacher's perceptions of their own role in relation to their students and in their classroom practice (Black et al., 2003). These deep changes in teachers' perceptions also imply that they must view formative assessment as a worthwhile process that yields valuable and actionable information about students' learning (Heritage, 2007).

The perceptions the teacher and her students have about formative assessment differ in the benefits that formative and self-assessment bring to learning. Having revealed the impact of perceptions in the teacher's practice, it also can be inferred that perceptions influence the students' behaviour as well.

Consequently, it is important that teachers devote some time in their classes to discuss their perceptions about certain aspects of formative assessment with their students. Although time pressure is one of the challenges teachers face in the context of higher education, this time taken from the course should view as an investment that will lead to implementing strategies in class (e.g., self-assessment and peer-assessment) that will increase students' involvement in their own learning and assessment, and consequently efficient use of class time.

Another major finding is that some of the inaccurate perceptions that the teacher has regarding formative assessment stem from an insufficient formation in assessment. This has important implications for teacher training; that is, it is crucial that every prospective teacher receives appropriate training in formative assessment. In the case of teachers who are already practising, it is also important to look for the ways of increasing their knowledge about formative assessment, though in-service workshops or conferences.

Both the teacher and her students agreed on the impact that graded activities have in student engagement. This perception derives from the pressure that students have with respect to getting high grades, which could lead to other academic opportunities, such as scholarships. Teachers should be aware, however, of the implications that this has for the students' learning: low intrinsic motivation, less self-efficacy for learning, reduced use and effectiveness of feedback to improve learning, and poorer social relationships among the students (Wood, 1986). Teachers also need also to be aware of their own tendencies to teach to the test at the expense of learning goals.

5.5. Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations of this study that are important to mention so that they can be taken into consideration in future research.

A potential limitation is that I worked with voluntary participants. According to Beaud (1997), voluntary participants have particular

psychological characteristics, such as: a desire to please, to know, and to solve problems. For example, the teacher that I observed is an experienced and very well prepared teacher who knew in advance that I was looking at formative assessment. It is possible that her performance could have been influenced by my expectations. The students were also aware of the general objective of this study which might have influenced their behaviour in class. Another possible influence on the teacher and students' behaviours was the use of the video camera in the classes.

With respect to the questionnaire, although I explained important terms to the students and invited them to ask questions for clarification, it is possible that for different reasons (e.g., shyness, indifference), some students might not have asked for clarification of the terms that they did not understand, which could have impacted the reliability of their answers.

In addition, exploratory research based on a case study implies weak generalizability, due to the small sample size (i.e., one teacher); consequently, results might not be transferable to other situations. This study is based on a single case, which is not necessarily representative of all teachers. Certainly, I have no way of knowing, empirically, to what extent the class that I observed is similar or different from other L2 classes in other universities. However, taking into account the limits that this methodological choice implies, I decided on a case study because it allowed me to understand the complex interrelationships (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001) between the teacher's perceptions and her actual practice and those between the teacher and her students' perceptions regarding formative assessment. Also, "cases studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes" (Yin, 2003, p. 10). This fits with my goal of contributing to theories (analytic generalization) and not to a goal of enumerating frequencies (statistical generalization).

Notwithstanding these limitations, this study is among the very first to look at feedback from two perspectives: assessment and SLA. Thus, there are a number of avenues to explore in future research.

First, in the present study, I limited my analysis to the teacher's feedback of students' linguistic errors. Further research look at other perspectives of the rich and complex nature of formative assessment in SLA.

Also, this study focused on the teacher's and her students' perceptions as well as on the teacher's actual practice. It would be interesting and relevant to investigate the coherence between students' perceptions and their behaviour regarding formative assessment.

In this study, the same interview was administered twice to the teacher. During the second interview, the teacher noted that her thoughts of assessment had changed. In Chapter 4, I expressed that this change of thought might have been a consequence of her reflecting on formative assessment due to her participation in this study. Future research could investigate the impact on teachers' perceptions of having participated in this type of study.

Another direction for future research has to do with the extent to which the teacher and her students' perceptions differ or converge concerning formative assessment. Although this was one of the main focuses of my study, this is a critical question, one worth examining in further research. For example, it would be relevant to explore the impact of the agreement and disagreement of teachers perceptions regarding formative assessment in students learning.

Conclusion

In this study, I investigated how formative assessment is practiced in Intermediate Oral English courses at the Université de Montréal and compared how these practices are perceived and performed by a teacher and her students. One of the most important challenges formative assessment faces in the context of higher education is the harmonization of summative and formative assessment. Indeed the fact that teachers have to deal with large classes, few hours of instruction per week, and the students' pressure to obtain good grades are critical factors contributing to the perception of formative assessment as an unrealistic option. Furthermore, the teacher is the only person who can initiate formative assessment, a teacher will initiate formative assessment in class only if it is perceived as valuable and useful.

Using a case study approach comprising teacher interviews, student questionnaires, classroom observation transcripts and grids, I was able to answer the three research questions. With regard to the nature of formative assessment in a second language classroom setting question, the findings showed that explicit correction and elicitation are the most common feedback types provided by the teacher, followed equally by acknowledgement and incorporation, and self-repair. Results showed that there is consistency between the teacher's perceptions and practice. Finally, I found that there are important differences between the teacher and her students' perceptions of the benefits of formative assessment.

More research is certainly required to further investigate the current research questions. Among other things, the nature of formative assessment in SLA needs to be explored from perspectives other than just the teacher's feedback of students' linguistic errors.

Furthermore, other research questions need to be addressed. For instance, in addition to studying the influence of teachers' perceptions in their actual practice, further research questions can attend to whether students' behaviours reflect what they think about formative assessment.

In this study, I did not examine the impact of the agreement and disagreement of teacher's perceptions of formative assessment on students' learning; however, this issue could be of great importance to researchers and teachers and needs to be investigated.

Finally, Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007) concluded their report with a call "for the field of language testing to study second-language classroom formative assessment practices, and AFL in particular" (p. 11). In this study, I answered that call by describing the nature of formative assessment in a second-language classroom, understanding how a L2 teacher's perceptions of formative assessment influence her practice, as well as comparing and contrasting the teacher and her students' perceptions about the benefits of formative assessment.

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Appendix 1: Student Questionnaire: Assessment and Students[3]

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Self-evaluation fosters (benefits) learning.				
2. Peer review feedback is useful for learning.				
3. I consider that peer feedback is important for learning.				
4. I should be actively involved in my assessment.				
5. It is important for me to have input on how my work is assessed.				
6. I prefer to be assessed by varied methods				
7. Varied assessment methods give more students a chance to do well.				
8. I prefer assessment by one primary method.				
9. I believe assessment contributes to learning.				
10. Using one primary assessment method allows students to perfect their performances.				
11. It's good for me to brainstorm what successful tasks should `look like``				
12. It is helpful to know activities' worth towards final grade.				

[3] Adapted from Colby-Kelly & Turner (2007).

Appendix 2: Student Questionnaire: Assessment and Teachers[4]

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Teacher – student conferences are effective in fostering learning				
2. Teacher feedback is effective in promoting student learning.				
3. Error analysis in general is effective feedback				
4. Error analysis of specific grammar points is effective feedback.				
5. Effective teachers need to be aware of student development.				
6. Teachers need to be aware of how a skill/L2 competence develops.				
7. Comprehension-check questions are useful to confirm student understanding				
8. Short-answer comprehension –check questions are useful.				
9. Audio-recording student speech is useful in correcting pronunciation.				

[4] Colby-Kelly & Turner (2007)

Appendix 3: Student Questionnaire: Assessment and Learning [5]

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Assessment focusing directly on student development is best.				
2. Assessment may have an impact on the course of students learning.				
3. I need to receive positive feedback in order to progress.				
4. I need to receive negative feedback in order to progress.				
5. Teacher comments to me are important in my learning				
6. Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals.				
7. Evaluation forms aid in communicating specific evaluation criteria to students.				
8. Varied assessment methods should be used continually.				
9. Assessment can contribute to student learning				

[5] Colby-Kelly & Turner (2007)

Appendix 4: Analysis of Student Questionnaires (Fall Session)

Assessment and Students

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Self-evaluation fosters (benefits) learning.			19	6
2. Peer review feedback is useful for learning.			14	11
3. I consider that peer feedback is important for learning.			14	10
4. I should be actively involved in my assessment.		4	11	9
5. It is important for me to have input on how my work is assessed.		1	11	13
6. I prefer to be assessed by varied methods		1	14	10
7. Varied assessment methods give more students a chance to do well.		4	11	10
8. I prefer assessment by one primary method.	2	13	8	2
9. I believe assessment contributes to learning.		5	10	10
10. Using one primary assessment method allows students to perfect their performances.		9	12	3
11. It's good for me to brainstorm what successful tasks should `look like``		3	17	5
12. It is helpful to know activities' worth towards final grade.		2	12	11

Assessment and Teachers

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. Teacher – student conferences are effective in fostering learning		3	13	6
14. Teacher feedback is effective in promoting student learning.		1	9	15
15. Error analysis in general is effective feedback		1	6	17
16. Error analysis of specific grammar points is effective feedback.		3	10	12
17. Effective teachers need to be aware of student development.		2	12	10
18. Teachers need to be aware of how a skill/L2 competence develops.		3	13	8
19. Comprehension-check questions are useful to confirm student understanding		5	12	8
20. Short-answer comprehension –check questions are useful.		3	17	5
21. Audio-recording student speech is useful in correcting pronunciation.		6	10	9

Assessment and Learning

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. Assessment focusing directly on student development is best.		2	19	4
23. Assessment may have an impact on the course of students learning.		2	16	4
24. I need to receive positive feedback in order to progress.	1	10	12	2
25. I need to receive negative feedback in order to progress.	1	14	8	2
26. Teacher comments to me are important in my learning	1	1	7	11
27. Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals.		2	12	10
28. Evaluation forms aid in communicating specific evaluation criteria to students.		3	18	4
29. Varied assessment methods should be used continually.		3	13	8
30. Assessment can contribute to student learning		2	9	13

Appendix 5: Analysis of Student Questionnaires (Winter Session)

Assessment and Students

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Self-evaluation fosters (benefits) learning.		1	17	2
2. Peer review feedback is useful for learning.			16	4
3. I consider that peer feedback is important for learning.		1	12	7
4. I should be actively involved in my assessment.		1	10	9
5. It is important for me to have input on how my work is assessed.		2	10	8
6. I prefer to be assessed by varied methods		2	12	6
7. Varied assessment methods give more students a chance to do well.		1	8	11
8. I prefer assessment by one primary method.		15	4	1
9. I believe assessment contributes to learning.		2	17	1
10. Using one primary assessment method allows students to perfect their performances.	1	5	13	1
11. It's good for me to brainstorm what successful tasks should `look like``		2	17	1
12. It is helpful to know activities' worth towards final grade.		1	12	7

Assessment and Teachers

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. Teacher – student conferences are effective in fostering learning		4	10	6
14. Teacher feedback is effective in promoting student learning.			9	11
15. Error analysis in general is effective feedback			10	10
16. Error analysis of specific grammar points is effective feedback.			11	9
17. Effective teachers need to be aware of student development.			9	11
18. Teachers need to be aware of how a skill/L2 competence develops.		2	9	9
19. Comprehension-check questions are useful to confirm student understanding		3	12	5
20. Short-answer comprehension –check questions are useful.	1	1	13	5
21. Audio-recording student speech is useful in correcting pronunciation.	1	3	9	7

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. Assessment focusing directly on student development is best.		3	14	3
23. Assessment may have an impact on the course of students learning.		2	14	4
24. I need to receive positive feedback in order to progress.		3	11	6
25. I need to receive negative feedback in order to progress.	1	4	10	5
26. Teacher comments to me are important in my learning		1	7	11
27. Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals.			8	12
28. Evaluation forms aid in communicating specific evaluation criteria to students.			15	5
29. Varied assessment methods should be used continually.		3	12	6
30. Assessment can contribute to student learning		1	15	4

Appendix 6: Collapsed Student Questionnaire Data (Fall & Winter Sessions)

Collapsed Data on Assessment and Students

	Disagree	Agree	N.A.	Total number of students
1. Self-evaluation fosters (benefits) learning.	1	44		45
2. Peer review feedback is useful for learning.		45		45
3. I consider that peer feedback is important for learning.	1	44		45
4. I should be actively involved in my assessment.	5	39	1	45
5. It is important for me to have input on how my work is assessed.	3	42		45
6. I prefer to be assessed by varied methods	3	42		45
7. Varied assessment methods give more students a chance to do well.	5	40		45
8. I prefer assessment by one primary method.	30	15		45
9. I believe assessment contributes to learning.	7	38		45
10. Using one primary assessment method allows students to perfect their performances.	15	29	1	45
11. It's good for me to brainstorm what successful tasks should `look like``	5	40		45
12. It is helpful to know activities' worth towards final grade.	3	42		45

Collapsed Data on Assessment and Teachers

	Disagree	Agree	N.A.	Total number of students
1. Teacher – student conferences are effective in fostering learning	7	38		45
2. Teacher feedback is effective in promoting student learning.	1	44		45
3. Error analysis in general is effective feedback	1	44		45
4. Error analysis of specific grammar points is effective feedback.	3	42		45
5. Effective teachers need to be aware of student development.	3	42		45
6. Teachers need to be aware of how a skill/L2 competence develops.	5	40		45
7. Comprehension-check questions are useful to confirm student understanding	8	37		45
8. Short-answer comprehension –check questions are useful.	5	40		45
9. Audio-recording student speech is useful in correcting pronunciation.	10	35		45

Collapsed Data on Assessment and Learning

	Disagree	Agree	N.A.	Total number of students
13. Assessment focusing directly on student development is best.	5	40		45
14. Assessment may have an impact on the course of students learning.	4	38	3	45
15. I need to receive positive feedback in order to progress.	14	31		45
16. I need to receive negative feedback in order to progress.	20	25		45
17. Teacher comments to me are important in my learning	3	37	5	45
18. Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals.	2	42	1	45
19. Evaluation forms aid in communicating specific evaluation criteria to students.	3	42		45
20. Varied assessment methods should be used continually.	6	38	1	45
21. Assessment can contribute to student learning	3	41	1	45

Appendix 7: Teacher Interview Guidelines[6]

In your opinion....

Assessment and students

1. Does self-evaluation foster (promote) learning?
2. Is it useful for learning when students correct other students' work?
3. Do you value peer feedback in learning?
4. Should students be actively involved in their assessment?
5. Do students prefer to be assessed by varied methods?
6. Do varied assessment methods give more students a chance to do well?
7. Do students prefer to be assessed by one primary method?
8. Do students believe assessment contribute to learning?
9. Is it good for students to brainstorm what successful tasks should `look like``?
10. Is it helpful for students to know activities' worth towards final grade?

Assessment and Teachers

11. Is teacher feedback effective in promoting learning?
12. Is error analysis effective feedback?
13. Is error analysis of specific grammar points effective feedback?
14. Are comprehension-check questions useful to confirm that students have understood?
15. Are short-answer comprehension –check questions useful?
16. Is audio-recording your speech useful in correcting pronunciation?
17. Is it useful when the teacher asks students what they think she wants them to learn from the lesson?

Assessment and Learning

18. Can formative assessment have an impact on the course of students learning?
19. Do your students need to receive positive feedback in order to progress?

[6] Adapted from Colby-Kelly & Turner (2007)

20. Do your students need to receive negative feedback in order to progress?
21. Are teacher comments to students important in their learning?
22. Should teacher and students share an understanding of assessment goals?
23. Do evaluation forms aid in communicating specific evaluation criteria to students?
24. Should varied assessment methods be used continually?
25. Can formative assessment contribute to student learning?

Appendix 8: Teacher Perceptions

	Number of Teacher Turns	% of Teacher Turns
self_assessment_fosters_learning (-)	4	7.00
self_assessment_ fosters_learning (+/-)	0	0
self_ assessment _fosters_learning (+)	0	0
peer_fb_useful (-)	3	5.30
peer_fb_useful (+/-)	1	1.60
peer_fb_useful (+)	1	1.80
varied_ass_methods_pref (-)	0	0.00
varied_ass_methods_pref (+/_)	0	0.00
varied_ass_methods_pref (+)	1	1.75
one_ass_method_pref (-)	0	0.00
one_ass_method_pref (+/-)	0	0.00
one_ass_method_pref (+)	1	1.75
formative_assessment_fosters_learning (-)	13	22.80
formative_assessment_fosters_learning (+/-)	0	0.00
formative_assessment_fosters_learning (-)	2	3.50
helpful_know_activ_graded (-)	1	1.80
helpful_know_activ_graded (+/_)	0	0.00
helpful_know_activ_graded (+)	9	15.80
T_fb_effective_prom_learning (-)	0	0.00
T_fb_effective_prom_learning (+/_)	0	0.00
T_fb_effective_prom_learning (+)	4	7.00
error_analysis_effective_fb (-)	2	3.50
error_analysis_effective_fb (+/-)	0	0.00
error_analysis_effective_fb (+)	1	1.80
s_need_+fb_progress (-)	1	1.80
s_need_+fb_progress (+/-)	0	0.00
s_need_+fb_progress (+)	0	0.00
s_need_-fb_progress (-)	0	0.00
s_need_-fb_progress (+/-)	0	0.00
s_need_-fb_progress (+)	6	10.50
T_s_share_understanding_ass_goals (-)	0	0
T_s_share_understanding_ass_goals (+/-)	0	0
T_s_share_understanding_ass_goals (+)	5	8.80
TOTAL	**55**	**100.00**

Appendix 9: Teacher Consent Form

Faculté des Sciences de l'éducation
Département de psychopédagogie

CONSENT FORM - TEACHER

Title of research: A Teacher's Formative Assessment Perceptions and Practices in Oral Intermediate English Courses at the Université de Montréal.

Researcher: Maria Lourdes Lira Gonzales, M.A. candidate, *Départment de Psychopédagogie*, Faculty of Education, Université de Montréal.

Research supervisor: Michel Laurier, associate professor, *Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation*, Faculty of Education, Université de Montréal.

A) INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

1. Research objectives

The purpose of the present study is to understand how formative assessment is practiced in two Intermediate Oral English courses at the Université de Montréal and to compare how these practices are perceived and performed by the teacher and her students.

2. Research participation

Participation in this study consists of giving two Intermediate Oral English courses at the Université de Montréal while the researcher is observing. The researcher will video-tape all the classroom interaction that takes place during the observed lessons with a camera. At no time and under no circumstances would the researcher intervene during the above-mentioned lessons. The recorded classroom interactions will then be transcribed.

The researcher will interview you at the end of each session (fall and winter) during 45 to 60 minutes about your perceptions about formative assessment. The interview will be held at a moment and in a place of your choice. The interview will be audiorecorded with a digital recorder, and then transcribed.

3. Confidentiality

All personal information collected will be kept confidential. Video-taped classroom interactions will be transcribed, and never used during the diffusion of results or any other circumstances. No nominative information will be used in the data analysis or in the diffusion of results. Data collected during the study will be kept in a locked drawer located in a locked room for 7 years (the standard period for any research data).

4. Benefits and disadvantages
There are no particular disadvantages or risks associated with participating in this study. By participating, you are contributing to research in the field of Teaching English as a second language.

5. Opt-out right
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any moment on simple oral notice, without prejudice and without having to justify your decision. If you decide to withdraw from this study, you can communicate with the researcher at the telephone number or email address provided on the last page of this document. If you withdraw from this study, data collected prior to your withdrawal will be destroyed.

6. Compensation
No monetary compensation will be given by the researcher.
7. Diffusion of results
You will be kept informed of the completion of the research project, expected in October 2011, and its results.

B) CONSENT
I declare having knowledge of the information above, having received answers to all of my questions related to my participation in the research and understanding the goal, nature, benefits, risks and disadvantages of this research. I know that I can opt-out from it at any time without prejudice, on simple oral notice and without having to justify my decision.

Upon consideration and after a reasonable delay, I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of the teacher: _____
Date:_____

Last Name: _____First Name: _____

Yes
No
I agree to the reuse of the anonymized data gathered in the course of this study for subsequent research projects of the same nature, at the condition of their ethical approbation and the respect of the same principles of confidentiality and data protection.
I declare having explained the goal, nature, benefits, risks and disadvantages of this research and having provided answers with the best of my knowledge to all the questions asked.

Signature of the researcher
(or its representative): Date:
Last Name: _____ First Name:_____

For any question related to this research or to opt-out from the project, you can communicate with Maria Lourdes Lira Gonzales by telephone at [redacted] or by email at [redacted]
You can also communicate with the researcher's supervisor, Michel Laurier at [redacted]

Any complaint related to your participation in this research can be addressed to the ombudsman of the University of Montreal by telephone at [redacted] or by email at [redacted] (the ombudsman accepts collect calls).

A copy of the signed consent form must be given to the participant.

Appendix 10: Student Consent Form

Faculté des Sciences de l'éducation
Département de psychopédagogie

CONSENT FORM - STUDENTS

Title of research: A Teacher's Formative Assessment Perceptions and Practices in Oral Intermediate English Courses at the Université de Montréal.

Researcher: Maria Lourdes Lira Gonzales, M.A. candidate, *Départment de Psychopédagogie*, Faculty of Education, Université de Montréal.

Research supervisor: Michel Laurier, associate professor, *Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation*, Faculty of Education, Université de Montréal.

A) INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

1. Research objectives

The purpose of the present study is to understand how formative assessment is practiced in two Intermediate Oral English courses at the Université de Montréal and to compare how these practices are perceived and performed by the teacher and her students.

2. Research participation

Participation in this study consists of attending to your Intermediate Oral English course at the Université de Montréal while the researcher is observing. The researcher will video-tape all the classroom interaction that takes place during the observed lessons with a camera. At no time and under no circumstances would the researcher intervene during the above-mentioned lessons. The recorded classroom interactions will then be transcribed.
At the end of the session the researcher will give you a questionnaire to answer during 25 to 30 minutes about your perceptions about formative assessment.

3. Confidentiality

All personal information collected will be kept confidential. Video-taped classroom interactions will be transcribed, and never used during the diffusion of results or any other circumstances. No nominative information will be used in the data analysis or in the diffusion of results. Data collected during the study will be kept in a locked drawer located in a locked room for 7 years (the standard period for any research data).

4. Benefits and disadvantages

There are no particular disadvantages or risks associated with participating in this study. By participating, you are contributing to research in the field of Teaching English as a second language.

5. Opt-out right
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any moment on simple oral notice, without prejudice and without having to justify your decision. If you decide to withdraw from this study, you can communicate with the researcher at the telephone number or email address provided on the last page of this document. If you withdraw from this study, data collected prior to your withdrawal will be destroyed.

6. Compensation
No monetary compensation will be given by the researcher.

7. Diffusion of results
You will be kept informed of the completion of the research project, expected in October 2011, and its results.

B) CONSENT
I declare having knowledge of the information above, having received answers to all of my questions related to my participation in the research and understanding the goal, nature, benefits, risks and disadvantages of this research. I know that I can opt-out from it at any time without prejudice, on simple oral notice and without having to justify my decision.

Upon consideration and after a reasonable delay, I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of the student: _____
Date:_____

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Yes
No
I agree to the reuse of the anonymized data gathered in the course of this study for subsequent research projects of the same nature, at the condition of their ethical approbation and the respect of the same principles of confidentiality and data protection.
I declare having explained the goal, nature, benefits, risks and disadvantages of this research and having provided answers with the best of my knowledge to all the questions asked.

Signature of the researcher (or its representative):
_____Date:_____
Last Name: _____ First Name:_____

For any question related to this research or to opt-out from the project, you can communicate with Maria Lourdes Lira Gonzales by telephone at [redacted] or by email at [redacted]
You can also communicate with the researcher's supervisor, Michel Laurier at [redacted]

Any complaint related to your participation in this research can be addressed to the ombudsman of the University of Montreal by telephone at [redacted] or by email at [redacted] (the ombudsman accepts collect calls).

A copy of the signed consent form must be given to the participant.