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**Bridging the mismatches between the lecturers' and students' beliefs about
the value of written feedback on their assignments: A Private Malaysian
University Case Study**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of**

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

in

Applied Linguistics

at

The University of Waikato

by

Judy, Miang Koon Ng



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2015

STATEMENT OF INTELLECTUAL OWNERSHIP

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sudip', written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Date: 4th June, 2015

ABSTRACT

Title: Bridging the mismatches between the lecturers' and students' beliefs about the value of written feedback on their assignments: A Private Malaysian University Case Study

This multi-method, qualitative study seeks to examine issues surrounding the purposes and roles of the written feedback provided by Malaysian lecturers in a private university on assessed student assignments written in English in two subject disciplines – English and science. The overall purpose of the study was to investigate the views and practices of staff and students that relate to provision and reception of assignment feedback and, in particular, their perceptions relating to its role and effectiveness.

An on-going issue is that although formative feedback is supposed to enhance students' learning, students are often unable to interpret and apply the feedback that they receive. Recently, sociocultural theorists have advocated the incorporation of students' own views about feedback back into formative assessment to improve the effectiveness of feedback and further assist students to self-regulate their learning (Murphy, 2000; Nicol, & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Scott, 2005).

Ten lecturers (five English and five science) were recruited through their participation in an initial survey, which was followed by a case study approach using multiple data collection methods. First the lecturers were interviewed individually and their students were interviewed in groups to obtain their beliefs towards written feedback in general. Then, using think-aloud protocols, each lecturer was observed providing written feedback on one or three students' assignments. This was followed by interviews with those students whose assignments were marked during the think-aloud sessions to obtain their responses towards their lecturers' feedback. Finally, summaries of these student responses to the feedback were then presented back to the individual lecturers to elicit their responses and reflections. The approach to the analysis of the data was a combination of grounded theory and thematic analysis (Glesne, 2011). The thematic findings were then subject to further analysis using socio-cultural

theory, specifically the concepts of *Zone of Proximal Development* and *Activity Theory*.

The main findings suggest that, although the English and science lecturers had pre-conceived beliefs about what constitute good written feedback practice, four contextual factors: the policies relating to assessment and feedback of the local and partner universities, the lack of training among the lecturers, the lack of training of students in Academic Writing and the students' poor English proficiency caused the lecturers to modify practices of their provision written feedback in ways that diverged from their beliefs. It was also found that the lecturers' feedback did not match students' expectations in terms of the purposes, types and foci of feedback, and the amount of guidance preferred in the feedback. However, when the students' responses were made revealed to the lecturers, some lecturers decided to incorporate students' views into their feedback practices.

My findings suggest a number of contributions to the field of teacher cognition, second language instruction and social-cultural theory. While few studies have examined the influence of contextual factors on teacher cognition, this study revealed the role of contextual factors in moulding lecturers' beliefs. Other potential contributions include implications for the practical application of written feedback, expanding the existing activity theory framework to examine conflicts caused by the different beliefs and practices within an institution, and the application of think-aloud protocols to the investigation of teacher cognition.

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CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This multi-method study involves the examination of five English lecturers' and five science lecturers' beliefs about, and practices in, their provision of written feedback in the context of a Malaysian private university, where English is used as the medium of instruction. The students' views and reactions towards their respective lecturers' written feedback were also elicited and presented to the lecturers for reflection. The lecturers then considered whether to retain or change their methods of providing feedback.

This chapter introduces my motivation for the research, the objectives of the study, the methodological framework, the background of the Malaysian education system and language policies, the context of the research site, the working definitions of key terms, the significance of the study and the overall structure of this thesis.

1.1 Initial motivation and identity of the researcher

My motivation to conduct this study of teacher cognition (beliefs, actual practices and reflection) and students' expectations of their lecturers' written feedback came from a variety of sources, especially my own journey as a student in the process of receiving and responding to the feedback provided by my teachers, and my subsequent teaching experiences.

When I was a student in primary and secondary schools, the medium of instruction used was the Malay language. During my schooldays, I received minimal and sometimes incomprehensible feedback from my teachers about my assignments, as compared to the feedback I received in extra private classes for certain essential subjects, which my parents paid for (for instance, the Malay language, mathematics and accounting classes). Through the feedback received from these private tutors, I was able to make improvements in my work and gain higher marks in subsequent assessments at school.

When I was an undergraduate student studying in a newly established Faculty of English Language Studies, I realised that the amount of feedback provided by the lecturers of English was very comprehensive compared with the feedback provided by the lecturers teaching other subjects. I was very privileged to have constructive and detailed oral and written feedback from a few professors teaching some of the other compulsory subjects that I studied. These experiences made me realise two important matters. Firstly, comprehensive feedback assisted my own learning process. Secondly, I felt that students' views of feedback ought to be incorporated in the lecturers' feedback.

When I first began my career in teaching in a private university, I had not been trained in designing assessment instruments, or providing feedback on students' written assignments. However, based on my past experience as a student, I was determined to provide detailed and constructive feedback, as I believed this type of feedback assisted students in their learning. At the beginning, I applied my belief about good feedback to my actual practices of written feedback. My pedagogical understanding of providing feedback increased even further when I was assigned to teach courses offered by a number of partner universities, and sets of standardised criteria were provided to the lecturers to guide them in marking students' work. In addition, I had the privilege of travelling to Australia for further training in assessment and providing feedback.

However, as I was given additional responsibilities, the amount of marking mounted. I found myself taking large amounts of work home, marking papers or having other work-related responsibilities, even during the weekends. This continued for many months until I felt burned out. When I was marking my students' written work, I realised that the majority of my students were not able to write well, as they were struggling with the English language. I found myself correcting all their grammatical errors as well as errors in their sentence structures, and this largely distracted me from focusing on the actual content of the assignments. I decided to have informal discussions with my colleagues from the same department to enquire how they coped with providing feedback and assessment. From these conversations, I gained more knowledge, and I began to realise that every lecturer has his or her individual beliefs on how to provide feedback.

My own early experiences, especially my inability to comprehend my teachers' or lecturers' feedback, and my frustration of being unable to provide effective feedback stimulated me to conduct this research project.

1.2 The contextual background of the study

1.2.1 The language policies in Malaysian education systems

Malaysia was once colonised by British and is both a multi-cultural and a multi-lingual society. The implementation of appropriate language policies is considered essential to maintain political stability and meet the economic needs of the country. The execution of these language policies, which include the English language across the Malaysian school sector and developments in the public and private tertiary education sectors, has taken place within a context of variability and complexity over an extended period of time. However, the inconsistent enforcement and the frequent change of language policy, especially in relation to the English language, have caused an expected unevenness in English language competence at multiple levels as a consequence.

Before Malaysia gained independence, according to Puteh (2010) and Zuraidah (2014), the Barnes Report (1951) suggested that bilingual education (English-Malay) could be implemented in primary schools. Malay was the national language, but English was used as the medium of instruction, while the students' mother tongues (the Mandarin and Tamil languages) were taught as separate subjects. Nevertheless, the Barnes Report was not implemented when Malaysia became independent.

Instead, the Razak Report (1956), which suggested using Malay as the medium of instruction in national schools in order to promote national unity among the different ethnic groups in Malaysia, was implemented (Puteh, 2010; Zuraidah, 2014). The National-Types schools use Tamil or Mandarin as their medium of instruction. Malay and English are two of the compulsory subjects taught in all types of school (Lee, 2011; Zuraidah, 2014). The use of Malay as the medium of instruction began at all levels of government-funded national schools in 1957.

Despite those emphases, the importance of maintaining the English language was recognised by the Malay political leadership. One of the factors that drove the Malaysian Government, from 2003, to implement the teaching of science and mathematics in English in primary schools was to meet the growing impact of globalisation (Foo & Richards, 2004). However, following a change in Malaysian political leaders in 2009, this policy was reversed in 2012 (Zaaba, Ramadan, Anning, Gunggut & Umemoto, 2011).

The Malaysian Government also did not fully implement the Private Higher Educational Institution Act (1996), to enforce the Malay language as the medium of instruction in private higher education (Gill, 2002; Puteh, 2010). According to McBurnie and Ziguras (2001), in 1996, the Malaysian Government implemented two acts (the Education Act and the Private Higher Education Institution Act), which proposed a change in the language policy to respond to the impact of globalisation and the need to achieve Vision 2020 (a vision and aim to make Malaysia a fully developed nation). The Education Act recommended the use of English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in technical subjects, while the Private Higher Educational Institution Act (1996) stated that all courses in the private institutions should be conducted in Malay, the national language. It was also stated that if English was to be used in preference to the Malay language, approval from the Government must be obtained beforehand (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2001; Puteh, 2010).

However, the private institutions in Malaysia increasingly used English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI), and the reasons for this decision ran parallel to Van der Walt and Kidd's (2013) later rationales of using EMI in higher education: to attract international students; to prepare domestic students to cope with the global market, which requires good command of English; to introduce new academic programmes into the market; to enhance the quality of education or the standing of the university; and to compete with other higher institutes of education.

Moreover, the twinning programmes (which enable students to study locally in their own country before furthering their studies abroad) are moderated by universities in English-speaking countries, and both instruction and examinations

are conducted in English (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2001). Thus, it is essential that students obtain a certain level of English proficiency to enable them to study, and the private universities have a benchmark of English proficiency which students need to meet before enrolling in the programmes offered. The majority of the private universities in Malaysia have different minimum English language requirements for students, depending on the courses and the requirements of their partner universities.

To conclude, as a result of political and economic factors, the English language policies in Malaysia have never been consistent. One of the negative effects of the inconsistent language policies is that they have the potential to influence the quality of English language teaching and learning.

1.2.2 Historical background of private higher education system

Many private higher institutions have been established in Malaysia since the 1980s (Tham & Kam, 2008). In the 1980s, the concept of twinning programmes became very popular among some private colleges to enable students to obtain an overseas degree from a university abroad (Yonezawa, 2007). Such agreements allowed students to study in a Western university (mostly in English-speaking countries) to complete their degree, either for a year or for a longer period, depending on the students' financial circumstances (Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005).

According to Marimuthu (2008), in 1996, the Malaysian Government implemented new legislation (the Private Higher Educational Institution Act), as follows:

1. The National Accreditation Board Act established the National Accreditation Board (LAN) in 1997, which functions as the quality assurance and accreditation agency for private education.
2. The National Council on Higher Education Act formulates policy for both public and private education.
3. The Private Higher Education Institution Act (PHEI) permits the establishment of degree-granting private universities and the establishment of branch campuses by foreign universities. It also permits private colleges

to conduct their courses in English, with the approval of the Ministry of Education.

4. University and Private university college Acts were amended to enable universities to be corporatised and to modernise the management of universities to meet the needs of society and industry.
5. The National Higher Education Funding Board Act (1997) was established to provide loans for both public and private students in tertiary institutions (Marimuthu, 2008).

In 1997, however, due to the economic crisis that hit Malaysia along with other countries in the region, there was a drop in the number of students opting to study abroad. Many overseas universities changed their business strategies and allowed the private colleges to run programmes entirely from Malaysia (3+0 degree programmes), so that students did not need to go overseas. As a result of the 3+0 programme, the Malaysian Government set up the National Accreditation Board (LAN) to ensure that the courses offered by the private colleges met the requirements set by the universities abroad to run their programmes (Yonezawa, 2007).

The Malaysian Government also approved four categories of private higher education in Malaysia: private colleges, private universities, private university colleges, and branch campuses (Tham, 2013b). Private colleges are not allowed to offer their own degrees but are allowed to conduct courses which enable students to sit various examinations to obtain professional qualifications, some of which are approved by reputable overseas universities, in such areas as accounting, engineering and law (Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005). Private universities are made up of private university college and branch campuses. The term private university college is used for reputable private colleges that have been upgraded to private university status and are able to confer their own degrees. Branch campuses are overseas universities which opened campuses in Malaysia. To the best of my knowledge, the recent updated statistics regarding the number of private institutions offering higher education has continued to rise, and on 31 May 2011, it was reported that a total of 25 private universities, 22 private college universities, 5 branch campuses and 403 private colleges

were registered with the Private Higher Education Institution Management Sector (PHEIMS) (Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), 2011, p. 6).

Private higher education is very popular among those Malaysians who are ethnically non-*Bumiputera* [Malays]. According to McBurnie and Ziguras (2001), 90% of the students enrolled in private Malaysian institutions are Chinese and Indian Malaysian citizens. The number of students enrolled in private institutions increased from 35,600 in 1990 to 203,000 in 2000 (Lee, 2004), and in 2011, the number rose to 478,924 students, which included 62,705 international students (Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), 2011, p. 6). In 2014, it was reported that 30-40% of the enrolment were international students and the increased international enrolment was on an average of 16% every year, with large numbers coming from China, Indonesia and the Middle East (Khalid, 2014, p. 1).

1.2.3 Factors which have encouraged the growth of private universities or private higher education in Malaysia

The growth of the private higher education industry in Malaysia is attributed to a number of factors.

One of the reasons for the establishment of private institutions was to reduce the Malaysian Government's huge expenditure on sending sponsored students abroad to further their studies. According to INPUMA (2000, as cited in Marimuthu 2008),

In 2000, the Malaysian Government spent RM 2 billion to fund 30% of the Malaysian students studying in the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States of America, Canada and New Zealand. Due to the high fees and the cost of living abroad, the Malaysian Government decided to reduce the number of sponsored students (2008, p. 272).

The change from an agriculture-based economy to a knowledge economy (K-economy) to meet the challenges of globalisation was another factor that encouraged the growth of private education in Malaysia (Othman, Singh, Tin

& Sulaiman, 2012; Tham, 2013a). The new economic policy (1971-1990) was implemented because the need to eradicate poverty and to distribute wealth equally among the three different ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indian) in Malaysia is crucial to maintaining peace in the country. This policy was implemented after the racial riot, which took place on 13 May 1969 (Gill, 2005), when the Malays were infuriated by the economic dominance of the Chinese. In addition, Dr Mahathir Mohammed, the ex-Prime Minister of Malaysia, also launched Vision 2020 to gear Malaysia toward being a developed nation by 2020. One of the requirements in achieving this vision is the need to develop a knowledgeable workforce, especially in the areas of science and technology. The demand for higher education increased, especially after Malaysia was accepted into the World Trade Organisation, where education is highly valued (Othman et al., 2012).

The proprietors of private universities and colleges recognise the popularity of private higher education in Malaysia and the revenue it brings. Some of them have therefore been trying to attract international students, especially from China, India and the Middle East, to study in Malaysia (Tham, 2013a; Yonezawa, 2007). As a result of this business-oriented aim, the number of international students enrolling to study in these private institutions has been increasing; for example, the number rose from 5,635 in 1997 to 11,733 in 1998 (Lee, 1999). Based on an evaluation of the huge revenue this sector brings, the Malaysian Government made an announcement in 2002 to make Malaysia the education hub in Asia, competing with Singapore and Japan, each of which holds 2% of the market (Othman et al., 2012; Tham, 2013a; Yonezawa, 2007). In 2004, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) established four education promotion centres: in China; Dubai, UAE; Vietnam; and Indonesia. The 9th Malaysian plan stated that 100,000 international students are expected to enrol in higher education in Malaysia by 2010 (Marimuthu, 2008; Tham, 2013b). By 2010, the number of international students increased to 87,000 and “a target of 150,000 was set by 2015” (Tham, 2013b, p. 4).

The major reason, however, is the quota system of the Malaysian Government, which restricts the rights of Malaysian students of other ethnicities (e.g., Chinese, Indian and Indigenous groups) to enter the public universities. Private

higher education institutions “grew in response to the demand for higher education in the country, which was further exacerbated by the preference policy of reserving at least 55% of public university admissions for *Bumiputera* [Malay] students implemented in 1970 as part of the New Economic Policy” (Tham & Kam, 2008, p. 356). From 2002 to 2006, the quota system favoured the *Bumiputeras* even more, with “62% *Bumiputera*, 32% Chinese, 5.5% Indians and the rest, others, entering the universities” (Marimuthu, 2008, p.280). In addition, Malaysian Chinese students are prevented from furthering their studies in the Malaysian public universities, as the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) obtained from the Chinese Independent High Schools is not recognised in the Malaysian public universities, even though UEC is recognised globally as an entrance qualification for many tertiary educational institutions (Lee, 2011). Thus, private higher education is the major pathway by which non-*Bumiputeras* are able to gain higher education.

Since the principal customers of the majority of the private higher learning institutions are Malaysian Chinese students, it is essential to examine the impact of the use of English as a medium of instruction on these students’ learning from the aspect of assessment and feedback. Few studies have been conducted to examine the Chinese Malaysian students’ reactions towards their lecturers’ feedback in the English language. The majority of these students have been exposed either to Chinese or Malay as a medium of instruction in schools prior to furthering their studies in the private universities.

1.2.4 Assessment and the role of feedback in the Malaysian private tertiary education

This section briefly describes the general assessment and feedback practices in the Malaysian private tertiary education.

Although the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education’s directives through the Quality Assurance Division and the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (2007-2020) required that all academic programmes which include English language programmes have (i) clear and measurable programme learning outcomes, and (ii) quality assessment that is well-aligned with the intended

outcomes (Tunku Ahmad, Zubairi, Ibrahim, Othman, Rahman, Rahman Nordin & Nor, 2014, p.16), the lecturers from both public and private universities were still unaware of the requirements when designing assessment (Tunku Ahmad et al., 2014). It was also reported that the lecturers preferred summative assessment over formative assessment due to a lack of training and knowledge on the latter (Tunku Ahmad et al., 2014).

With the assistance of UK-experts, the Malaysian Higher Education Leadership Academy (a division of the Ministry of Higher Education) has recently developed modules and provided training for university lecturers to address the above issues of implementing effective assessment practices (Tunku Ahmad et al., 2014). However, these efforts were conducted in early 2013, after the data collection at the research site towards the end of 2010. Thus, the participants in this study were unaware of this initiative, as was I.

The study and role of formative feedback in the Malaysian tertiary context are limited because summative assessment is generally preferred and discussion of formative feedback has been limited. The few published studies that I located on the perceptions and roles of formative feedback conducted in Malaysia are discussed in Section 2.4.1.

1.3 The objectives of the study

This study seeks to achieve a number of aims. The first aim is to examine the nature and extent of contextual factors which may influence some of the Malaysian private university lecturers' beliefs and their practices for providing written feedback on students' written academic assignments, where English is used as a medium of instruction in a second language context. A number of studies (Carless, 2006; Chanock, 2000; Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2005; Shamshad & Faizah, 2009; Weaver, 2006) have indicated that the majority of students are unable to incorporate the feedback provided by their lecturers. Therefore, another objective of this study is to find out the extent to which the students incorporated the lecturers' feedback in their learning. A further aim is to consider the extent to which lecturers were able to gain extra pedagogical knowledge in the provision of feedback after receiving students' responses

towards their written feedback. A fourth aim of this study is to apply an expanded activity theory framework to the data gathered, with a view to identifying contradictions that emerge as a result of the different practices that are influenced by sociocultural contextual factors. The final aim is to contribute to the area of research methodology by investigating teachers' cognition, especially in the area of collecting data by think-aloud procedures.

1.4 Methodological framework

In this study, the beliefs and actions of lecturers and students from two faculties within a Malaysian private university were under scrutiny for a period of time. Therefore, an interpretive, embedded case-study approach is applied in this research.

Unlike the positivist approach, in which the researcher's role is to confirm or disconfirm theoretical hypotheses, the researcher's function in the interpretive approach is to inductively expand or refine theories during and after the data gathering (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013; Creswell, 1994). Blumer (1969) comments that people's actions are largely based on their thought processes, and so the focus of this approach is to analyse how individuals perceive the world and react towards one another (Bryman, 2001; Creswell, 1994). These perceptions and reactions are influenced by the context in which individuals and groups operate, as any institutional activity is subjected to constant change (Cohen et al., 2013).

This is a case study conducted among lecturers and students, in a specific context – a “bounded system” (Merriam, 1988, p. 9) – in two disciplinary areas, English and science, within a private university in Malaysia. Casanave (2003) encourages the use of the case study in the research of second language (L2) writing, as each specific context plays a role in influencing the beliefs of both teachers as readers, and students as writers. This study is an embedded case study, which means that it employs more than one sub-unit of analysis (Yin, 2003). The research setting involves two different disciplines. Each faculty's beliefs and practices of providing the written feedback are different from the other's. These studies enable the research to describe and analyse people's behaviour in the context within which it occurs. The central issue is feedback and how these two different settings

(that is, the two different disciplines in the research site) shape the beliefs of both lecturers and students regarding the value of feedback.

Here, reliance on using only one or two data collection instruments might lead to an invalid and inadequate interpretation of the findings. Therefore, it is necessary to use multiple instruments to collect, analyse and triangulate the data (Creswell, 1994; Duff, 2008; Hood, 2009). This study applied a multi-method data collection which included a survey, interviews and think-aloud and stimulated recall sessions. This approach allowed the beliefs, intentions and actions of teachers (and students) to be probed so that the researcher could reflect on, interpret and analyse the activity of the participants.

All the oral data collected were transcribed manually and participant validations were completed. The validated data were then analysed and coded thematically; the data were subjected to a process of constant comparison and contrast in order to facilitate a rich interpretation of the findings. Intentionally, no pre-conceived theoretical framework was applied to this process, as it was considered essential to 'let the data speak'. Only after the grounded analysis was conducted, did it seem appropriate to apply insights from a sociocultural perspective, especially the construct of a Zone of Proximal Development (for example, Vygotsky, 1978) and Activity Theory (Leontiev, 1981; Engeström, 1987). These enabled me firstly, to explain the possible causes of the lecturers' behaviour in providing certain types of written feedback, and secondly to suggest some ways of bridging the mismatches between the students' expectations of feedback and the lecturers' actual provision of written feedback in students' written assignments.

It is intended that this research may also stimulate other researchers to conduct similar studies in other parts of Malaysia and elsewhere, to contribute to the field of applied linguistics within the wider national and regional context. Finally, in addition to a greater understanding of the specific context, new insights and knowledge of the process of teaching and learning may promote a greater understanding of wider theoretical issues (Duff, 2008). Thus the case may be both intrinsic, in that it seeks to illuminate the particular circumstances of a given situation, and instrumental (Stake, 2005) in terms of theory development.

1.5 Significance of the study

My study contributes to the academic field in a number of respects. The first contribution is examining the extent to which contextual factors influence the lecturers' beliefs, pedagogical knowledge, and practices of assessment and written feedback, especially in a Malaysian private higher institution. Although students play an essential role in the feedback process, the students' views were seldom incorporated in the lecturers' feedback.

An important contribution of the present study is the attempt to bridge the gap between students' expectations, the lecturers' actual provision of feedback, and meeting the institutional policies. As it is well documented that lecturers were not trained to provide assessment and feedback, this study contributes by pointing out the value of examining the process of two-way communication between the lecturers and students. Through such dialogue, the lecturers' pedagogical knowledge in assessment and feedback is further enhanced after receiving their students' responses towards their feedback practices.

Another contribution is the expansion of the activity theory framework to resolve conflicts; these conflicts occur when a number of different beliefs collide due to the different practices that are influenced by differing sociocultural contexts. It is essential to resolve these conflicts in order to ensure effective collaboration between a number of institutions; in this way, effective education services may be provided for their clients (students).

Research methodology, especially in the area of applying think-aloud procedures in the investigation of teachers' cognition, is another area in which this study contributes to current scholarship. The data collection methods used to record students' reactions towards the lecturers' feedback, as well as the lecturers' reflections on their students' responses, are other areas of contribution.

1.6 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. This first chapter has introduced the motivation, objectives and significance of the study, the sociolinguistic national and institutional contexts, and the outline of the thesis.

The second chapter includes a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on the issues and controversies of using English as a medium of instruction, as well as theoretical views and controversies over assessment, written corrective feedback, and teacher cognition. Also reviewed are empirical studies on teachers' stated beliefs and their actual practices of providing feedback; students' responses towards feedback; and the lecturers' and students' perceptions of written feedback. Reviews on several aspects of sociocultural theory, especially on the Zone of Proximal Development and Activity Theory, are presented in relation to the activity of assessment and feedback.

Chapter 3 explains and justifies the methodological framework used in this study, including the research design, the research methodology, and styles and data collection methods adopted. In addition, ethical concerns, procedures and sampling procedures are explained. This is followed by an explanation of the way that the data was subjected to grounded analysis.

The findings of the research are reported in Chapter 4. The findings chapter is divided into two main sections. The first part of the chapter concentrates on addressing the research questions in terms of five main themes. The first is focused on the lecturers' beliefs about providing written feedback. The second concerns the convergences and divergences between lecturers' beliefs and their observed practices in providing the written feedback. The third aspect of the research concerns the factors that influence lecturers' beliefs about good feedback and the extent of these factors which in turn influence lecturers' actual practices of written feedback. The fourth examines the mismatches of the beliefs of students and those of the lecturers regarding the value of written feedback. The fifth and the final research question deals with the findings from eliciting the lecturers' reflections, if they would change or retain their feedback practices based on their students' responses. The second section of the findings

chapter presents the results of this study, which are then compared and contrasted with the existing studies reviewed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings from two sociocultural theories, namely Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the three different models of Activity Theory (AT) to identify (1) the gaps between the lecturers' and students' beliefs of the value of written feedback; (2) the reasons that may cause the lecturers to diverge from their pre-existing beliefs about good practices of written feedback; and (3) conflicts that may arise due to the different beliefs and practices of the lecturers compared with the institutionalised systems. In addition, the sociocultural theories were applied to the findings to explain how knowledge about assessment and feedback was shared and distributed among the different institutions of different cultures. Some suggestions were also provided to further improve effective collaboration between the two different institutions.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by summarising the findings; acknowledging the limitations of this study; providing a statement of its implications; and making suggestions for further research that might be pursued in the area of teacher cognition, feedback, and sociocultural theories.

CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter begins in Section 2.1 with a definition of English as a medium of instruction (EMI), and an exploration of the rationales and the challenges faced in implementing EMI, especially in a context where English is not used as the first language – which is the case in the private university investigated in the present study.

The focus then turns, in Section 2.2, to a review of teaching writing in higher education, followed by a review of studies on assessing undergraduate assignments in Section 2.3.

Section 2.4 examines theoretical and methodological issues relating to the provision of written corrective feedback in the context of universities where EMI is used, including Malaysia. In addition, it discusses the controversy around written corrective feedback, in relation to its value in helping to develop the language of writers for whom English is a second or an additional language.

Studies on teacher cognition are then reviewed in terms of the key theoretical and methodological issues in Section 2.5. Also, this section considers comparative studies on the teachers' beliefs as an aspect of their overall cognition and their actual provision of assessment and feedback. These studies address the complexities of teacher cognition, acknowledging the limitations of existing theories about what teachers believe and know. In addition to teacher cognition theories, studies of students' beliefs about effective feedback are presented in this section. The majority of the studies emphasise the conflict between students' and lecturers' beliefs about effective written feedback.

Through the review of literature in this chapter, it becomes clear that the mismatch between teachers' and students' beliefs about effective feedback could be reduced through the application of socio-cultural perspectives,

particularly the zone of proximal development and activity theory, which are presented in Section 2.6.

The final section of the chapter, Section 2.7, presents the research spaces which this study seeks to occupy, and the research questions which guided the investigation.

2.1 English as a medium of instruction (EMI)

This section begins by briefly defining English as a medium of instruction (EMI), outlining the development of EMI and explaining the rationale for implementing EMI in universities globally. Selected literature on the positive and the negative aspects of implementing EMI is then discussed.

2.1.1 Definition of English as a medium of instruction (EMI)

Platt, Platt and Richards (1992, p. 225) define medium of instruction as:

the language used in education. In many countries, the medium of instruction is the standard variety of the main or national language of the country. In multilingual countries or regions there may be a choice, or there may be schools in which some subjects are taught in one language and other subjects in another.

EMI in the present study refers to English as the main language used to teach other subjects such as applied science and engineering.

2.1.2 Development of, and rationale for, implementing English medium instruction (EMI) in institutes of higher education

The current language policy in many institutes of higher education and universities globally, especially in contexts where English is not used as the first language, is shifting towards implementing English as a medium of instruction (Tsui & Tollefson, 2004, 2007). EMI is becoming established in the Asian context, especially in tertiary education (Kirkpatrick, 2014). For example, in Japan, the universities are reportedly being obliged by the

government to offer 10-30% of their academic courses in English (Brady, 2008). According to Nunan (2003), English is used as a medium of instruction in Hong Kong tertiary education. It is also reported that EMI is increasingly favoured over Chinese as a medium of instruction in universities, as publication in Chinese is perceived as not being recognised internationally (Mok, 2007).

A number of factors have contributed to this worldwide trend, one of which is the impact of globalisation (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Coleman, 2006; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). For example, the spread of knowledge – especially in the areas of science, technology, and business – and the social and economic benefits that come with globalisation, promote the increased use of English as the global language (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997, 2005, 2006). Another effect of globalisation is that people are more aware of the importance of obtaining higher education through the medium of English.

The trend of ranking universities is another factor which encourages the implementation of EMI (Wilkinson, 2010). Currently, American and British universities are ranked as top universities, and many Asian universities, for instance in Hong Kong, China and Malaysia, desire to obtain the same status (Kirkpatrick, 2014). The concept of enrolling high numbers of international students in the universities to improve the rankings has further promoted the implementation of EMI (Kirkpatrick, 2014; Wilkinson, 2010). International students are also seen as assets to the university in terms of contributing to research and publications in the English language (Altbach, 2010), and as a source of income for both the university and the host country (Bolsmann & Miller, 2008). Because of the income generated from the higher education sector, many British and American universities have established branches in Asia, including Malaysia (Gill, 2005), where English is used as the medium of instruction (Goh, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2014; Van der Walt, 2013).

Another purpose for the introduction of EMI is to equip domestic students for the global employment market (Maiworm & Wachter, 2002), by improving their English language proficiency through the implementation of EMI in the universities (Aguilar & Rodriguez, 2012; Nor Liza Ali, 2013). Nevertheless, the

actual implementation of EMI in tertiary education is not an easy task, and the next section explains some of the challenges of implementing EMI.

2.1.3 Challenges of implementing EMI in universities

The implementation of EMI in universities involves the challenge of successfully integrating both language and content (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2013; Wilkinson & Zegers, 2008). To illustrate this point, some of the subject lecturers teach content in isolation from language. Studies demonstrated that subject lecturers were more concerned about delivering knowledge or the content aspects of the disciplines, while ignoring the language aspects (Clemente, Cots, & Arántegui, 2006; Cots, & Clemente, 2011; Dafouz, 2011). In another study, it was found that some content lecturers were reluctant to give students clear instructions, advice and feedback about their academic English usage, due to their belief that the responsibility for teaching English belonged solely to the English specialist. Instead, the content lecturers felt that they were responsible for delivering the subject matter (Jacobs, 2007). Furthermore, even though some content lecturers may be obliged to teach through the medium of English, they are unsure of the amount of English they should emphasise in class. Some lecturers may also argue that the undergraduates entering the university ought to have a sufficiently high English language proficiency to cope with the courses (Doiz et al., 2013).

Another major issue in using EMI is that students may be prevented from achieving their potential learning due to poor English language proficiency. For example, in the Malaysian context, even though English is taught to students in primary and secondary schools, the majority of Malaysian undergraduates are still unable to attain satisfactory English literacy (Naginder, 2006). There are a number of reasons that have contributed to the lack of English proficiency among Malaysians. It is documented that the Malaysian education system is examination-oriented and students are expected to perform well in examinations (Tuah, 2007). As a result, teachers focus too much on the linguistic aspects of grammar in English classes, which are tested in the national examination (Razianna, 2005). Consequently, although students may perform well in the examination, they may still be unable to apply their

knowledge of grammar correctly in oral and written forms (Ambigapathy, 2002, 2006). The implementation of EMI in Malaysian public universities, despite evidence of poor English language proficiency, presents major issues (Ali, Hamid, & Moni, 2011). One of the issues is that the students' learning potential may be hampered due to the lack of understanding of the subject as students may not be proficient in English. Another problem is that students may not perform well in their assessment when it is conducted in English. In the Malaysian private universities, students are expected to prove that they have attained a required level of English language proficiency, which is also a requirement in many English-medium programmes globally (Shohamy, 2013).

Another hurdle in implementing EMI is the cultural challenge (Bradford, 2013). According to Sapir (1929), it is impossible to separate culture from language – a point made later by Agar (1995) in his coinage of “languaculture.” The syllabus and methods of teaching, learning, and assessment differ from one country to another (Smith, 2004). For instance, in Japan, short term EMI courses in universities were based on an American model rather than on Japanese pedagogical practices (Bradford, 2013); the approach to teaching and learning in many Western countries tends to be learner-centred, task-based, and to involve critical and creative thinking. Students are expected to actively participate in their lessons rather than passively listen to lectures. However, the approach to teaching and learning in many Asian countries tends to be based on rote learning, the ability to memorise content and teacher-centred learning (Croese, 2011), which is also reflected in the Malaysian context (Koo, 2008; Lee, Hazita & Koo, 2010). Undergraduates are expected to respond critically after reading a text, but some studies have shown that the majority are unable to perform this task in English (Ahmad Mazli Muhammad, 2007). The expectation that students would be more independent in their own learning is not reflected in some studies of Malaysian undergraduates, as they seem to be heavily dependent on the lecturers (Koo, 2008). Overdependence on lecturers is thought to be largely caused by the dominance of teacher-centred learning in Malaysian schools (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003) and the cultural tradition of respecting elders. As noted by Fauziah, Parilah and Samsuddeen (2005), “the teacher is seen not as a facilitator but as a fountain of knowledge” (p. 90), and the concept of a learner-centred approach is perceived as “a

complete departure from the traditional teacher-centred and text-book driven teaching ... [and] independent learners do not seem encouraged in [Malaysia]" (p. 92).

2.1.4 Implications for the present study

The section above defined EMI, and explained the rationale and challenges of implementing EMI in the context of higher education. It is essential in Malaysia to examine the impact and challenges of implementing EMI to ensure on-going quality education, as the Malaysian Government aims to establish Malaysia as a major education hub in Asia, through the establishment of private universities. The implications of EMI for students' learning are vital; for example, if the learning is hindered due to their poor English proficiency, it is essential to address these issues and to provide solutions to overcome these challenges as students are clients of the private universities. Another essential reason to conduct the study of EMI in the Malaysian tertiary context is the on-going challenges faced by issues of implementing EMI policies in the universities. To the best of my knowledge, no studies have been conducted to examine the impact of EMI on student learning in the Malaysian private university context.

The next section explains some issues concerning the general teaching of writing in the higher education context and specifically the teaching of writing in English in the second language context in Malaysia.

2.2 Writing pedagogies in English, both in the global and the Malaysian context, where English is used as a medium of instruction (EMI)

This section firstly defines some of the key terms used in the teaching of writing in English, and explores the rationale of introducing writing for students in higher education, in both global and Malaysian contexts. The development of writing pedagogies in contexts where EMI is used is then reviewed as part of this discussion; this section provides an overview of some of the problems faced by students from diverse backgrounds in mastering university writing and the different approaches to responding to students' writing difficulties. Some of

the key approaches that have been used to teach writing at this level are then considered.

2.2.1 Definitions of English for academic purposes (EAP) and academic writing (AW)

A key term associated with the teaching of writing in the EMI context, where English is taught as a second language, is English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Hyland (2003b) defines EAP as “language research and instruction that focuses on the specific communicative needs and practices of particular groups in academic contexts” (p. 2); for instance, mechanical engineering or biosciences. Hyland’s (2003b) definition of EAP is adopted in the present study as a function to equip and support students’ English language needs where EMI is used (Hellekjaer, 2010; Knight, 2014). A number of language skills are introduced in an EAP programme; for instance, Academic Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing (AW) courses. As a subset of the EAP course (Gillett, 2000), an AW course is perceived as a solution for improving L2 students’ writing skills (James, 2010); for instance, students are trained to write critically in academic contexts and in different disciplines (Fatimawati, 2012) through EAP and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Prior to EAP, the function of the ESP course is similar to that of EAP, which is to identify and narrow the gap in overcoming students’ weaknesses and meeting the intended requirements of the academic fields or disciplines (Belcher 2009; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

2.2.2 The development of writing pedagogies in higher education in the global and Malaysian contexts

In the wider context, there have been considerable developments in what are considered effective writing pedagogies in the L1 context. The traditional approach to the teaching of writing was centred on accuracy and the application of grammatical rules. However, Emig (1971) highlighted the importance of the cognitive process of the individual learner. Hayes and Flower (1980) developed this concept further, by introducing a process writing approach, whereby students brainstorm ideas through pre-writing activities and edit multiple drafts

before submitting the final version of the text (Hayes & Flower, 1980). The assignment may be revised several times, both independently and after exchanging drafts with peers, or as a result of student-teacher conferences. Since 1980, there have been various approaches to process writing. In one of the approaches, students were encouraged to express their ideas using their own voice and to consider their readers when writing (Clark, 2012). Writing pedagogies in the L2 context were heavily derived from the writing pedagogies of process writing from the L1 context (Pennington, 2013).

Nevertheless, through research it was suggested that the language needs of students from the L2 context differ from the language needs of L1 students, based on comparative studies on the different types of errors committed by the students (Hyland, 2003a; Silva, 1993, 2001). It was suggested that the L2 students' errors were mainly caused by their cultural background and the interference of the mother tongue (Connor, 1996, 2001, 2002, 2004; Kaplan, 1966; Leki, 1997; Matsuda, 1997). Thus, the approaches to teaching process writing in the second language context were designed to equip L2 students with relevant writing strategies.

Process writing approaches, both in L1 and L2 contexts, were heavily influenced by cognitive psychology. The main emphasis of cognitive psychology was the focus on the individual student's thinking process and how the student's interest and motivation for writing were formed. However, the notion of emphasising the student's individual thinking process was challenged by a number of L2 writing researchers, because the role of social and cultural factors in influencing students' thinking and writing cannot be ignored (Bizzell, 1983; Bruffee, 1984; Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland, & Warschauer, 2003; Mesana, 2004). Based on socio-cultural perspectives, knowledge is perceived to be distributed among the members of a community (Vygotsky, 1978). To illustrate this point, the different academic fields require different forms of texts in terms of discourse, forms and structure of writing. For example, the genre of laboratory reports in the field of mechanical engineering is different from that in the field of biosciences.

A more recent approach to the teaching of writing in L2 contexts has termed writing “as a form of social practice” (Wette, 2014, p. 60), which incorporates sociocultural perspectives through genre approaches. Genre approaches involve teaching students to write different types of text based on the expectations associated with specific academic fields (Wette, 2014). The focus of the genre approach is to provide students with writing strategies that help them to understand patterns/organisation and why certain texts are constructed in a particular manner (Hyland, 2007). Another aspect of the current sociocultural approach in the teaching of writing is the practice of facilitating collaborative interaction among students (Clark, 2012) through group work, where knowledge is co-constructed. For example, students are placed either in pairs or groups to analyse sample or model essays and to discuss the process of constructing specific texts. Process and genre-based writing approaches have been incorporated into a number of ESP, EAP and AW courses, to meet L2 students’ language needs, both in the global and the Malaysian context. Genre is used as a tool to assist students to become more familiar with the different types of discourse associated with various fields (Coffin, 2006; O’Halloran, 2004).

2.2.3 Issues of writing pedagogy in tertiary education contexts

A number of serious issues were identified in terms of the L2 writing pedagogy, both in the general and in the Malaysian tertiary context. One of the major criticisms of writing pedagogy in L2 contexts is the bias of one culture over other cultures. Breeze (2011) emphasised that the English writing requirements in a university of one country may differ from the English writing requirements of a university in another country. For instance, the English writing requirements of a university in the UK would differ from those in a university in the US, and neither of these conventions may be entirely applicable in other contexts. In addition, Breeze (2011) pointed out that the writing pedagogy – especially in textbooks – is dominated by Western academics, and ‘ideal’ writing is based on Western philosophical traditions, where the ability to argue ideas and to be direct is considered to be good academic authorship. Thus, writings that do not conform to Western perceptions of good writing may be considered to be flawed. In reality, the majority of non-native English-speaking students

are trained to write according to the standards of their own cultures, which hold different views of what constitutes good writing. The Chinese writing framework, for instance, has long emphasised the Confucian ideals of being indirect, benevolent, and loyal to tradition and of keeping social harmony (Cai, 1993; Kaplan, 1972). As non-native English speakers and as international students studying in an English-speaking country, these students may face difficulties trying to meet the requirements of English-speaking universities in Western countries. The discourses are complex, and when students produce different writing styles which do not conform to the Western style of writing, they may be penalised, so that eventually their academic success is affected (Cumming, 2006; Leki, 2003; Silva, 1997).

The second issue is the debate regarding the effectiveness of academic writing courses and whether or not these courses are necessary. In the Hong Kong context, Hyland's (1997) survey indicated that the teaching of academic writing through EAP was essential to address second year students' English language needs and their confidence in learning English. In the same study, Hyland's (1997) students also indicated that they would like their subject lecturers (for example, in science and business management) to assist them, in terms of the language and discourse needed. Nevertheless, the ability and willingness of subject lecturers to assist students in terms of language was another issue (Hyland, 1997). It was suggested that perhaps both the English lecturers and the discipline lecturers perform team-teaching in meeting students' needs (Doiz et al., 2013).

The third issue of writing pedagogy concerns the EAP or ESP lecturers' approaches to teaching writing. One of the teaching approaches that caused concern among researchers included the focus on accuracy (form) rather than higher order concerns (content), both in the global and Malaysian contexts (Atkinson, 2002; Mesana, 2004; Ridhuan, Zulqarnain, Razol, Raja Ahmad, Abd Mutalib & Am Zairi, 2011). Little attention appeared to be paid to the other domains of compositional knowledge and skills such as content, organising ideas and the ability to express ideas clearly in writing, without ambiguity (Connors & Lunsford, 1988; Diab, 2005a; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). In the Malaysian context, the lack of time for the EAP/ESP lecturers to

guide students in their writing was another concern (Boon, Irfan & Foo, 2013). For example, the lecturers in NorShidrah's (2012) study were reluctant to encourage students to think critically as this is a time-consuming activity. The allocated time of three hours per week were reduced to two hours when students provided peer feedback on written drafts. One of the students in the study strongly indicated a preference to have more time allocated to the activity.

A perceived inability of Malaysian undergraduates to write effectively is another major challenge faced by lecturers. For example, the findings from the assessment reports from two public universities, from 2011 to 2012 (Boon et al., 2013), indicated that engineering undergraduates in a public university under-performed in their report writing in the ESP courses, compared to the other assessment components such as online written assessments, oral presentations and written tests. In terms of report writing, it was found that students performed badly in the areas of content and language, especially in relation to errors of grammar and vocabulary (Boon et al., 2013). In another study, it was found that despite eleven years of learning English in schools, the majority of Malaysian undergraduates were still unable to effectively compose academic essays in universities (NorAslah, 2009).

Three factors are linked to Malaysian undergraduates' poor writing skills. The first factor that causes poor writing among students is a lack of exposure to Academic Writing (Normazidah, Koo, & Azman, 2012). It has also been noted that the writing strategies acquired in secondary schools did not suit the writing discourse required in tertiary contexts (Ismail, Hussin & Darus, 2012). As a result, students were unable to cope with the writing demands in the tertiary context. For example, students were unable to organise their ideas in a cohesive way, and were unable to quote, paraphrase or use a referencing style (Rafik-Galea, Arumugam & de Mello, 2012; Shamshad & Faizah, 2009).

Negative attitudes among Malaysian undergraduates towards writing is another factor which has been found to contribute to an inability to write effectively, as students perceived writing as the most difficult skill to master (Krishnakumari, Paul-Evanson & Selvanayagam, 2010). For example, a study by Noriah et al

(2010) revealed that the majority of the students (45%) were apprehensive and highly apprehensive (10%) towards Academic Writing. In another example, students did not spend time improving their drafts (Shamshad & Faizah, 2009). Students were found to procrastinate in their writing and as a result, they produced writing of poor quality

Another important factor that is thought to contribute to students' poor writing is poor English language proficiency. For example, studies found that students' lack of grammar and incorrect syntactic structure prevented them from expressing ideas clearly (Giridharan & Robson, 2011; Noriah, Suhaidi, Intani, Mohd, Perumal & Indran, 2010). In another study, Nayan (2009) indicated that two groups of social science undergraduates lacked grammatical knowledge and were unable to identify proper subject-verb agreement of numbers and subject-verb agreement of persons. Other issues that contributed to poor writing skills among Malaysian undergraduates included the tendency to be dependent on their lecturers; a lack of reading habits; and poor reading skills (Noriah et al., 2010; Rafik-Galea et al., 2012).

2.2.4 Summary and implications of writing pedagogy for the present study

The section above explained the importance of introducing academic writing to students in the context of higher education, both in the global and the Malaysian context. It also discussed the challenges of teaching writing in tertiary contexts.

In the present study, especially where English is being used as a medium of instruction, the teaching of writing English as a second language is essential in equipping students with the writing skills that they need. Students are required to use the English language in all of their main assessments. The major issue is the likelihood that the majority of the students have not been trained to write academically in schools, and there is a lack of evidence for effective instruction in the university about the different genres and discourses required by different fields of specialisation. Secondly, the specialist English lecturers face a daunting task as their students, and the deans from the other faculties, expect the lecturers to improve students' writing within a short space of time. Thirdly,

all lecturers are required to meet the expectations of the different writing requirements of partner universities from different countries, while the lecturers themselves have their own perceptions of what constitutes good writing, based on their training (Connor, 1996).

All of the problems mentioned above cause a number of issues in relation to the assessment of written assignments, and in providing appropriate feedback to students. These are the foci of the present study, and each will be discussed in the sections that follow.

2.3 Assessment and writing assessment in EMI Contexts

This section presents a definition of assessment and writing assessment, and an overview of the functions of assessment in the L1 context of tertiary education. This is followed by a discussion of the development of accreditation and the practices of conducting outcome-based assessment in higher education contexts where English is used as the medium of instruction. Next, the lecturers' practices in conducting assessment and their students' responses towards the assessment especially in EMI contexts where English is used as a second language are discussed. As the procedures of conducting assessment are complex, some of the controversies in implementing assessment are then discussed in the wider context. This is followed by the controversies associated with implementing assessment in the context of Malaysian tertiary education.

2.3.1 Definitions and terminologies related to assessment and writing assessment, and the different types and functions of assessment in the higher education context where EMI is used

Assessment in higher education (as it is at other levels) is normally broadly categorised as formative or summative. The function of summative assessment – that is, to identify learning outcomes – was first stated by Bloom, Hastings and Madaus (1971) as summarising students' achievements, a definition that was widely used. Bloom et al.'s (1971) work was cited again by Brown and Knight (1994). In 2010, Cizek refined the functions of summative assessment as:

any test ... administered at the end of some unit of instruction (e.g., unit, semester, school year); and ... its purpose is primarily to categorize the performance of a student or system. (p. 3)

In other words, the function of a summative assessment in the tertiary context is to measure students' overall understanding of their course of instructions, at the end of a semester, often through a final examination. In a summative assessment, students are given a specific duration of time to write but generally not the opportunity to rewrite (Neff-Lippman, 2012).

On the other hand, formative assessment refers to:

the collaborative processes engaged in by educators and students for the purpose of understanding the students' learning and conceptual organisation, identification of strengths, diagnosis of weaknesses, areas for improvement, and as a source of information that teachers can use in instructional planning and students can use in deepening their understandings and improving their achievement. (Cizek, 2010, pp. 6-7)

One function of formative assessment in tertiary education is to evaluate and improve students' understanding of the subject matter in various disciplines. Formative assessment may be based on the writing of academic assignments in a number of genres; for example, argumentative essays, laboratory reports, tests and examinations (Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis, & Swann, 2003; Leki & Carson, 1994; Nesi & Gardner, 2012). Another function of formative assessment is to assist students in their learning through the ongoing process of assessment and the provision of lecturers' feedback (Black & William, 1998). According to Cizek (2010), formative assessment ought to encourage students to be more self-reliant in relation to their own learning. Formative assessment is also seen as a tool in assisting students in developing their academic writing (Huot, 2002).

The definition of assessment differs from one context to another, due to the different perceptions of the functions of the assessment (Utaberta & Hassanpour, 2012). For example, in the UK, Broadfoot (1999) suggested that

the emphasis on accountability and standards formed the definition of assessment as a “defining principle of English education policy in the late twentieth century” (Broadfoot, 1999, p. 2). According to Neff-Lippman (2012), the assessment types vary and are much influenced by different stakeholders. For example, deans might prefer to conduct summative assessment in order to save costs, while lecturers might prefer formative assessment because of the teachers’ interest in the individual student’s learning performance, based on the curriculum. The type of assessment also differs depending on the expectations of different disciplinary discourses, the expectations of different departments, and the policies of institutional gatekeepers, such as chief subject examiners (Baynham, 2000; Beaufort, 2007).

It has been claimed that in the Asian context, the local governments and the gatekeepers of higher institutions do not know how to conduct assessment in the EMI context to ensure the quality of the programme (Hou, Morse, Ince, Chen, Chiang & Chan, 2013). As a result, various quality assurance systems for higher education institutions have been set up for two purposes. The first function is for the government to ensure that both domestic and international students receive quality education for their money. The second function is to assist local institutions to enhance their ranking so that they can compete with other universities globally (Asia Pacific Quality Network, 2012). In the Malaysian context, the National Accreditation Board (LAN) was established in 1997, which functions as the quality assurance and accreditation agency for private higher education (Marimuthu, 2008, p. 273). LAN was later replaced by the Malaysian Quality Assurance (MQA) in 2007 (Marimuthu, 2008).

In the process of accrediting institutions of higher learning globally, the concept of criteria-based assessment increased in contexts where EMI programmes were taught (Ecclestone, 1999). The concept of criteria-based achievement refers to the process whereby students achieve the learning objectives or aims stated in the course structure and curriculum (Allan, 1996; Ecclestone, 1999). Despite the perceived benefits of this form of assessment to guide students in achieving the goals of the curriculum or the course structure, many practitioners do not have an understanding of what criteria-based means or what it implies in practice. Empirical studies have suggested that the majority of lecturers would

assess students' work subjectively, even though the lecturers might use criteria-based achievement (please see Section 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 for further details).

As the current study examines feedback on students' written assignments, I have adopted the following definition from Utaberta, Hassanpour and Bahar (2012) of writing assessment for this thesis:

the process of forming a judgment about the quality and extent of [a] student's achievement or performance. Such judgments are mostly based on information obtained by requiring students to attempt specified [writing] tasks and to submit their work to instructors or tutors for an appraisal of its quality. (p. 143)

The types of assessment in this study refer to criteria-based assessment and formative assessment as these concepts are fairly new in the Malaysian tertiary private education.

2.3.2 Lecturers' practices and their students' perceptions of the formative assessment

To the best of my knowledge, few studies appear to have been conducted which examine both the lecturers' practices of conducting general assessment in higher education contexts and the students' reactions towards their lecturers' assessment.

An empirical study by Collins (2010) in a private Turkish university revealed two divergent views of EMI lecturers regarding summative assessment. One group of lecturers mentioned that they were content lecturers and they were more concerned about assessing the students' knowledge rather than their English language abilities. However, another group of content lecturers felt that they were also responsible for assessing the students' English language proficiency, and they would deduct marks if students made errors in language. The students' perceptions in the 2010 study were that they were unable to express their ideas and content knowledge fluently, and thus they were reluctant

to write. However, the students in this study did not clearly mention their perceptions about being assessed in English.

Aguilara and Rodríguez (2012) conducted a study on the perceptions of engineering lecturers and their postgraduate students about EMI in a Spanish university. In a small section of the study that examined the lecturers' perceptions of assessment in English, the lecturers admitted that they did not use English to assess students in the summative assessment. Two reasons contributed to their reluctance to use English. The first was due to the lecturers' expressed lack of confidence in assessing the English language, while the second was the perception that the assessment of content was more important than that of the English language. The students, on the other hand, did not really indicate their responses towards the lecturers' decision not to use English in the assessment. However, students were unhappy with the lecturers' poor English proficiency during the lectures, and this affected the students' understanding of the content. Students were also unhappy with the lecturers' decision to not use code switching in class, but they were happy to acquire English technical content-specific vocabulary in class.

In the Malaysian public and private tertiary education context, the assessment conducted is based on the Malaysian Quality Assurance (MQA) and the Ministry of Higher Education's general outline of conducting assessment. The policies stated that the universities are required to design programmes which clearly outline and measure the learning outcomes and that the assessment is designed in parallel with the intended learning outcomes (Tunku et al., 2014). Nevertheless, these stated policies have never been fully implemented, as the lecturers in both the public and private Malaysian universities tend not to have clear directions about how to conduct assessment, as reported by Zubairi, Sarudin and Nordin (2008). The methods of conducting assessment also varied from one university to another. Even within a single university context, some lecturers are given the flexibility to conduct their own assessment, while others are subjected to the assessment requirements of their partner universities (Mohamad, 1999).

Limited studies have been conducted on the lecturers' practice of assessment in the Malaysian tertiary context where EMI is used (Tunku et al., 2014), with the exception of Chan and Sidhu (2013), Lee et al.(2010), Mohamad (1999), Tunku et al. (2014) and Zubairi et al. (2008).

The findings of Mohamad's (1999) study suggested that the Malaysian private university lecturers from the social sciences and education were exposed to, and applied, the theories of assessment more than their colleagues from the other disciplines in an EMI context. Overall, the lecturers' concerns about validating the grades outweighed the procedures of validating the test. The lecturers' emphasis on validating grades could have been influenced by the policies set out by the university, where a form of review or moderation was conducted to verify the grades provided. The lecturers were required to submit the assessment with the criteria for vetting purposes. Despite the policies to assist them in the process of assessment, the lecturers' practices of providing assessment did not match the best practices suggested in the previous studies on assessment. It was suggested that perhaps the institution's existing training on assessment was still inadequate to assist lecturers (Mohamad, 1999).

The lecturers' failure to conduct formative assessment was also revealed in Zubairi et al.'s (2008) research. In that particular study, lecturers in one of the public Malaysian universities that used both EMI and Arabic as a medium of instruction preferred traditional methods of using multiple-choice questions or essay questions. More recent assessment methods – for instance, the use of portfolio and demonstrations – were not highly favoured or practiced by the lecturers. Chan and Sidhu (2013), from Education Department of a public Malaysian university, advocated the use of online assessment to assist lecturers in their formative assessment process.

In another study, Tunku Ahmad et al. (2014) conducted a national study of 543 lecturers from 33 higher learning institutions in Malaysia, both from the public and private universities, to analyse their self-reporting practices in formative assessment. In the study, the majority of the participants were from applied science and technology disciplines, and from the social sciences and humanities. The study suggested that the lecturers used the assessment to

convey student performance using both written and oral feedback. The assessment methods varied from assessing group participation to alternative methods, such as, demonstration and observation. Students' effort, attentiveness, and language proficiency were taken into consideration by the lecturers when grading work. The study also indicated that the Malaysian lecturers did not have a clear understanding of the functions of formative assessment and they did not incorporate feed-forward in assisting students' learning. Thus, the researchers suggested that more training on formative assessment ought to be provided to lecturers. None of the studies stated above (Chan & Sidhu, 2013; Mohamad, 1999; Tunku Ahmad et al., 2014; Zubairi et al., 2008) incorporated students' perceptions of their lecturers' assessment.

Utaberta et al. (2012) compared their study of 23 Malaysian undergraduates studying architecture in a Malaysian public university with a survey done by Salama and El-Attar (2010), on Egyptian students studying in an Egyptian university, showing the differences and similarities in student preferences between several assessment processes. The findings suggest that the majority of the students from both countries felt that the assessment criteria were unclear and outdated, and that the assessment procedures ought to have been changed and adapted to the students' learning needs and current pedagogic trends.

In another study, Utaberta and Hassanpour (2012) examined the effectiveness of a criteria-based assessment model, which was developed by the researchers in a public university for an undergraduate architecture course. The finding suggested that although some lecturers may have marked according to the criteria provided, the lecturers chose to withhold the criteria from the students. Utaberta and Hassanpour (2012) suggested that perhaps the criteria should be made known to the students. It is also essential to clarify the assessors' expectations and apply the same criteria to all students, in order to be fair.

However, Lee et al. (2010) conducted a small-scale study on students majoring in English language studies, to examine their perceptions of the various assessments conducted by their English lecturers in a public university. The findings suggested that the university lecturers did not provide much feedback on students' formative and summative assessment, yet students were happy to

receive only the grades provided by their lecturers, passively accepting the grades and not requiring further feedback. Students perceived their status as submissive learners, while the lecturer was perceived as an authoritative person, especially in grading assessments. Grades were perceived by students as a measurement of the knowledge they had acquired, rather than a tool to assist them in their subsequent learning. The researchers implied that the students' views of assessment were not taken into consideration in higher education, so that they were often at a disadvantage, even though they were clients who were paying for their own education.

2.3.3 Issues in implementing assessment in higher education contexts

Some research on assessment in higher education revealed several controversial issues in EMI contexts. One of the controversies, according to Abedi (2011), is that assessment may be biased against non-native English students, due to the complex language structures used in assessment rubrics. As a result, the non-native English-speaking students might not understand the questions, and therefore be unable to provide the required answers. In one study, due to their low English proficiency and the inability to express themselves well, the non-native English-speaking students were awarded lower scores compared to their native English-speaking peers (Abedi, 2004, 2006).

The performance of these non-native English-speaking students was further threatened by the “one-size-fits-all” standards imposed on all students (Wang, Beckett & Brown, 2006, p. 313). As a result, the students' abilities were not taken into consideration but were based on certain institutional policies (Barkaoui, 2007; Behizadeh & Jr., 2011; Rust, O'Donovan & Price, 2005).

Other controversies surrounding the general issue of assessment involve perceptions of validity and reliability (Murphy, 2000), especially in the areas of applying standardised criteria in assessment. In Anson's (2000) research, the teachers' reactions to errors were formed subjectively; for instance, while some of the teachers viewed an error as minor, others viewed the same error as major. Connolly, Klenowski and Wyatt-Smith's (2012) study revealed that although the issue of standardised criteria and the concept of moderation were accepted

positively among the English, mathematics and science teachers in 24 Australian public schools, each teacher had his or her own interpretations of the standardised criteria. In the context of higher education, Baker (2010), Barkaoui (2007) and Sadler (2009) stressed that context played an important role in influencing lecturers' views of standardised criteria. In Sadler's (2009) study, students' work was assessed differently from one lecturer to another, depending on the lecturers' perceptions of "best practice" in conducting assessment. Baker (2010) investigated whether the different contextual situations influenced the way the examiners assessed teacher certification in Quebec, Canada. The examiners were provided with the same training and the same marking sheet, and the same text was given to the raters twice for different assessment contexts. The findings revealed that the scores provided by the examiners differed from one context to another, based on the raters' perceptions, which were influenced by sociocultural factors and different contexts of assessment.

Another controversial issue in using assessment is negative wash-back. For example, both teachers and students tend to focus heavily on selected topics which would be tested in the mid-term test and in the final examinations (Biggs & Tang, 2007; Brown, 2008; Cheng & Curtis, 2004; Gibbs 2006b). As a result, students selectively emphasised some topics to study, rather than studying all of them. This strategy defeats the main purpose of assessment, which is to assist students in gauging their learning progress (Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Sadler, 1998). Another negative effect of wash-back is that academics are hindered from reflecting on the effectiveness of their teaching skills (Shepard, 2006), because they tend to perceive and conduct assessment as an activity separate from the teaching and learning process (Biggs & Tang, 2007; Kaufman, 2008). If teachers were able to relate the outcome of student assessments with their own teaching skills, perhaps they would be able to improve their teaching techniques. Teachers could, for example, change their practices of providing feedback to suit the students' learning styles.

Another controversial issue is the lack of professional development among lecturers in conducting both summative and formative assessments. In North America, the findings of two extensive surveys conducted among pre-service university lecturers by DeLuca and Klinger (2010), and Volante and Fazio

(2007), suggested that the lecturers were not trained to conduct proper assessment. For example, the lecturers were not able to ensure the validity and reliability of the assessment and were unable to adapt the assessment tools. In the Malaysian context, the majority of lecturers are not trained to provide the necessary assessment (Mohamad, 1999). For example, it was discovered that there were inconsistencies in applying the rating scales in the assessment of students' written work in a public Malaysian university, due to the lack of standardisation (Wong, Mohd Sallehudin, & Thang, 2011). As a result of these inconsistencies, it was difficult to compare the scores awarded to students of different classes. Wong et al. (2011) suggested that pre-marking sessions ought to be conducted in order to train lecturers to standardise the scores, while samples of marked ESP assignments would be moderated by a group of appointed instructors.

Although Hattie and Timperley (2007) claimed that assessment is a tool to assist students in their learning, in reality the assessment conducted might not encourage student learning. For example, due to economic factors (for instance, government cuts in education funding, and the shortened length of courses), students could be disadvantaged as they were assessed through "objectified quantitative learning outcomes" (Kvale, 2007, p. 68). Another example is that student motivation for learning was impeded by anxiety about doing the examination, and of receiving low grades in assessment (Kvale, 2007).

2.3.4 Summary and implications for the present study

The section above presented a definition of, and an overview of, the functions of, assessment. This was followed by a discussion of both reported practices and the actual conduct of various types of assessment in higher education institutions where English is used as a medium of instruction, and in contexts where English is not used as a medium of instruction, both in the global and the Malaysian contexts.

It was essential to examine the impact and challenges of implementing assessment in Malaysia in order to ensure the consistent quality of education. In the existing studies which I have reviewed, it was reported that the majority of the university

lecturers were not trained to conduct proper assessment. The only study on students' perceptions of their lecturers' assessment that I was aware of indicated that they were satisfied with grades, and with minimal or no feedback. The submissive attitude of students towards their lecturers' grades and lack of feedback are issues to be addressed. 2.3.4 Summary and implications for the present study

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2.4 Feedback

This section on feedback is divided into two main sections. The first section seeks to define the term feedback and discuss some of the functions or roles of feedback in students' written assignments. This is followed by discussion of

some of the challenges and suggestions for providing effective written feedback with particular reference to EMI contexts.

The second part of this section focuses on a subset of written feedback known as written corrective feedback (WCF). Since WCF has sparked controversy in the relevant literature, most notably in the *Journal of Second Language Writing*, a number of issues and challenges in conducting WCF research are also discussed, with particular reference to EMI and non-EMI contexts.

2.4.1 Feedback in general

2.4.1.1 The definition and the purpose of the provision of feedback in general

Hattie and Timperley (2007) defined feedback as “the information provided by an agent (e.g., lecturer) regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding. Feedback is thus a ‘consequence’ of performance” (p. 81). In terms of assessing writing, feedback is defined as a reader giving several suggestions to the writer on improving a piece of writing. Formative feedback is defined as “information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behaviour for the purpose of improving learning” (Shute, 2008, p. 154). The writer is made aware of errors in their writing, which they will use as a guide to make amendments to the writing (Keh, 1990). Feedback in second language writing classes is deemed to be vital in assisting learners in their writings (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Hyland (2003b) stated that writers typically intend their texts to be read, and in the classroom feedback from readers provides opportunities for them to see how others respond to their work and to learn from these responses. This kind of formative feedback aims at encouraging the development of students’ writing and is regarded as critical in improving and consolidating learning (p. 177) thus enabling learners to reflect on their learning progress through the different stages of writings. Based on traditional views of formative feedback, the EAP lecturers were solely responsible for providing feedback to students for improvement. However, current approaches incorporate student-centred feedback, where students are involved in peer feedback and self-editing written work (Falchikov, 1995; Kathpalia & Heah, 2010; Mawlawi, 2010; Meerah & Halim, 2011; Paulus,

1999; Wang, 2014; Xie, Ke, & Sharma, 2008; Zhang, 1995), an approach also based on the constructivist perspective, which views knowledge as socially co-constructed (Lea, Stephenson, & Troy, 2003; Murphy, 2000; Nicol, 2007; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Scott, 2005; Yorke, 2003). Thus, contextual factors and students' prior knowledge and background are essential to learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

When incorporating a social constructivist perspective into their feedback, teachers should also ensure that what they say is meaningful and constructive, and that it assists students to self-regulate their learning (Burke & Pieterick, 2010; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Nicol, 2007). It is also said that the purposes of feedback could vary, based on the aims of the task, the learners' needs, the requirements of the institution and the different types of feedback paradigms applied (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Poulos & Mahony, 2008).

In the context of higher education, the main aim of formative feedback is to assist and increase students' knowledge and comprehension of their specific disciplines or fields through two methods. The first method involves direct and specific explanation of the areas that need to be corrected, while the second method involves suggestions and recommendations on how to improve students' weaknesses (Shute, 2008). Another essential purpose of formative feedback is to assist students to perceive and reduce the gap between current performance and desired performance (Lizzo & Wilson, 2008; Sadler, 1998). Another view of the functions of feedback, according to Coffin et al. (2003, p. 17), includes the clarification and justification of the assessment given and the recommendations to assist students to develop their writing further. All of the above points indicate that feedback is also seen as "feed forward," a term used by Carless (2006) to refer to the lecturer's use of the results from the feedback to incorporate various instructional methods, designed to help students improve their performances in their next assignment. The other terms associated with formative feedback include "corrective/negative feedback" and "reinforcing or positive feedback" (Meerah & Halim, 2011, p. 633). Positive feedback encourages students to be more motivated in their attitudes towards writing and learning experiences (Stern & Solomon, 2006).

The term “feedback” in this study is geared towards formative feedback, which is defined as information provided by the lecturers to assist their students in achieving their learning goals, and as a feed-forward in improving their grades in subsequent assignments. My definition of negative feedback includes highlighting all types of errors (i.e. content, organisation, referencing, grammar, vocabulary) without giving praise. Although there are many types of feedback – for instance, one-to-one teacher-student conferencing and peer feedback – the focus of this thesis is on the lecturers’ written feedback; that is, the “comments written on drafts and assignment papers” (Meerah & Halim, 2011, p. 633). Another term associated with the word feedback in this study is “effective feedback”. This refers to the feedback that students are able to actively engage with, understand, learn, retain and apply in their subsequent assessment (Handley, Price & Millar, 2011). Another aspect of effective feedback is that the feedback must be clear, encouraging, direct (Lindemann, 2001), and useful in regulating student learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). One of the crucial issues in the study of feedback is the students’ inability to utilise their lecturers’ feedback in the subsequent assessment, which is an important focus of this study.

One of the roles of feedback in writing assessment functions as a learning tool for students to improve their writing skills (Huot, 2002). Another purpose of writing assessment is to assess students’ understanding of the subject and feedback corrects students’ misinterpretations of the information (Black & William 1998). Feedback also functions as reinforcement tool for students to remember correct concepts through writing assessment (Devrim, 2013).

2.4.1.2 Issues in effective written feedback

Despite Hattie and Timperley’s (2007) claim that feedback is a powerful tool for assisting students to achieve their desired goals in performance, some research findings suggest that written formative feedback provided in the higher education context seemed to be ineffective in assisting students in their learning (Carless, 2006; Chanock, 2000; Crisp, 2007; Orsmond et al., 2005; Weaver, 2006).

One of the major flaws of feedback is that although formative feedback is supposed to assist students to improve in subsequent assignments, recurring errors are still apparent even though the lecturers have highlighted them. For example, Crisp's (2007) findings suggested that errors were still apparent in the 51 social science students' assignments in an Australian university, despite the fact that they had been corrected in the previous essay. The students in the study were not able to align their lecturers' feedback to match their learning needs. In another study, Handley et al.'s (2011) findings seemed to imply that students did not engage with the feedback provided by their lecturers. Other studies indicate that although students referred to the feedback provided by the lecturers, they were unable to apply the feedback to their subsequent writings either because it was too detailed and specific (Carless, 2006), or because they did not know how to use the feedback (Chanock, 2000; Orsmond et al., 2005; Weaver, 2006).

One of the possible factors which may contribute to the mismatch of effective feedback from the socio-constructivist approach is that formative feedback is perceived to be effective only when students are able to engage with it, with support of their lecturers (Rust et al., 2005). Students indicate their views about effective feedback to the lecturers and the lecturers incorporate these ideas into their actual provision of feedback. Another aspect of students' engagement is their willingness to assume responsibility for their learning, by correcting their own errors and by being motivated in the learning process (Harris, 2008; Zyngier, 2008). Handley et al. (2011) also imply that the students' willingness to be engaged in the feedback process was also influenced by other contextual factors; for instance, institutional policies which may hinder students' learning; the expectations inherent in the programmes/courses/syllabus; and the social expectations (for example, the students' expectations of their lecturers' feedback, their goals and their self-confidence in learning and the lecturers' expectations or requirements from their students). Handley et al. (2011) suggested that students cannot be forced to engage with the feedback provided by their lecturers. However, they can be encouraged to engage with the feedback, through support from institutional policies to promote students' learning and through the support from lecturers.

Another issue of providing formative feedback is concerning the foci of feedback, especially in the different fields in which students are majoring in. One of the debates is if the content lecturers should provide language feedback, which is based on the different genre requirements of different fields and feedback on the content areas (Carter, 2007). According to Hyland (2013a), the subject lecturers' willingness to provide feedback in terms of language was debatable. Writing is the main medium of assessment in higher education, and the ability to write well is essential for students to succeed in their university studies (Adler-Kassner & Harrington, 2010).

2.4.1.3 Summary and implications for the present study

The section above defined formative feedback and reviewed a number of issues in both formative and written feedback in the context of higher education where English is used as a second language. Although the purposes of formative feedback are clearly specified in the existing studies, the lecturers' practices of providing feedback seemed often ineffective in assisting students in their writing. To the best of my knowledge, few studies on written feedback have been conducted in Malaysia, especially among subject lecturers in a private tertiary context where EMI is used. In addition, the issue of providing feedback in terms of content and/or on language among the subject lecturers is another under-researched area in the Malaysian private tertiary context, with the exceptions of Perera, Lee, Khin-Win, Perera and Wijesuriya's (2008) study (see Section 2.5.6). Thus, this present study seeks to occupy the research gaps mentioned above.

2.4.2 Written corrective feedback (WCF)

This section begins by defining the term written corrective feedback (WCF) and a number of other terms associated with WCF.

The term written corrective feedback (WCF), a subset of written feedback, refers to either direct or indirect feedback on language issues in a student's work, provided in written form. Direct WCF means that the teacher provides corrections of linguistic errors (Ellis, 2009), while indirect CF refers to the

highlighting of errors with the expectation that the students themselves will find the answers to the errors and then self-correct (Hendrickson, 1980). According to Bitchener, Young and Cameron (2005), the process of providing indirect feedback involves either highlighting errors with or without the use of codes or specific criteria. Coded feedback refers to the type of feedback whereby the exact error is highlighted through the use of codes or cues. An example of coded feedback is where an error in tenses is identified as “T.” Uncoded feedback refers to the highlighting of errors through underlining or circling, without any guidance or cue to the type of error.

Hyland (1990) suggested using a code as a step towards minimal feedback. A code is created in association with the students’ errors; for example, errors on tenses are labelled “T” and logical development as “L” (p. 280). According to Hyland (1990), the usage of code to highlight errors has more advantages than disadvantages. The first advantage is that students are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning through their act of correcting their errors. Students also will not be discouraged by seeing many red marks on their written work. Another benefit is that the lecturers would not be overwhelmed with the huge task of correcting student errors. However, it is not easy to categorise students’ errors and some students may not be able to correct more complex errors for instance syntax and organisation errors. In order to overcome these two limitations of coded feedback, Hyland (1990) recommended to follow-up the written feedback with taped commentary to clarify any ambiguity. Another aspect of WCF deals with metalinguistic WCF, which involves detailed explanations of the students’ errors (Ellis, 2009). However, metalinguistic WCF has its disadvantages. For example, it may be difficult for content lecturers to formulate the feedback. Another difficulty of implementing metalinguistic WCF is that students may not comprehend the feedback. The final aspect of WCF is whether WCF is focused or unfocused (Van Beuningen, 2010). Focused WCF refers to corrections made to selected, specific types of linguistic errors (for example, preposition errors are corrected while the others are ignored), while unfocused CF refers to comprehensive marking or the correction of any or all types of errors. It is documented that the advantages of using focused WCF is that the students would improve further in their accuracy of correcting errors (Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008; Sheen,

2007). However, focused WCF also has its limitations as it has also been reported that learners find difficulty in applying the required grammatical knowledge in subsequent writing tasks. Similarly, unfocused WCF could also impede students' learning because there is no specific focus on the types of errors; as a result, students might not be able to learn as there is no specific learning direction for them. Finally, as will be noted below, a strict focus on correcting errors means that other issues – including where the learner has demonstrated language strengths or improvement over previous tasks – are overlooked.

The use of WCF in the present study covers all six aspects: direct, indirect, coded, un-coded, focused and unfocused feedback.

2.4.2.2 The WCF Controversy

The discussion on WCF has been a controversial issue; some researchers (Truscott, 1996; Truscott & Hsu, 2008) suggested that error corrections should not be the focus in the provision of written feedback as this act impeded students' learning process, while other researchers (Ferris, 1999; Chandler, 2003, 2004) suggested that the provision of error corrections was necessary. This debate arose because it was found that despite the provision of feedback in grammar, students kept making reoccurring errors and the effectiveness of WCF was being questioned. Another problem concerns the methodological issue as the contextual and social factors were not taken into consideration in much of the research into WCF. Contextual factors are important as students have different levels of English proficiency, different needs, and follow different programmes of study, etc., which means some types and approaches of WCF treatment are more appropriate compared to others in assisting students' learning.

Subsequently, more studies on corrective feedback have been conducted to investigate whether or not Truscott's observations were applicable in other contexts. Storch (2010) critically reviewed a corpus of WCF research and categorised the studies into initial and early studies (1980 to 2003) and current studies (from 2005 till 2010). The foci of the initial and early studies on the

former were various: the positive effect of direct and indirect feedback after revision of drafts (Ashwell, 2000; Fathman & Whaley, 1990; Ferris, 1997; Ferris & Helt, 2000; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Lalande, 1982; Lee, 1997); comparison of the effect of WCF and content feedback in students' writing (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Fazio, 2001; Kepner, 1991; Semke, 1984; Sheppard, 1992); and the impact of the WCF on students' writing and the outcomes of the various types of feedback on students' inaccuracy in writing (Chandler, 2003; Kepner, 1991; Polio, Fleck & Leder, 1998; Semke, 1984; Sheppard, 1992).

Storch (2010), like Ferris (2004) and Guenette (2007), concluded that the findings of these studies in the previous paragraph contradicted one another, due to the lack of conformity in the research design and data collection. For example, it was difficult to gauge whether the WCF provided was really effective and that students' accuracies in the following drafts were actually based on the WCF treatment. Ferris (2004) noted that some studies took into consideration preliminary drafts while others did not. Moreover, there were inconsistencies within the different foci of the error corrections: some took into account focused/unfocused/direct and indirect corrective feedback, while others did not. Ferris (2004) suggested that future research ought to be geared towards building stronger data collection methods, so that these studies could be compared.

Due to the inconsistencies of the research designs mentioned above, the recent studies (2005 to 2010) reviewed by Storch (2010) focused on the effectiveness of using various forms of WCF (Storch, 2010) to assist learners' interlanguage development (Bitchner & Knoch, 2010a & b; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen 2007). Overall, two major findings emerged from the recent studies. The first findings suggested that various forms of WCF did assist students learning English grammar. For example, Bitchener's (2008), Bitchener and Knoch's (2008, 2009a, 2009b) and Sheen, Wright and Moldawa's (2009) studies suggested that the focused written corrective feedback was beneficial to students in terms of grammatical accuracy. In Bitchener's (2008) and Bitchener and Knoch's (2009a, 2009b) studies, students in New Zealand contexts were able to retain the article and tense rules for a period of time. In another study, Ellis et al.

(2008) suggested that although there were no significant differences in the effectiveness of focused or unfocused feedback, they advocated focused WCF because students in their study had made improvement in their subsequent writing.

The second set of findings of the recent studies (2005 to 2010), most of which were experimental studies with control groups, suggested a combination of oral and/or written metalinguistic explanations with the various forms of WCF were effective in assisting student learning. In a study by Bitchener et al. (2005), a combination of direct correction with oral metalinguistic explanation was effective in assisting students to learn verb tenses and articles, but not in the use of prepositions. In another study, Sheen (2007) found that direct correction with written metalinguistic explanation was effective in assisting students in learning articles. Bitchener (2008) found that students performed better with oral metalinguistic explanation than they did with written metalinguistic explanation while other findings indicated that direct corrections with metalinguistic explanation were more effective compared to the indirect feedback (Van Beuningen, De Jong, & Kuiken, 2008). Despite the positive reports on the effectiveness of utilising WCF, Truscott and Hu (2008) insisted that WCF was effective only to a very limited extent. It was found that students were only able to amend their errors after receiving the WCF from the lecturers when they revised the draft of the particular written task. However, when students were given a new writing task, they reverted to the same errors and were unable to apply the feedback provided by the lecturers. Based on these findings, Truscott and Hsu (2008) concluded that the reduced number of errors in the revision of drafts was not an indicator of student learning.

Despite the positive aspects of the research designs conducted above, several limitations were still evident. The first limitation was the diversity of participants in these studies, so that the varying levels of proficiency in English amongst the students in the experiments were not clearly defined (Storch, 2010). Another limitation was that the techniques of testing the effectiveness of the WCF were questionable; for example, the grammatical items analysed were restricted to certain structures, such as articles (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008, 2009a, 2009b). Another limitation was that the majority of the

current studies were based on experimental methods, and because these excluded the issues of lecturers' beliefs and the associated affective factors in providing feedback. Storch (2010) recommended the need to include more qualitative research designs.

In the Malaysian context, limited studies on WCF were conducted in the private tertiary Malaysian context (Asiah & Ng, 2014; Nordin, Halib, Ghazali, & Ali, 2010; Yoke, Rajendran, Sain, Kamaludin, Nawi, & Yusof, 2013). Yoke et al. (2013) conducted an experiment to examine whether the use of technology, in the form of email and internet, was a better mode of assisting students in making corrections to their errors (in an academic writing course in a public Malaysian university), as compared to the conventional mode of pen and paper. The findings suggested that the students who received electronic feedback outperformed students who received conventional feedback. When comparisons were made between the first and the second drafts, it was found that students who received electronic feedback made fewer errors, in terms of sentence structure, grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, students who received conventional feedback did not make any significant progress in the second draft; for example, students did not make any progress in grammar and the majority of the students were still unable to make corrections to their sentence structure and vocabulary.

Asiah and Ng's (2014) study focused on the effectiveness of focused and unfocused corrective feedback in the areas of preposition use in engineering undergraduates' report writing in a public Malaysian university. The findings of the study suggested that both focused and unfocused corrective feedback led to improved accuracy in subsequent drafts. The students' ability to retain the rules of grammar was further strengthened when they actively collaborated with their peers in dialogue as they revised errors which had been highlighted by their lecturer. The study conducted by Nordin et al. (2010) will be discussed in detail in Section 2.5.5.

The studies above explained either the effectiveness or the ineffectiveness of the different treatments of WCF. Although the present study did not attempt to

restrict the type of WCF used by the lecturers, it aimed to elicit their beliefs about the effectiveness of the different WCF treatments used.

2.4.2.3 Issues and suggestions for implementing WCF successfully

A number of issues were identified in conducting the research in WCF, both in terms of theory and methodology.

The relevance of the debate on either withholding or providing WCF that was initiated by Truscott and Ferris was examined by Evans, Hartshorn and Strong-Krause (2011). Their conclusion was based on their stance that students expected feedback and that WCF assisted students in writing accurately from the linguistics aspects. However, the provision of effective feedback, whether WCF or other, still remains a central concern (Lee, 2013). Assessing the effectiveness of WCF leads to a number of issues; for instance, with how much feedback should lecturers provide students, and which categories of errors should be highlighted (Ferris, 2014; Lee, 2013). Another concern is the failure of students to implement the lecturer's WCF (Lee, 2013). Studies document that because students did not understand the feedback and could not apply it to their assignment, lecturers were led to believe that feedback was a waste of time (Truscott, 1996). Despite being demotivated and fatigued from having to repeatedly correct students' consistent errors, the lecturers continued to provide detailed and comprehensive feedback to students (Lee, 2008b, 2009). Part of the reason why the feedback was ineffective was because the lecturers did not consider the students' views about what they considered to be effective feedback (Lee, 2013). Hyland (2010) indicated that WCF was effective when students were "willing and motivated to engage with it" (p. 177).

Perhaps the most essential theoretical issue in the WCF research has been the lack of information on contextual and social factors (Lee, 2013; Goldstein, 2001; Hyland, 2010). These factors include the lecturers' beliefs and actual practices of providing effective WCF; the impact of emotional reactions and responses; the institutional policies influencing the lecturers' practices of providing WCF; the students' expectations and perceptions of effective WCF; and their responses towards their lecturers' feedback. In addition, from the

methodological perspective, contextual factors were not taken into consideration when the different treatments of WCF were provided (Guenette, 2007). Guenette (2007) suggested that comparison of the existing studies could not be made, due to the different research designs employed and the different foci of WCF in treating errors. Evans et al. (2011) noted the importance of considering categories of variables, such as learner variables, situational variables (the teacher's physical environment), and methodological variables (instruction and how the subject is being taught).

2.4.2.4 Summary and implications for the present study

The section above defined and reviewed the debate between Truscott and Ferris, and others, on the effectiveness of WCF, especially in the context of higher education where English is used as a second language. The review above suggested lecturers still provided WCF despite Truscott's negative perception. However, some inconsistencies could also be found in the studies reviewed. For example, the numbers of respondents is small and the majority of the methods used to gather the data in the studies are inconsistent in terms of the research methods and design used. For example, some of the WCF feedback was on focused WCF and some was on unfocused WCF. The samples in the studies chosen by the researchers still showed diverse students studying in different levels of education. Finally, research on teachers' beliefs in relation to written corrective feedback is still limited, especially in the Malaysian private tertiary contexts where EMI is used. The majority of the existing studies did not take into account contextual factors, such as lecturers' and students' perceptions of effective WCF. Thus, the present study seeks to fill the gaps mentioned above.

The next section explains some issues concerning the general definition of teacher cognition, lecturers' beliefs, and practices in providing written feedback in the context of private Malaysian higher education where EMI is used. Studies of student perceptions of written feedback are also examined.

2.5 Teacher cognition

Section 2.5.1 begins by providing the definition of teacher cognition. In studying teacher cognition, it is essential to study teachers' beliefs because they develop their own theories, "with a small t" (Atkinson, 2010, p. 13), which are influenced by various factors, including daily reflection on their teaching practices and experiences (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004), their previous experiences as students, and contextual factors such as the classroom context (Borg, 2003, 2006).

Sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 review empirical studies on (1) lecturers' beliefs about providing written feedback and (2) lecturers' beliefs and their observed practice in the area of written feedback, which focus in the areas of a) the purposes of providing written feedback, b) providing positive feedback to motivate students and/or highlighting errors c) the foci of written feedback, d) the effectiveness of written feedback and e) feedback which encouraged students' autonomy.

Section 2.5.4 presents some of the theoretical and methodological issues in the present teacher cognition studies, which needed to be addressed. One of the issues is that students' perceptions about the value of feedback were seldom taken into consideration in the process of assessment and feedback. It is essential to examine students' views of feedback and if there were any mismatches between the lecturers' and the students' views, it is essential to bridge the gap between the two to ensure successful teaching and learning processes. Section 2.5.5 presents empirical studies on students' perceptions of the value of effective feedback and Section 2.5.6 presents empirical studies on the mismatches of beliefs between the lecturers and the students about the value of feedback.

2.5.1 Definition and the theories of teacher cognition

Borg's (2003) definition of teacher cognition refers to "what teachers know, believe and think" (p. 81). He expanded the definition to include "cognition, knowledge (and its subtypes), beliefs, attitudes, conceptions, theories, assumptions, principles, thinking and decision-making" (Borg, 2006, p. 272,

italics in original). Due to growing research in teacher cognition, the definition and scope of teacher cognition has been further expanded to include abstract elements such as “attitudes, identities and emotions” (Borg, 2012, p. 11).

Theories of teacher cognition date back to the 1970s and the work of Jackson (1968), who employed descriptive methods to examine the interaction between teachers’ thoughts, decisions, actions and reflections. In the two decades after Jackson’s (1968) research, research on teacher cognition accumulated. Clark and Peterson (1986) reviewed 50 studies conducted at primary and secondary schools, and categorised the research on teacher cognition into three components: teachers’ planning, teachers’ interactive thoughts and decisions, and teachers’ theories and beliefs. Teacher cognition theory from the early stages emphasised that teachers’ goals and their conduct in class were influenced by their beliefs and knowledge about factors which either encourage or impede students’ learning, such as knowledge of teaching and learning (pedagogical knowledge), the knowledge of the subject matter (Shulman, 1987), and the relationship with the learner (Calderhead, 1996; Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2002; Wittrock, 1986).

Another aspect of teacher cognition theory concerns the sources which influence teachers’ beliefs and conduct in class. Woods (1996) was one of the first researchers to study the sources of language teachers’ beliefs, based on their assumptions and their knowledge of lesson planning and decision making in class. Woods (1996) stressed the importance of a teacher’s daily teaching experience as a source in developing pedagogical knowledge. Woods observed that teaching experiences enhanced and shaped the teachers’ existing knowledge of pedagogies, as well as their beliefs about good approaches to teaching and learning. Woods’ (1996) observation was further researched and expanded by other researchers (Borg, 2003, 2006, 2012; Farrell, 2007).

The development of teachers’ cognition, their learning process, and their behaviour in class are interrelated and are influenced by a number of contextual factors (Borg, 2003, 2006; Frost, 2010). A teacher’s past experiences as a learner at school is one example of a contextual factor. To illustrate this point, Frost’s (2010) findings suggested that in the US, mathematics teachers’

approach to teaching was based on their experience as students, where students were encouraged to understand concepts rather than rote-learn. However, in Taiwan, the pre-service teachers' approach to teaching was focused on traditional methods (Tsai, 2002). Professional coursework for training students to be teachers is another contextual factor which shapes a teacher's beliefs (Borg, 2003, 2006; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). Despite the claim of some studies that students' beliefs about teaching and learning were set and therefore difficult to change (Calderhead & Robson, 1990; Zeichner, Tabachnik & Densmore, 1987; Zuzovsky, 1995), student beliefs may be altered through critical thinking (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). Students are encouraged to self-regulate and re-examine their existing beliefs by engaging with new ideas, introduced in the course through critical thinking. Borg (2006) summarised the factors influencing teacher cognition in Figure 1 below:

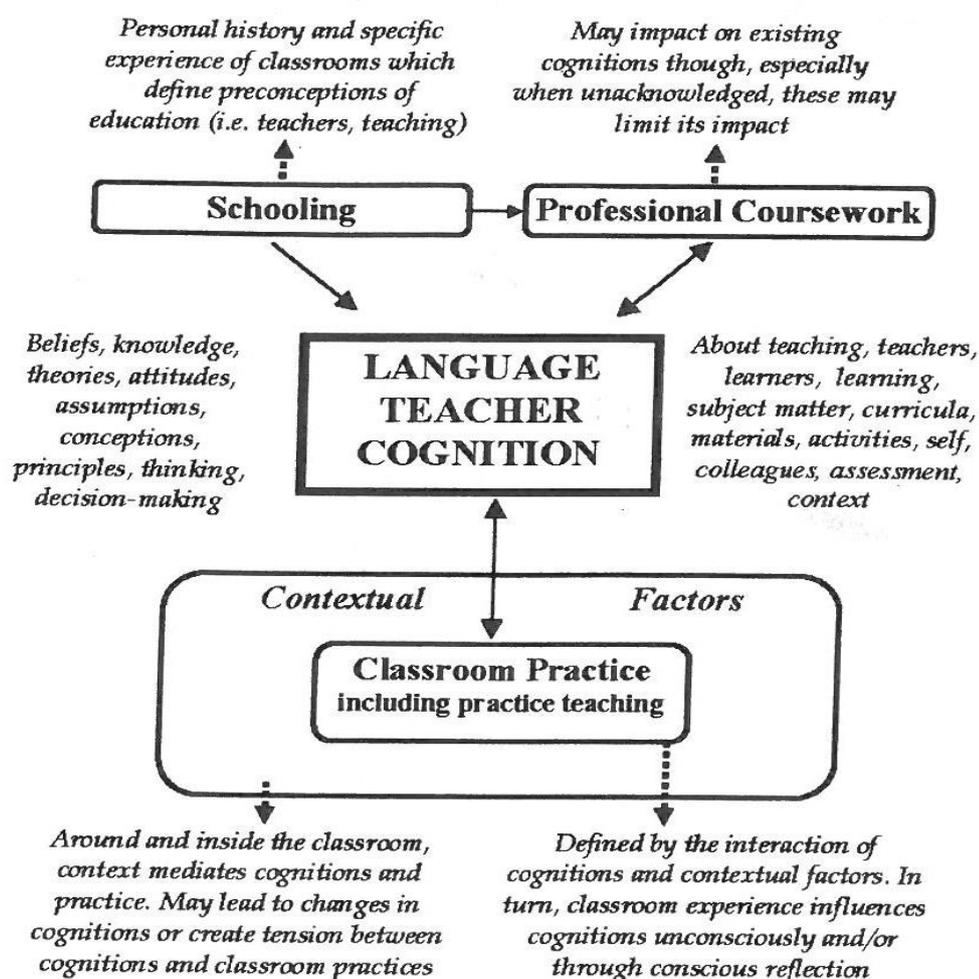


Figure 1 Borg's Cultural Historical Factors which influenced Language Teacher Cognition. From Teacher Cognition and Language Education (p. 283), By S. Borg, 2006, London: Continuum.

This diagram illustrates the influence of the contextual factors in developing language teacher cognition, for example, schooling, professional coursework and classroom practice. The language teachers apply their own experiences (both good or bad) as students in schools in their own classroom practices. Another influential area is through the teachers' professional coursework, to be trained as language teachers. The teachers might be influenced by some of the pedagogy knowledge gained through the training courses. Contextual factors for example, classroom practice, which include teaching practice and the classroom experience form the language teachers' beliefs.

In conclusion, current teacher cognition theories take into account the complex relationship between teachers' knowledge, beliefs and actions, their reflections on their own teaching, and the influence of contextual factors. Faced with such complexity, this study seeks to address the concept of teacher cognition by emphasising the role of contextual factors, such as governmental and institutional policies, situational constraints and the reactions of students, in influencing the teachers' actions regarding the provision of feedback. The next section presents empirical studies on lecturers' beliefs about providing good written feedback practices.

2.5.2 Empirical studies on EAP/ESP and subject lecturers' beliefs about providing written feedback

This section reviews empirical studies on EAP and subject lecturers' beliefs about providing written feedback in the following areas: (1) the purpose of feedback as justification of grades awarded or to promote student learning; (2) lecturers' self-reports and their observed practices in providing positive feedback and highlighting errors; (3) lecturers' self-perceptions of the effectiveness of their own feedback; and (4) lecturers' preferred foci of the written feedback.

In regard to the purpose of feedback, a study by Connors and Lunsford (1993) in the USA suggested that the feedback provided by subject lecturers was primarily to justify grades. The findings by Ivanic, Clark and Rimmershaw

(2000) in South Africa, which compared the practices of two categories of university tutors, were similar to those of Connors and Lunsford (1993). Ivanic et al.'s (2000) findings indicated that the feedback practices of the subject tutors aimed to justify the grades provided, while the EAP tutors considered it a means of assisting students to improve their writing. In the UK, 48 subject lecturers mentioned the importance of feedback in assisting student learning and in justifying grades (Bailey & Garner, 2010). In another study, design lecturers from a UK university stated that the role of feedback in assessment functioned as a form of motivation and guidance, and ensured the maintenance of professional standards (Harman & McDowell, 2011). In the Asian context, particularly in China, Tang and Harrison's (2011) study revealed that some of the EAP tutors in an EMI context perceived the purpose of feedback as aiming to improve student learning, while some EAP tutors considered it a means of measuring student achievements. In Hong Kong, subject lecturers indicated that feedback was essential in improving student learning in the disciplinary fields (Hyland, 2013a).

In terms of the subject lecturers' practices of providing either positive or negative feedback in the EMI contexts, studies suggest that lecturers provided a mixed reaction of both positive and negative feedback. For example in the L1 context, in Connors and Lunsford's (1993) study, it was found that EAP lecturers' practices of providing written feedback were more negative than positive. Hyland and Hyland's (2001) study in New Zealand indicated that the two ESL teachers' overuse of praise as an indirect method of implying negative feedback was not a good technique for assisting student learning. It was found that the use of praise to soften the impact of negative feedback was likely to lead students to misunderstand the true meaning of the feedback. Cardelle and Corno's (1981) study revealed similar results, where ESL students were misled through insincere praise in the initial drafts. As a result, the students did not improve in their subsequent revisions. Brophy's (1981) study indicated that positive feedback ought to be given only when students' work deserved praise, because misleading positive feedback did not assist students in their writing. The lecturers in Stern and Solomon's (2006) study indicated that their comments consisted of both personal and positive comments, as well as corrective feedback. In the Chinese context, Tang and Harrison (2011)

indicated that the EAP tutors who held traditional views of assessment strongly believed the importance of providing feedback which focused on student errors. The Chinese tutors who advocated a student learning-centred approach believed in being balanced in their feedback, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses.

EAP tutors in Tang and Harrison's (2011) study advocated the use of written corrective feedback. The EAP tutors in this study were not sure of the effectiveness of their feedback or whether the students applied the feedback in subsequent assignments. These findings were similar to those of other studies, which implied that science lecturers perceived their feedback to be ineffective in the EMI context, both in the L1 and L2 contexts. For example, in the L1 context, Higgins, Hartley and Skelton's (2002) study revealed that science tutors considered it a waste of time to provide detailed feedback for average students, as these students were not interested in receiving it. The outcome of this study was similar to the findings on tutors in two British universities in the UK (Glover & Brown, 2006), and to the pure science lecturers in Hyland's (2013a) Hong Kong study, where students were perceived to be uninterested in the feedback provided.

The EAP tutors in Tang and Harrison's (2011) study indicated that the focus of their feedback was based on contextual constraints. For example, the choice of either focusing on error correction, or content and organisation, was based on the Chinese tutors' beliefs about teaching and learning. One of the Chinese tutors chose to focus on content and organisation feedback due to time constraints, and he felt that the students were more interested in obtaining a grade than receiving feedback. Another Chinese tutor felt that the students' English proficiency was at an advanced level and therefore chose to focus on content feedback rather than language feedback. Despite the contextual constraints, the majority of the Chinese tutors firmly believed in the importance of written corrective feedback, due to Chinese cultural beliefs whereby teachers are perceived as authoritative figures and the teacher's responsibility is to correct errors.

The various studies conducted in different contexts seemed to imply that the lecturers' preferences for certain criteria depended on their beliefs about what constitutes good written assignments. For example, the lecturers from the pure sciences in Hyland's (2013a) study in an EMI context where English was used as a second language emphasised the importance of fulfilling the criteria stated in the outcomes of the programme; that is, of the students' understanding of scientific knowledge. Thus, the students' abilities to argue and discuss the information were perceived as unimportant. Moreover, even though the science lecturers acknowledged the importance of writing in accordance with the discipline's specific requirements, they believed that the task of guiding students to write belonged solely to the academic writing lecturers.

A study conducted on 15 Malaysian English school teachers and 20 Malaysian ESL public university lecturers to examine their self-reported practices of providing written feedback revealed that the lecturers and teachers perceived that the purpose of assessment was not merely to provide a grade or score, but also to assist students in their learning in the form of feed-forward to guide students' writing (Mukundan & Ahour, 2009). Both the lecturers and the teachers also felt that content and organisation were essential, followed by vocabulary and cohesion. Lower order concerns were perceived by both lecturers and teachers as less important. However, in terms of the differences of the practices of providing the written feedback, the lecturers preferred to provide holistic scoring or impression marking, while schoolteachers preferred analytical scoring. The reasons provided by the lecturers for their preferences included ease in marking, validity of the assessment, and because their methods were less time-consuming, while the teachers indicated the importance of explaining to students their limitations so that they could continue to improve. The researchers suggested that an analytical scoring rubric could be considered as an ideal instrument for evaluating student writing samples, as compared to impressionistic scoring (Mukundan & Ahour, 2009).

All the studies mentioned above did not examine if the lecturers' beliefs were put into practice. The next section reviews studies about teachers' beliefs and their observed practices about providing written feedback.

2.5.3 Empirical studies about teachers' beliefs and their observed practice in the area of assessment and written feedback in L1 and EMI contexts

This section reviews some empirical studies on English and subject lecturers' beliefs and observed practices in written feedback. The majority of the studies reviewed implied that there were more divergences than convergences in the following areas: (1) the purpose of feedback as justification of grades awarded or to promote student learning; (2) the lecturers' self-reports and their observed practices of providing positive feedback and highlighting errors; (3) the lecturers' foci of the written feedback; (4) the process of grading in the assessment; and (5) the practice of encouraging student autonomy. A small number of studies indicated convergences in the teachers' beliefs and their observed practice in terms of (1) the lecturers' foci of the written feedback; and (2) the lecturers' self-reports and their observed practices of providing positive feedback and highlighting errors.

The majority of the studies reviewed revealed both divergences and convergences in lecturers' beliefs and in their observed practices regarding the purposes of providing feedback in the L1 context. For example, in an Australian context, although 16 subject lecturers believed that the aim of feedback was to assist student learning, they were observed trying to improve students' grades. The lecturers also did not expect the students to improve and resubmit their assignments (Orrell, 2006). In Li's (2012) study, despite the tutors' beliefs that the primary role of feedback was to help students improve their writing, the observed practices of the tutors revealed that the main function of feedback was to justify the grades for three audiences: themselves, the lecturers and the students.

Other forms of divergence in the teachers' beliefs and practices were evident in the provision of positive and/or negative comments in the L1 context. For example, a study by Read, Francis and Robson (2005) focused on 50 history lecturers from 24 UK universities, using two sample history essays. The study revealed that the lecturers' beliefs diverged from their actual practices when providing comments on the quality of the essay writings. Although grades were awarded on the basis of quality, structure and analysis, several of the comments

were contradictory. Thus, the reliability of the lecturers' assessment was questionable.

Similar findings from other research also revealed that both the EAP and subject lecturers tended to focus their feedback on lower order concerns in the L1 context (Connors & Lunsford, 1988; Orrell, 2006). For example, in Orrell's (2006) study, instead of concentrating on the students' ideas, the subject lecturers' main focus was on lower order concerns. Another study illustrated that the lecturers' major focus of correction was on micro levels (grammar, vocabulary and spelling), while the focus on the macro or holistic levels (organisation) were limited (Stern & Solomon, 2006).

Another form of divergence could be observed through grading and assessment in the L1 context. Although the grading was standardised and influenced by the external moderators, the examiners used their discretion, based on their beliefs, when they were marking. Examiners were trying to keep as close as possible to the requirements of the curriculum (Read et al., 2005). In Li's (2012) study, during the stimulated recall session, the tutors admitted that it was difficult to award grades and also maintain consistency in awarding grades.

The beliefs and practices of encouraging ESL students' independence in correcting their own errors reflect forms of divergence in the L2 context. For example, in Lee's (2009, 2011) studies, it was found that society's expectation that English teachers would correct student errors meant that teachers did not encourage students to be responsible for correcting their own. In another study (Min, 2013), it was revealed that one writing instructor's beliefs and practices changed as she reflected on her practice of providing written comments. Initially, the teacher perceived that she was solely responsible for her students' feedback and for correcting their errors. However, after she had read previous studies about writing and feedback, she changed her feedback approaches, encouraging student autonomy by facilitating peer feedback. Her strategy of focusing intently on student errors was modified, so that she could concentrate on assisting students in communicating ideas clearly through writing.

There were two major convergences between lecturers' beliefs and their actual practices in the L1 context. The first type of convergence is found in the specific methods used to provide feedback. For example, Ferris' (2014) study revealed that the writing instructors' self-reports, providing a mixture of content, language and focused corrective feedback in the survey, matched the observed practices of the teachers. Another self-reported practice by the instructors, which converged with the observed practice, could be seen in the provision of higher order concerns, which focused on content and ideas, where the comments on the content were lengthy. The self-report and the observed practice of lecturers providing suggestions for improvement rather than highlighting errors also converged. In Li's (2012) study, the lecturers' beliefs about providing feedback on errors in grammar converged with their observed practices.

The second convergence could be seen in the lecturers' beliefs and practices about providing either positive or negative comments in the L1 context. For example, Li's (2012) study indicated that the lecturers were consistent in providing positive comments, which reflected their belief in withholding negative feedback.

A recent mixed method design study investigated English writing instructors' reported beliefs and their actual practices in terms of oral, written and facilitated peer feedback among students in the L1 context (Ferris, 2014). Two universities and six colleges in the United States participated in the study, which revealed that the majority of the lecturers' beliefs about providing feedback were consistent with their practices (Ferris, 2014). The teachers' beliefs in providing a mixture of content, language and focused corrective feedback matched the observed practices of the teachers. Another self-reported practice by the instructor, which converged with the observed practice, could be seen through the provision of higher order concerns, which focused on content and ideas, where the comments on the content appeared to be lengthy. The beliefs and the observed practice of lecturers providing suggestions for improvement, rather than highlighting errors, also converged.

2.5.4 Research spaces in the study on teacher cognition

A number of issues are identified in the theories of teacher cognition reviewed in the previous sections. These issues are related to: the lack of studies on contextual factors that shape teachers' beliefs and practices in the provision of assessment and written feedback; the limited studies on teachers' beliefs about encouraging students to be responsible for their learning; mismatches between the teachers' beliefs and their observed practices; and methodological issues in the research of teachers' beliefs.

The first gap is the lack of research on teacher cognition in the area of feedback and writing. The majority of teacher cognition studies reviewed by Borg (2006) are focused on twenty-two studies on teaching of grammar and a total of seven studies were focused on the teaching of literacy. Studies on the teaching of writing and feedback were limited with the exception of the teaching of the process writing approach (Cumming, 2006; Shi & Cumming, 1995; Tsui, 1996), and the empirical studies on the beliefs and actual practices of providing written feedback (Yigitoglu & Belcher, 2014).

The second concern pertains to the limited studies on the contextual factors that influence teachers' beliefs and decisions when providing written feedback (Lee, 2014) in the L2 context. The teachers in Lee's (2009) study were heavily influenced by contextual factors; for instance, despite their conviction that error correction was futile, teachers still provided corrections because the students preferred them to. Other contextual factors included the limitations within the institution which may have prevented teachers from performing as they would like to (Lee, 2011). In Hong Kong, such limitations included long teaching hours, heavy workloads, and lack of teacher autonomy. Some teachers were faced with the daunting task of improving students' language proficiency within a very short time (Lee, 2011).

Limited studies have also been conducted on institutional policies and practices that influence language teachers' cognition and beliefs in the area of assessment and written feedback, with the exception of studies conducted by Bailey and Gardner (2010), Li (2012), and Orrell (2006). Bailey and Gardner's (2010)

findings suggested that the institutional policies and practices in one UK University prevented the lecturers from providing written feedback which would assist student learning. The examples of policies and practices within the institution included the pressures and expectations of the quality assurance agency; the standardised marking criteria and schemes; the vague practices of the other lecturers across and within the different faculties; and the different requirements of feedback in the form of score sheets. Orrell's (2006) findings were similar to those of Bailey and Gardner (2010), in terms of the influence of policies on the lecturers' practices of providing written feedback. As a result of the policies formed by the institution, the lecturers were forced to provide feedback which did not encourage reflection and learning, but were designed instead to ensure that students passed their examinations. Likewise, Li's (2012) findings suggested that the assessment policies in a New Zealand university determined the guidelines for assessment and the division of labour (i.e. the lecturer rather than the tutor has the authority to finalise the grades) actually hindered the application of suggested and current feedback, such as assessment dialogues.

There is a lack of studies on lecturers' beliefs about encouraging student independence in learning, with the exception of studies conducted by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2011), Tang and Harrison (2011) and Yoshiyuki (2011). The findings of all three studies suggested that the beliefs and observed practices were divergent, due to contextual factors. For example, despite the Omani lecturers' beliefs in Borg and Al-Busaidi's (2011) study that students needed to be encouraged to be independent in learning, in reality, the lecturers were hindered from putting their beliefs into practice because the students were very dependent on them. Japanese teachers in Yoshiyuki's (2011) study were restricted by education policies that emphasised the importance of performing well in examinations, and this prevented teachers from encouraging students to be responsible for their own learning. Tang and Harrison's (2011) findings indicated a mixture of responses in terms of encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. Although the majority of the EAP tutors believed in the importance of guiding students through the provision of WCF, they were also aware that providing answers to student' errors could be detrimental to their learning process. The tutors were also confident that their

students were able to correct their own errors because they had advanced English language proficiency.

Another essential issue is the need to investigate the relationship between beliefs and practices, because the teachers' stated beliefs and their observed practices very often do not match. One of the causes of the divergence between beliefs and practices is cognitive dissonance (Lee, 2008b, 2009; Li & Barnard, 2011; Li, 2012; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). Cognitive dissonance refers to mental confusion, which may then lead to an emotional reaction (Festinger, 1957). Cognitive dissonance can be caused by a number of factors. One of the causes is contradictory knowledge; for example, new rules and regulations for providing assessment might be imposed by an institution, but these are not made clear to the lecturers. The lecturers then apply their own knowledge, based on both their own experiences of receiving feedback as students, and on their teaching experiences. However, when the lecturers discover that their practices of providing feedback differ from those of their colleagues, cognitive dissonance is the result. Cognitive dissonance may arise because of new information: pedagogical understanding has always been evolving along with the latest teaching techniques – a good example is the use of information technology in education. However, there may be some lecturers who refuse to change their teaching methods (Kagan, 1992; Richards, 1996), because they resent the challenge to their personal beliefs about methods of good teaching and learning (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992).

The research settings/contexts and methods employed in research about teacher cognition is another issue that needs to be addressed. Initially, the methodologies employed in the studies reviewed by Borg (2003) focused on native English-speaking teachers teaching adult learners in Western countries, such as in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. A small number of teacher cognition studies have also been conducted in South East Asia, in Singapore and Hong Kong. As the volume of teacher cognition research has grown, the scope of participants has expanded to include non-native English-speaking teachers in other contexts (Borg, 2012). However, limited studies have been investigated in Malaysian universities. Initially, the majority of the research designs in the area of assessment and feedback were

focused on the quantitative paradigm, such as self-reporting data through the use of questionnaire and document analysis (Bailey & Garner, 2010; Ivanic et al., 2000), and these methods might be unreliable. Only a limited number of studies on teachers' beliefs about feedback were conducted based on qualitative studies using less conventional data collection procedures, such as think-aloud protocols (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Diab, 2005b; Li, 2012).

All of the studies above do not take into consideration students' perceptions and beliefs about teaching and learning. Learning is likely to take place if students feel that their beliefs about effective feedback are in accordance with the lecturers' practices (Lo, 2010). However, in most actual education settings, the students' points of views have not been applied in assessment and feedback (Hyland, 2010; Lee, 2014). It is essential to examine both the views of the students and the lecturers about the value of written feedback and if there are any mismatches between the two, the gaps ought to be narrowed.

2.5.5 Empirical studies of students' beliefs about written feedback

A number of studies have been conducted to elicit students' beliefs and their responses towards their lecturers' feedback which were outside the area of learning English or academic writing. For example, studies were conducted on students' perceptions about the effectiveness of their lecturers' feedback in the fields of science, education and business (Hounsell, McCune, & Hounsell, 2008; Orsmond & Merry, 2011, Orsmond, Merry, & Reiling, 2002; Orsmond, et al., 2005; Poulos & Mahony, 2008; Price, Handley, Millar, & O'Donovan, 2010; Weaver, 2006). Other types of studies included the strategies used by the students in understanding and incorporating their lecturers' feedback (O'Donovan, Price & Rust 2004; Orsmond et al., 2005; Rust, Price, & O'Donovan, 2003).

Other studies on students' perceptions and their expectations of effective feedback from their EAP/ESP or subject lecturers are discussed in the following areas: (1) the purpose of their lecturers' feedback; (2) the different areas of learning in which the students seek to improve; (3) the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the feedback; (4) the students' preference for receiving

positive reinforcement or/and the different types of error correction; and (5) students' preference for feedback which encourages them to be independent learners, or for feedback that provides the answers.

The overall findings of studies suggest that both ESL and subject students perceived the purpose of feedback as an essential tool to improve grades (Zacharias, 2007). To illustrate this point, six out of 16 UK biology students in Orsmond et al.'s (2005) study considered marks to be more important than the lecturers' feedback. One student would only read the feedback if the marks received were below his or her expectations, while two did not read the feedback at all. The remaining seven students perceived both grades and feedback as essential in assisting their learning process. The findings of Orsmond et al.'s (2005) study converged with Taras' (2003) findings in a UK university, which suggested that subject students would read the feedback only if the marks received were below their expectations, and Carless's (2006) finding that the lecturers' feedback was only utilised by subject students in their assignments when they wanted to improve their grades rather than enhance their learning progress. In other studies, some students – both ESL and the subject students – perceived feedback as a tool for assisting them in learning (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Diab, 2005a & b; Enginarlar, 1993; Ferris, 1995b; Grami, 2005; Lee, 2008a; Leki, 1991; Lipnevich & Smith, 2009; Saito, 1994; Zacharias, 2007).

Studies on ESL and subject students' preferences in the different areas in which they sought to improve their writing displayed a number of divergences. For example, some ESL students preferred comments on content and ideas rather than WCF (Semke, 1984; Woroniecka, 1998; Zamel, 1985). Other ESL students preferred feedback in a number of areas, for instance, content, organisation and WCF (Ferris, 1995b; Lee, 2005; Radecki & Swales, 1988). Some ESL students wanted to have their grammar corrected (Ashwell, 2000; Lee, 2005; Leki, 1991). Lee's (2005) finding suggested that ESL students preferred unfocused WCF over focused WCF and a mixture of direct and indirect WCF. On the other hand, a minority (30%) of ESL students indicated that only major errors should be highlighted (Leki, 1991; Zhu, 2010). Students perceived that the English lecturers placed emphasis on accuracy and expected

error free essays (Diab, 2005a & b; Leki, 1991). A limited number of students in Leki's study thought that the content area lecturers (such as in engineering and business) were concerned about language errors (Leki, 1991). The research of Higgins, Hartley, and Skelton (2001) found that the biology students noted that their lecturers highlighted only grammatical errors, but suggestions for improvement were not provided. Higgins et al.'s (2001) research was in line with Li's (2012) research project, where the tutors in her study likewise did not provide any suggestions for improvement. In other research, error correction, providing support in compositional skills, giving overall comments on content and the overall quality of the writing were some of the students' expectations of lecturers' feedback (Diab, 2005 a & b; Enginarlar, 1993; Leki, 1991). Walker's (2009) study implied that more than two thirds of the 43 technology students preferred feedback which focused on content, developing skills and motivating comments. Business, engineering and science students in Hyland's (2013b) study indicated that they preferred language accuracy feedback from the subject lecturers. However, the lecturers believed that the application of knowledge was more essential than language accuracy. In terms of genre writing, according to the specific requirements of the different fields, it was found that the subject lecturers did not provide the guidance that the students desired. Students were also given the impression by the subject lecturers that specialised writing was provided solely by the academic writing lecturers.

In terms of the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of their lecturers' feedback, the findings of Duncan (2007), Straub (1997) and Weaver (2006) indicated that the students appreciated focused comments, where the feedback was accompanied by examples and clear explanations of the errors. A three-year longitudinal study by Higgins et al. (2002), on 19 first year business students in two UK institutions, indicated that 97% of the students read their lecturers' feedback. However, the study did not clearly indicate whether the students referred back to the lecturers' feedback in their subsequent assignments. These students (i.e., those in Higgins et al. (2002)) also suggested that lecturers should direct their feedback towards higher order concerns, such as critical thinking skills and the ability to analyse content, use of simpler English structures, facilitating feedback which encouraged student learning centredness (for instance, feedback from peers), and providing timely feedback

to guide them in future assignments. Another study seemed to suggest that students incorporated their lecturers' feedback when the feedback was perceived to be constructive. Some of the students' perceptions of constructive feedback included providing both feed-forward (Duncan, 2007; Weaver, 2006) and feedback from time to time, in order to inform students of their learning progress, to provide positive feedback and to encourage students to reflect (Osmond et al., 2005). Students also preferred lecturers' feedback over model answers. The findings of 183 UK biology students' preferences by Huxham (2007) contradicted the existing research suggesting that model answers were more effective than lecturers' feedback for improving examination performance. Students in Lizzio and Wilson's (2008) study believed that effective feedback ought to be connected with the aims of the syllabus. In addition, the feedback ought to be positive and motivating, and the lecturers assessing the assignments ought to be transparent and fair.

On the other hand, students' perceptions of ineffective feedback included the lecturers' illegible handwriting (Carless, 2006), the provision of grades without justifications (Duncan, 2007), comments that were vague (Hounsell et al., 2008); feedback in which no suggestions were given on how to improve future assignments; and irrelevant feedback which was not related to the criteria of the assignments (Weaver, 2006). The findings by Weaver (2006) also concurred with those of Scott, Badge and Cann (2009) findings, where second year bioscience students reported that they could not apply their lecturers' feedback in subsequent assignments because of a lack of continuity in assessment. The students' inability to understand some of the academic terms used in the feedback was another example of ineffective feedback (Duncan, 2007; Higgins et al., 2002; Lizzo & Wilson, 2008). For example, the students in Carless's (2006) and Duncan's (2007) studies indicated strongly that they needed to understand the academic terms used in the feedback and the criteria used in the assessment. Moreover, feedback was considered ineffective if it was inconsistent or delayed, as both forms hindered students in making the necessary changes or improvements (Hounsell et al., 2008). Similarly, Hyland's (2013b) study, Magg's (2014) findings and Watty, Carr, De Lange, O'Connell and Howison's (2011) findings suggested that students were unhappy with the subject lecturers' delayed feedback, and for not providing detailed feedback to

assist them in their learning. As a result of the delay, students in Hyland's (2013b) study indicated that feedback was not necessary, as it did not assist them in learning. However, some students also perceived that detailed feedback assisted in their learning. For example, a minority of the students (12%) in MacLellan's (2010) study indicated that detailed feedback was useful.

In terms of providing positive reinforcement in feedback, the majority of the ESL students in the study by Zacharias (2007) indicated that they felt demotivated if the correction of errors were overemphasised by the academic writing lecturers, although some did acknowledge the importance of highlighting errors. Zhu's (2010) findings were similar to those of Zacharias' (2007) study, only implying that some ESL students (30%) did not like the lecturers to overcorrect their errors, as they would lose confidence and feel demotivated (Zhu, 2010). However, students in Button's (2002) study seemed to appreciate their writing lecturers' negative but constructive comments, because they were perceived as a challenge to put in extra effort. Lee's (2008a) study suggested that students with high English proficiency were more willing to receive detailed written comments from their lecturers, while students from the lower proficiency group were not deeply concerned with error correction.

Findings on the subject students' perceptions regarding the provision of either positive or negative feedback were similar to those of ESL students. The science students in Higgins et al.'s (2002) study indicated that balanced feedback, which consisted of both positive and negative comments, was essential in assisting their learning. Higgins et al.'s (2002) findings were also reflected in Bevan, Badge, Cann, Willmott and Scott's (2008) study, where the majority of students required both critical comments and clear explanations of their errors. Poulos and Mahony (2008) suggested that while students valued both the positive and the negative aspects of feedback they would become demoralised if negative comments dominated the overall feedback. Weaver's (2006) study perceived that the subject lecturers' decisions to use too many negative comments could be demoralising. Undergraduates in Lizzio and Wilson's (2008) study indicated that they preferred their subject lecturers to provide positive feedback in terms of acknowledging students' efforts, and wanted the lecturers to be more tactful when highlighting the need for

improvement. Lizzo and Wilson's (2008) findings were similar to those of Ferguson's (2011) study, in terms of acknowledging students' effort. Students felt that their subject lecturers' comments could be harsh, non-personal and too detailed, all of which could be demotivating (Ferguson, 2011). Students in Hyland's (2013b) study felt that a lack of feedback suggested that the lecturers were indifferent towards their students. However, the EAP lecturers' personalised feedback suggested care for the students and it also encouraged student learning. Duncan's (2007) findings, however, revealed that some of the students perceived vaguely positive comments as unhelpful.

In the area of increasing students' learning through the technique of encouraging students to correct their own errors, it was found that students would rather receive feedback from lecturers than from their peers (Ferris, 1995a; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Mahfoodh & Pandian, 2011; Radecki & Swales, 1988). To illustrate this point, the majority of the students (70%) perceived learning would take place if the lecturers highlighted their errors (Zhu, 2010). In the Indonesian context, Zacharias' (2007) findings suggested that lecturers were perceived to be experts, so that students, especially the ones with lower proficiency, relied heavily on their lecturers' feedback in order to improve their writing. This belief in the lecturer's expertise was strongly influenced by Indonesian culture, which expects the younger generation to respect their elders. This view confirmed most researchers' views that teachers were expected to provide feedback (Chandler, 2004; Ferris, 2004, 2009; Sengupta, 1998). Although Truscott's observation (1996, 1999, 2004, 2007) that providing error correction appeared to be a waste of effort, it may have been the case that the students' different levels of proficiency played an important role in determining whether or not the teachers' feedback was successful, as demonstrated in Vengadasamy's (2002) study. Other researchers suggested that if teachers were to train students in peer feedback and self-editing, students would be more independent of teachers, and the writing of learners would improve (Brown, 2007; Chandler, 2004; Ferris, 1995a; Ferris, 1999c; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hyland, 2000).

In the Malaysian context, a number of studies have been conducted to examine undergraduates' responses to their lecturers' written feedback. Perhaps the

majority of the Malaysian undergraduates' perceptions of the purpose of feedback was primarily as a tool to guide them to increase their grades in subsequent assessments. As an illustration, the study conducted by Nurtjahja and Lahur (2002) indicated that the majority of students (66.7%) believed that better grades could be obtained in future assessments through feedback. In another study, Nordin et al.'s (2010) findings indicated that students considered feedback to be essential in assisting them to write more accurately in the future.

There is limited research on Malaysian undergraduates' perception of their lecturers' written feedback that either encourages or discourages students. To my knowledge, only one small-scale study discusses the issue in terms of either providing positive reinforcement or highlighting errors. Nurtjahja and Lahur's study (2002) stated that half of the students in their study indicated "they always feel nervous to find out what sort of feedback they may get from the lecturers, while another 40.6% of respondents said that sometimes they feel nervous about it" (p. 5). This statement could imply that students may be discouraged by their lecturers' comments. Nordin et al.'s (2010) study, however, seemed to contradict Nurtjahja and Lahur's (2002) findings, as it was reported that the students' confidence was increased through the feedback provided. However, Nordin et al. (2010) did not clearly specify whether feedback in the area of motivation was used in the study. In a more recent study, Tom, Morni, Metom and Joe's (2013) findings indicated that students in a public university wanted both positive and negative feedback to assist them in their academic writing class. The presence of the lecturers' feedback was seen by the students as a form of motivation and a challenge to improve their writing. The findings of Tom et al. (2013) were also apparent in Leng's (2014) study, where the Malaysian ESL undergraduates in a private university valued both positive and negative feedback. The negative feedback was perceived as constructive, while the positive feedback was welcomed as a form of encouragement and motivation.

Malaysian undergraduates' perceptions of the importance of the different foci of feedback varied. For example, the findings from Tom et al. (2013) suggested that the majority of ESL students (85%) in a public university considered grammar feedback as the most essential, while 44% of the students perceived

content feedback to be essential. In the same study, the students also believed that vocabulary and the mechanics of writing were essential. Other studies observed that students' writing improved when written feedback was provided in parallel with content and language, as compared to the feedback on content and language being done in isolation (Lourdunathan, 1997; Nurtjahja & Lahur, 2002).

Malaysian undergraduates had various perceptions of the effectiveness of their lecturers' feedback. For example, Shamshad and Faizah's (2009) findings indicated that ESL students' poor language proficiency hindered their ability to correct their errors in the revisions of their drafts. This was because students were unable to comprehend the meaning of the lecturers' feedback especially in the area of discussing ideas. In terms of responding to errors of form, students had difficulty applying their lecturer's feedback on certain grammar rules, for instance, tenses, word choice, nouns, adverbs and subject verb agreement. Despite the students' inability to make corrections to subsequent drafts, the majority of students were able to make corrections in the other areas of feedback, for instance, the introduction, topic sentences, thesis statement and some aspects of grammar rules, such as prepositions and pronouns. However, another study seemed to imply that the feedback from academic writing lecturers was effective. The study of Tom et al. (2013) of undergraduates in a public university indicated that the majority of students (94%) perceived their lecturers' feedback to be very effective in assisting them to improve their writing skills, and they were also made aware of their strengths and limitations in writing. Moreover, 85% of the students also felt that suggestions from their lecturers helped to generate ideas for students to improve their writing. However, the technique of using one-word comments and question forms were perceived as unhelpful forms of feedback. Students were confused by these comments and questions, and the processes of learning were therefore hindered. A more recent study by Leng (2014) indicated that the ESL students from a private university considered their lecturers' direct and authoritative feedback to be clear and effective in assisting them in revising their drafts. The authoritative tone of the direct feedback provided a sense of direction and guidance to the students when correcting errors.

Little research has been done in the Malaysian context in terms of feedback which trained students to be more autonomous. Nevertheless, it is documented in other studies that the majority of Malaysian undergraduates in the public Malaysian universities preferred lecturer-centred learning over student-centred learning, due to the cultural perception that the lecturers are the experts and the source of all knowledge (Januin, 2007; Thang, 2005, 2009; Thang & Azarina, 2007; Thang & Bidmeshki, 2010). In a comparative study conducted by Thang (2009), it was found that although the Malaysian undergraduates from both the public and private universities indicated a preference for a teacher-centred approach to learning, the Malaysian undergraduates from the private universities in the study had been trained to be autonomous learners. In terms of the student preference for error correction in written feedback, it was found in one study (Nordin et al., 2010), that the engineering undergraduates preferred error correction in the form of indirect un-coded feedback – this refers to a method whereby errors are indicated by underlining or circling, without using code or making corrections, but with comments made in the margins. This was true for the feedback on both form and content. Nurtjahja and Lahur's (2002) findings, however, contrasted with Nordin et al.'s (2010) study, in which students indicated a preference for detailed feedback. In another study conducted by Tom et al. (2013), the majority of undergraduates in a public university either preferred the lecturers to provide the answers to the errors, or to receive some form of guidance in correcting errors in their academic writing course. A study by Chan and Yap (2010) indicated that students were encouraged to be more independent in their learning by participating in discussions through e-forums, and students perceived their writing skills improved. Students in Ismail, Singh and Abu's (2013) study were encouraged to be more responsible for their own learning. It is clear that encouraging ESL tertiary students' participation in e-forums can foster their learning. However, the studies by Chan and Yap (2010), and Ismail et al. (2013), did not examine the aspect of feedback.

Overall, the findings of the studies above indicated that the majority of the students were dissatisfied with their lecturers' feedback from the aspect of the aims of feedback; the different areas of focus in feedback; the perceived effectiveness of the feedback; positive and motivating feedback; and feedback

which encouraged students' learning autonomy. Few students appeared to appreciate their lecturers' feedback. The next section presents studies which examine if there were any mismatches between the students' and the lecturers' beliefs about the value of written feedback.

2.5.6 Empirical studies on the mismatches between the lecturers' and students' perceptions of written feedback

This section discusses theoretical and methodological issues in the lecturers' and students' perceptions of written feedback research. From the perspective of theoretical issues, the majority of the studies reviewed in this section revealed mismatches between students' and lecturers' beliefs about providing written feedback. A number of factors that create these mismatches are identified.

The major cause of disparity is that the students' beliefs about teaching and learning are not taken into consideration within the institution. Many studies have indicated that the lecturers are not aware of the students' beliefs about the teaching and learning of writing. As a result of this mismatch, the lecturers are disappointed when students are unable to apply their feedback in subsequent writing. On the other hand, the students are dissatisfied with their lecturers' feedback, as they feel that the lecturers are not meeting their writing needs. To illustrate this point, the lecturer in Diab's (2005b) study perceived that most of the Lebanese students did not take feedback on final drafts seriously. Therefore, she reduced the amount of feedback. Another example that illustrated the mismatch of Iranian lecturers' and students' beliefs is in Norouzian and Farahani's (2012) findings, which suggested that the students felt that the lecturers were not sensitive to their needs and did not acknowledge their preference for detailed feedback, although they were satisfied with the lecturers providing error corrections as they considered that it was their job to do this.

In another example of the mismatch of the students' and the lecturers' beliefs about achieving the aims and goals of learning and teaching could be seen through Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) study in two private English language schools in Canada. Their study examined the extent of mismatches between teachers and students, their expectations and their reasons for preferring a

different type of written corrective feedback. The students preferred to have all of their errors corrected; however, their teachers preferred to correct errors selectively, especially if the errors seemed to hinder the communication of ideas. The reason given for correcting selectively was that students had indicated that they needed to be guided and made aware of their errors. The teachers were divided between being aware of their students' need to know their errors, and running the risk of demotivating students by over-correcting their errors. The students felt that the responsibility for highlighting errors belonged to the lecturers, and they preferred explicit and explanatory WCF, where the errors were explained in detail. Although both the students and the teachers agreed that feedback functioned as a tool for learning, students felt that recurring errors ought to be repeatedly highlighted, while the lecturers preferred to give feedback that encouraged student autonomy. Students much preferred feedback which focused on lower-order concerns (for instance, grammar, spelling and vocabulary), while the students' attitudes towards content feedback were either negative or neutral. The teachers' responses towards both the language and the content feedback, however, were positive, and showed an inclination towards highlighting important errors. The overall findings in a study conducted by Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) suggested that the main mismatch between the beliefs of lecturers and students concerned the goal of language pedagogy. The students were dependent on the teachers, while the teachers perceived student autonomy as essential. Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) suggested that it was essential for students and teachers to agree on a pedagogy which would best serve the interests of the students.

In another study, Long's (2014) findings in the UK indicated that the lecturers were concerned about providing error corrections to justify the grades awarded to students. The lecturers believed that the students were either not interested in receiving feedback, or, if they did want more, then the lecturers would be able to provide this kind of feedback only if they were given more time and smaller work-loads. However, students did not so much want feedback on their performance, but on how they could actually improve. The students' perceptions of good feedback also continued to change as they progressed from their first to their final year. However, the causes of these perceptual changes were not clearly identified. The practice of providing feedback is often

described from the lecturer's perspective, and from one voice. It is therefore essential to reconceptualise feedback, to take into account the perceptions of both lecturers and students in order to enhance the process of providing effective feedback (Carless, 2006; Defeyter & McPartlin, 2007; Gibbs, 2006a; McDowell, Smailes, Sambell, Sambell, & Wakelin, 2008; Nicol, 2010; Sadler, 2010). Although it may be argued that not all students' expectations are practical, it is still essential to conduct detailed studies of both lecturers' and students' beliefs in order to determine whether there are any mismatches in beliefs. If mismatches exist, both parties need to come to an agreement on how to maximise the process of learning to write academically; this needs to be done through discussion. (Ashwell, 2000; Ferris, Pezone, Tade, & Tinti, 1997; Zamel, 1985).

Policies imposed upon educational practices often prevent lecturers from assisting students in the way that they would like to (Bailey & Gardner, 2010; Orrell, 2006). These regulations may be in the form of institutional or governmental policies. Lecturers may be more concerned about trying to fulfil the requirements of the policies than they are about meeting the students' needs (please Section 2.5.4). In another study in a British university (Maggs, 2014), life science students were dissatisfied with their institution's assessment policies. Although the lecturers were encouraged to provide feedback according to a stipulated timeframe, it seemed that the feedback was not provided to the students within the allocated time, and the quality of the feedback was below the students' expectations. As a result, students did not have enough time to engage with the feedback, and therefore did not benefit from it. The lecturers, however, were neutral in their responses to the institution's feedback policy, and felt that the amount and availability of feedback was adequate for the needs of students. Both the lecturers and the students agreed that perhaps the use of technology –Moodle, for instance –should be increased to assist the process of assessment and feedback. Students would be able to keep copies of the marked assessment through the Moodle site, and more training could be conducted for the lecturers to assist them in their provision of feedback.

In the Malaysian context, few studies of the mismatch between lecturers' and students' beliefs have been conducted. In a private Malaysian university, Perera

et al.'s (2008) study indicated a mismatch between the perceptions of medical students and lecturers in regard to effective feedback. Students indicated a strong preference for formative feedback, suggesting that this ought to be given at the commencement of their first year of studies in order to promote self-regulated and self-directed learning. Students also indicated that model answers and grades in assessment did not constitute sufficient feedback, and they preferred that vague feedback should be clarified via teacher-student dialogue. Other forms of effective feedback, from a student's point of view, included simple, focused written feedback from the content lecturers within two weeks. On the other hand, the content lecturers considered feedback in the form of model answers by an English expert to be sufficient. The researchers suggested that lecturers in this private university should be trained on how to provide feedback, and that the practice of providing formative feedback ought to be incorporated into the institutional policy.

Nurtjahja and Lahur (2002) conducted a study on 38 engineering and 58 commerce undergraduates' reactions towards 10 ESP lecturers' written feedback in a private Malaysian university. The findings suggested a number of mismatches. The first mismatch could be seen in the area of achieving the goals of the assessment; for example, the lecturers viewed assessment as a tool used to establish the level of students' understanding and knowledge gained in the process of learning. However, the majority of students in the study perceived assessment as a channel to obtain grades to fulfil the course requirements, which enabled them to get a degree. Ideas about the purposes of feedback were another area of mismatch between students and lecturers. Lecturers perceived feedback as a tool – not only to highlight student errors but also to assist students in the process of learning and avoiding the same errors in subsequent assessments. Nevertheless, students perceived feedback as guidance to assist them in obtaining higher grades through avoiding the same errors in the next assessment. The final mismatch of beliefs was in the area of the perceived effectiveness of the written feedback provided by the lecturers. Despite the detailed feedback provided for them, students were still unable to identify their errors. The lecturers identified the students' weaknesses in the areas of grammar and content, while the students felt that their limitations were in the areas of grammar and the organisation of the essay. In addition, the lecturers

commented that the majority of their students were not concerned with the feedback provided, as only a few students returned to clarify the feedback. The students, however, disagreed with the lecturers' accusation of not being serious about the feedback. The majority of the students claimed that the marked assignments were used for reference in subsequent assignments. A minority of students felt that the feedback provided by lecturers was irrelevant for future assessments because they felt that the methods of assessment and the tasks did not relate to each another. Therefore these students did not bother to refer to the marked assignments.

Another area of mismatch pertains to preferences for different types of feedback. The lecturers preferred to provide general comments, identify some specific errors, and offer suggestions for improvement. However the majority of the students indicated a preference for indirect error corrections, while the minority of the students preferred to have general comments on their errors. Nurtjahja and Lahur (2002) concluded that the perception that the students were not concerned with their lecturers' written feedback was incorrect. Instead, it was suggested that the expectations of what constituted good written feedback between the lecturers and the students did not match. While the students expected to receive feedback that would, if accepted, lead to higher grades, the lecturers believed that the feedback actually assisted students in their learning. As a result of this mismatch of beliefs, the lecturers felt that their efforts in providing feedback were wasted, while the students believed that their lecturers were not providing enough specific feedback to meet their needs. The findings above are similar to those of Zhao's (2010) and McMartin-Miller's (2014) studies, which indicate that not all of the students were able to comprehend the purpose, function, and feedback strategies employed by their lecturers. As noted by Schulz (2001), it is essential that the lecturers' and students' beliefs match, in order to enhance the process of learning. It was suggested that there was a need for two-way communication between the lecturers and the students, so that both could agree on the use of specific strategies from the different types of feedback (Diab, 2005b; Leki, 1991; Schulz, 2001; Plonsky & Mills, 2006). The aims of assessment and feedback, from the lecturers' point of views, must be made known to the students, and the students' views need to be made transparent to the lecturers. Through seeking a consensus and demonstrating a

willingness to negotiate, the goals and aims of both parties could be fulfilled (Plonsky & Mills, 2006).

However, one study revealed that the teachers' practices of providing written feedback did match the students' perceptions of effective written feedback. Leng, Kumar and Abdullah's (2013) study indicated that the ESL Malaysian Chinese students in a private college valued the lecturers' directive and expressive written feedback. Leng et al. (2013) define directive feedback as the act of guiding students to improve in their learning in terms of obtaining higher grades, and they categorise directive feedback into three sections, namely instruction, clarification and suggestion. Expressive feedback refers to feedback that contains emotion, conveying either approval (positive or motivating feedback) or disapproval (negative or corrective feedback). Students perceived that the feedback was sufficient and enabled them to revise their drafts. Students in the study perceived disapproval feedback as a form of constructive feedback which assisted them in their writing.

Overall, in terms of the methodology used in the studies above, both in the general and the Malaysian context, the majority of the studies were conducted using experimental methods and surveys (Nordin et al., 2010; Shamshad & Faizah, 2009), with the exception of Nurtjahja and Lahur's (2002) study. In this study, interviews were conducted as a follow-up from the questionnaire distributed among the ten lecturers and their students, regarding their perceptions of the use and effectiveness of written feedback. The outcome of the study indicated that there was considerable mismatch between the lecturers' and the students' perceptions of good written feedback. In studies conducted by Nordin et al. (2010), and Shamshad and Faizah (2009) in the Malaysian tertiary context the students' responses towards the written feedback were analysed in relation to their ability to apply their lecturers' feedback to their drafts. Although Nordin et al. (2010) distributed a questionnaire to the students at the end of the experimental study in order to elicit their attitudes towards their lecturers' feedback, the information collected was very limited due to the nature of the data collection using surveys.

In this Malaysian context, think-aloud procedures were conducted on the students' perceptions of the lecturers' feedback, especially in Kumar, Kumar and Feryok's (2009) study, where a Chinese postgraduate student was asked to think-aloud when responding to his lecturer's feedback. However, the scope of the study sought to examine if the student's cultural background, being from a "Confucian Cultural Heritage" (p. 26), influenced his cognitive process of evaluating the lecturers' feedback in his written work. In the general studies conducted elsewhere, Diab's (2005b) study employed think-aloud procedures to elicit the lecturer's feedback practices, while her two students were also interviewed to elicit their beliefs about receiving feedback.

To sum up, the studies mentioned above revealed mismatches between the lecturers' and the students' beliefs about effective feedback. Few studies have been conducted to examine how both the English/ESL and content lecturers apply their theoretical beliefs about providing different types of feedback. It is also essential to examine the factors which influence teachers' perceptions of effective written feedback. The majority of the methodology employed in the studies reviewed above used experimental and surveys. Thus, this study which employs multi-data gathering methods attempts to bridge the gap between the students' own perceptions of their work, the students' views of their lecturers' feedback, and the lecturers' reflection on their students' responses toward their feedback, in order to increase the lecturers' pedagogical skills. Not many studies have been conducted on the lecturers' and students' beliefs from the perspective of sociocultural theory, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.6 Teacher cognition from a socio-cultural perspective

The existing studies of teacher cognition have examined the individual teacher's cognitive process (Basturkmen et al. 2004; Calderhead, 1996; Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2002; Wittrock, 1986). However, in recent studies, it is indicated that the individual teacher's beliefs and observed practices are influenced by the socio-cultural factors and settings in which the teacher is placed. Sociocultural theory enables the study of influences on teachers' beliefs through the lens of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Social Cultural Activity Theory (CHAT).

This section begins with a discussion of the Zone of Proximal Development. Another socio-cultural perspective, Social Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) is then presented, followed by a discussion of assessment and feedback using this conceptual framework, viewing the university context as a community of practice.

2.6.1 Theories and issues of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky (1978) defined the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as follows:

It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

Thus, the ZPD is a construct which depicts the learner's ability to learn (especially in the area of problem solving) with assistance so that subsequently s/he can do the task independently, without assistance. According to Vygotsky (1978), the learning process occurs in two stages within the ZPD framework. The first stage involves the interaction between people, mediated by cultural tools, both material - such as physical artefacts - and symbolic, the most important of which is language. The second stage involves interaction within the self (mental activity). Once the learner has internalised the knowledge through self-regulation and inner speech, s/he should be able to perform the task without the scaffolding (Van Lier, 1996) provided by experts.

In terms of applying the concept of ZPD in the area of assessment and feedback, the lecturers would be seen to be the experts, while the students would be the novices. Assessment and writing are perceived in the ZPD framework to be the activity in which the learners are involved, and the feedback is the form of scaffolding provided by the lecturers in assisting students' learning and writing. Figure 2 on the following page illustrates the activity of assessment within the ZPD framework.

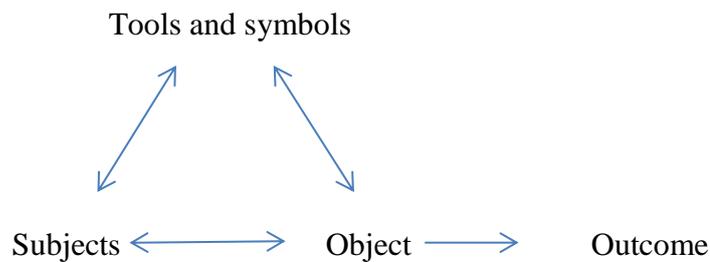


Figure 2 : A basic model of the ZPD, [adapted from] Vygotsky (1978)

To explain the model above in detail, the symbols refer to language, in the form of both the students' assignments and the lecturers' written feedback. The tools refer to instruments used in the provision of feedback, for example, pens, pencils, and the marking criteria. The subject represents lecturers, while the object refers to the students' written competence as evidenced in the submitted assignments, and the outcome refers to improved writing or other forms of learning to be achieved.

Bruner (1983) applied the ZPD concept described by Vygotsky within the education context and coined the term "scaffolding." The term scaffolding means to provide support to learners to assist them to achieve a task which is beyond their current ability (Barab & Duffy, 2000). Scaffolding is a process whereby the expert (the teacher or the more capable peer) performs actions for the novice (the learner, or weaker student) to imitate and learn (Daniels, 2008). According to Van Lier (1996, p. 151), successful scaffolding involves six principles, which are (1) the principle of contextual support; (2) the principle of continuity; (3) the principle of intersubjectivity; (4) the principle of flow; (5) the principle of contingency; and (6) the principle of handover. The principle of contextual support refers to a mutual agreement, whereby all the participants involved in an activity feel challenged in the learning process, yet also feel supported. The principle of continuity means that varied and complex learning activities are introduced, and go through a series of repetitions within a specific time frame. During the process of learning, mutual engagement and support between the novice and the expert is secured through the principle of intersubjectivity. During the learning activity, it is also essential to have natural and ongoing, flowing communication between the novice and the expert. Based on the novices' responses towards the learning tasks and objectives, the expert modifies the process of scaffolding in a variety of ways, which might include

abandoning, changing or repeating the learning activity (the principle of contingency). Once the expert is assured that the novice's self-confidence has increased so that no further guidance is needed, the expert needs to hand over the task completely to the learners.

The activity of providing formative feedback from the lecturers (experts) to assist students' (novice) learning and writing may be seen as a form of scaffolding. Based on Van Lier's (1996) principles of successful scaffolding, formative feedback is intended to provide learning support for students to assist them in their writing and the understanding of content knowledge based on different academic fields. Formative feedback should be provided continually, based on the various on-going assessments. According to the principle of intersubjectivity, the type of feedback ought to encourage students' learning by providing motivation, and feedback should encourage students to be responsible for their own error corrections. However, the student needs to comprehend the feedback provided by the expert in order to ensure effective learning. If lecturers perceive that their feedback is not effective—for instance, when the students continue to make the same errors highlighted by the lecturers—then the lecturers should change the type of feedback they provide, in line with the principle of contingency. Once learning is achieved, lecturers would be confident that their students could correct their errors.

The extent to which the feedback provided by the lecturers in the present study can be considered to be effective scaffolding will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The concepts of ZPD and scaffolding in the relevant literature have raised several issues, among them: whether the ZPD can be applied to a group of learners as well as to individuals; the power relationships within a ZPD; and whether corrective feedback leads to productive outcomes within a ZPD.

Vygotsky (1978) emphasised that “for each discipline and each student the interacting curves of learning and development need to be plotted individually” (Kozulin, 1990, p. 171). Thus, Vygotsky's (1978) statement illustrates the importance of guiding students individually in their learning. This presents problems for teachers working with groups of students, because each student

has different background knowledge, goals and motivations for learning (Newman, Griffin, & Cole, 1989). Each student's language proficiency, which influences the understanding and interpretation of knowledge, is inevitably different from those other students within the same context. This implies that the teacher needs to adjust the scaffolding to cater for the fact that students' core skills of knowledge will develop at different points in the ZPD, with different degrees of outcome.

Another issue is that Vygotsky (1978) did not discuss the impact of power relationships within a ZPD where the co-construction of knowledge and mutual learning are intended outcomes (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), when learning among equal peers takes place, "if one member of a dyad undergoes developmental change, the other is also likely to do so" (p. 65). However, in a formal educational context, such as a university, the difference in status between the strong (lecturer) and the weak (student) is asymmetrical; thus any interaction is heavily biased towards the exercise of power by the lecturer, so that the extent to which mutual learning occurs is open to question.

From a sociocultural perspective, to the best of my knowledge, only two studies on written corrective feedback have been conducted from a ZPD perspective. Plonsky and Mills (2006) in the American context acknowledged the mismatches of a Spanish lecturer's WCF practices and the students' expectations of feedback in four areas, namely (1) student discouragement in learning due to the WCF provided by the lecturer; (2) learner readiness to learn from their errors; (3) the importance of writing clearly, without ambiguity; and (4) writing accurately in terms of using correct grammar. In order to reduce the gaps mentioned, the Spanish lecturer provided additional scaffolding to guide students in applying his feedback in subsequent assignments. The outcome of this experimental study indicated that a gap existed, between the perceived importance of writing knowledgeably and using correct grammar. It seemed that after the scaffolding process, students appeared to be both more ready to learn and to be more accurate in their use of grammar. Although few changes were apparent in terms of the focus on meaning and student motivation, this study indicated the importance of open communication between lecturers and

students, in order to reduce mismatches in feedback that might compromise the learning process. Another important finding of this study was the need to train students to apply their lecturer's feedback in practice. This study, however, was limited to the teaching of the Spanish language, and the methods used were based on an experimental design. In a more recent ZPD study, Rassaei (2014) reported an experimental study on 78 EFL Persian students on error corrective feedback. The findings suggested that students who received scaffolding feedback produced better results in terms of their grammar and oral presentation skills and were able to retain the information. These students were also more autonomous in their learning, compared to the students who did not receive feedback.

From a socio-cultural perspective, one limitation of these studies is that they did not include the learners' perceptions of assessment within a ZPD. This omission is typical of most studies of assessment. Also, to the best of my knowledge, no studies have been conducted to examine the approach of conducting written feedback in ZPDs involving second language learners. In summary, the ZPD focusses on the role of the human mediator in teacher-student interaction; thus the application of principles of the ZPD will assist in addressing the research questions (a), (b), (d) and (e) in Section 2.7

2.6.2 Cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT)

Models of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) have been developed through three generations. The first generation activity theory was developed by Leont'ev (1981), based on Vygotsky's (1930) original but unfinished model, which focused on the concept of mediation within social activities such as, but not limited to, teaching and learning. The first generation sought to explain the idea of mediation where tools are used as stimulus to create a person's responses in performing actions to achieve a goal. The Russian version of Cultural Historical Activity Theory, especially based on Ilyenkov's (1994, 1977a, 1977b) philosophy is based on two notions. The first notion is the concept of the social self, where an individual is viewed as a social being and the human mind is shaped by the society, history and the culture that the person is placed in. Humans have the ability to rationalise, reflect and activity

engaging in the activities performed in society. The second concept, activity, is viewed as an essential tool in comprehending human mind and behaviour as a method for analysing activity systems provided. From the viewpoints of western philosophers, the concept of self is common but the notion of activity is not. Some activities, for example, exercising, talking and sleeping, are considered to be non-confrontational and no discussions are required to analyse these behaviours.

The second generation of CHAT was further developed by Engeström (1987). Overall, activity theory is intended to illuminate the process of “distributed cognition” (Cole & Engeström, 1993, p. 1; Pea, 1993, p. 47), whereby knowledge and new ideas are formed through the interaction among members of a community using the tools and symbols provided. The idea of distributed cognition paved the way for the third phase of CHAT: as a tool to compare and contrast two different organisations within the same culture that are collaborating to achieve the same goals (Engeström, 1999). Despite its name, Engeström’s version of CHAT is not a theory, but functions instead as a philosophical framework, which enables researchers to understand the conduct of the members of a particular society within an activity system. The CHAT framework has been used to identify and then resolve conflicts that arise when the manner of performing an activity in one system does not match that of another system during the collaboration process. As the literature continues to grow, Barnard (2010) suggested that CHAT could also be used to analyse activity systems of two or more different cultures that are collaborating to achieve the same goal, such as a Malaysian university and its partner institutions overseas.

This section begins with the discussion of the different models of CHAT, beginning with Leont’ev’s (1981) model, and proceeding to outline Engeström’s (1987, 1999) models on activity theory, and Barnard’s (2010) model of activity theory. Studies on assessment and feedback in the area of teaching English in tertiary contexts are then reviewed in the light of these models.

2.6.3 Leont'ev's (1981) first generation of activity theory

Leont'ev (1981, p. 46) expanded Vygotsky's (1978) ideas about the distribution of cognition within a ZPD through the introduction of his original model of cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), which takes into account three important characteristics. The first feature is that the activity must be significant, and that all the participants need to have the same motivation to achieve a common goal. For example, in providing feedback, both lecturers and students should share the view that the provision of written feedback aims at improving learning. The second feature is that the activity should be socially oriented. The activity is not conducted in isolation by the individual but as a collective effort by members of the community of practice, which includes both lecturers and students. Finally, the activity of providing feedback must be hierarchically systematic and attempt to achieve the aim of improving students' overall learning. Thus, within the overall activity, secondary actions would include the formulation of written comments to provide feedback, and – at the lowest level – operations would include such routine, semi-automatic steps as reading the assignment (sometimes audibly to oneself), making brief notes, and underlining errors.

2.6.4 Engeström's (1987) model: Second generation of activity theory

Engeström (1987) viewed Leont'ev's (1981) model as incomplete and unable to illuminate the concept of the “collective activity system” (2001, p. 134) as the focus was on the individual. The focus of studies in institutional levels was not researched (Daniels, 1963). The second generation of Activity Theory distinguishes between “action” and “activity”. An action is performed by an individual while the activity is performed collectively in a group to achieve a goal or aim (Bakhurst, 2009). Engeström added three more dimensions to the model, as illustrated in Figure 3 in the next page.

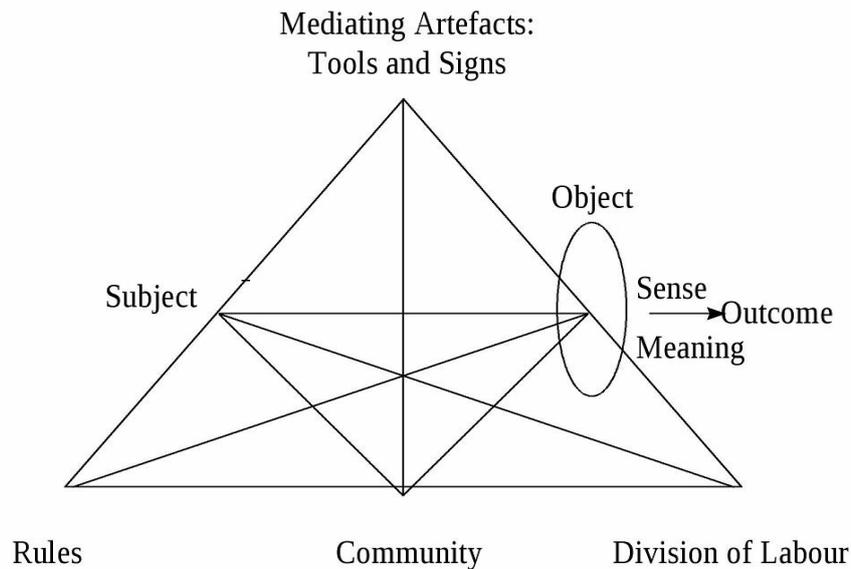


Figure 3: The structure of a human activity system (Engeström, 2001, p. 135)

The diagram above depicts the complexity and the processes of an individual performing an activity within a single community or institution. “Rules” in the diagram refer to the explicit regulations and policies, or implicitly held norms, which guide individuals in performing an activity. While the rules provide guidance, they also restrict the individual’s freedom to perform the activity according to their personal knowledge and beliefs. However, all rules, including the provision of assessment and feedback, are individually interpreted in each specific context, leading to divergent operations and actions, as well as potential contradictions as to the purpose of the activity itself.

The “division of labour” refers to the different tasks which are allocated vertically or horizontally within the activity system. The division may be horizontal, whereby tasks are undertaken by people according to their particular knowledge, skills or functions; within a department, lecturers of equal or different rank are allocated to teach the courses for which they are suitably qualified. A vertical division is based on power relations derived from a hierarchy of status; for instance, the lecturers have authority over the students, while the deans of the faculties have authority over the lecturers.

The “community” component of CHAT can be viewed in terms of a community of practice. Community of practice here refers to the process of learning through participation in activities created within a community or a group of people (for example, church goers, businesspeople or doctors). Development of knowledge within the community is perceived as an important goal to be achieved, in addition to the process of learning. The process of learning within the community of practice is depicted in the figure below.

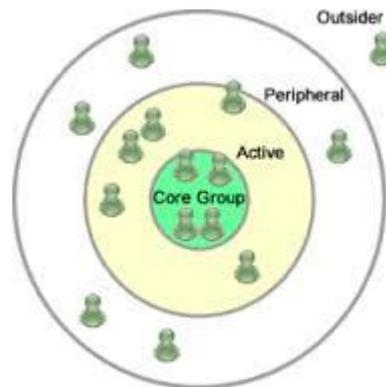


Figure 4: Wenger’s degree of community participation (adapted from Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002)

The model above illustrates three types of participants –core, active and peripheral (Wenger, 2000) – within the community of practice, which here refers to an institute of higher education. Participants in the core group are considered to be the experts, due to their wealth of knowledge, and they may also be leaders within the community, for example, deans or professors at the university. The participants in the core group are constantly practising and engaging in activities within and outside of the context, which develop their existing knowledge. The members in the active group participate regularly in the activities within the system; however, their participation is less intense than that of the core group members. Senior lecturers are examples of members from the active group. The peripheral group consists of new members or new lecturers, who have just been recruited into the institution. These group members play the smallest role in their contribution of knowledge to the community (Wenger et al., 2002). New lecturers, however, would gradually be accepted as members of the core community through a series of learning processes. The new or novice lecturers learn via their involvement in activities

through scaffolding. The experts in the core, together with the active group, guide the novice lecturers by modelling. For example, in some institutions, new lecturers might be given training in the methods of conducting assessments, or novice lecturers might be given a set of marking criteria as a guide for providing assessment. After the novice lecturers go through a series of observations and practices of providing assessment and formative feedback, the experts need to release the novice lecturers to be responsible for their own feedback to students. Once the members at the periphery achieve independence in performing some of the goals of the institution, they would then be assigned other challenging tasks, thereby being gradually accepted into the community. Some of the peripheral members in a community of practice can upgrade their position and be accepted into the active group, while the members of the active group can be accepted into the core group. The gradual change that occurs within the community of practice is known as “legitimate peripheral participation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29).

One of the limitations of the community of practice model is that although students are supposed to be members within the community of practice, in reality – and in the actual teaching and learning context – the students are placed as outsiders. In the majority of the studies on feedback, students’ views are often not taken into consideration by the other members of the community. In the present study, however, the students are included in the community of practice. The students’ views about feedback are presented to the lecturers as a form of shared knowledge. However, due to the power relations within the ZPD, some lecturers may choose not to apply the knowledge provided by the students.

Overall, CHAT has been expanded to other areas, to illuminate the process of conducting an activity and the idea of “higher psychological function.” The crux of the activity theory proposed in Engeström’s (1987) model is the idea of “distributed cognition” (Cole & Engeström, 1993, p. 1; Pea, 1993, p. 47). The concept of distributed cognition is that knowledge and new ideas are formed through the interaction among people within a community, using the tools and symbols provided. For example, the deans and the lecturers co-construct new knowledge about formative assessment and feedback, with the aim and

motivation of improving students' learning. In order to ensure that this knowledge is shared, from the views of the vertical line where power relation is involved, there are several lecturers who are responsible for developing the course structures, assessment and marking criteria, for instance, the senior lecturers or the chief examiners appointed by the dean. While marking the assessment, lecturers refer to the tool provided, for instance the pre-set criteria and perhaps their existing knowledge of the subject. Symbols, such as language, and various abbreviations are used to signal to the students their errors, to assist them in writing or to improve their content knowledge. The assessment and feedback activities are bound by the rules and regulations of the institution; for example, the language and feedback policy guides the lecturers in providing formative feedback and assessment.

The emphasis on historicity in Engeström's model of CHAT is that activities occur not only in place, but also in time; thus, all activity systems are dynamic and will change as a result of both internal and external pressures. For example, any changes to the regulations regarding the provision of feedback need to be effectively transmitted from policy-makers to individuals and groups of practitioners, who will then interpret them in light of their knowledge and beliefs, and then put them into operation, influenced by the opportunities and constraints of their specific teaching contexts. Over time, the uneven flow of the distribution of knowledge about such changes will lead to contradictions in the perceptions and practices of the purpose of the activity. Applying the CHAT framework to specific activities can enable the analyst to see where such contradictions are likely to occur. Development and improvement can only take place when these potential contradictions are identified and steps taken to overcome the conflicts and tensions.

However, two main limitations were identified in the Second Generation of CHAT. The first limitation is the lack of analysis of combined activities within an activity system, and the second limitation is the lack of attention to the issue of cultural diversity. These issues led to the introduction of the Third Generation of CHAT by Engeström (1999), who suggested that this new generation of CHAT could be used to analyse combined activities based on mediated activities, rather than being confined to the analysis of individual

actions within a single system. The third generation of activity theory by Engeström also enabled the other issues of representations to be analysed for instance voice, emotion, identity, and others. Agents from the two activity systems could reflect upon how they might use tools differently, and be prepared to compromise in order to achieve their goals within the new activity system (Cole & Engeström, 1993). Engeström's (1999) expansion of CHAT is illustrated in the figure below:

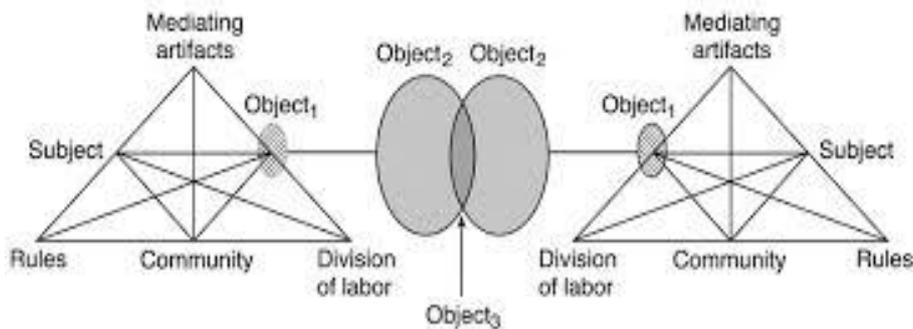


Figure 5 : Third Generation Activity Theory (Engeström, 2001, p.136.)

To illustrate his 1999 model, Engeström (2005) presented a study on the process of collaboration – between a primary health centre and a hospital clinic in Finland – in diagnosing a patient's illness. The method of establishing the diagnosis, however, was done differently in each of the activity systems (depicted in object 1 in the diagram). When the two diagnoses were presented to the administrators and to the patient, conflict arose due to miscommunication (object 2 in the diagram). In order to improve the collaboration between the two activity systems, ideally a form of agreement between them needed to be reached, so that the goal of restoring the patient's health could be met (object 3 in the diagram).

A limited number of studies have applied the CHAT approach to assessing writing. Burton (2010) and Russell (1997) conducted a study on feedback, writing across the curriculum, while Crossouard (2009) and Crossouard and Pryor (2008) conducted a study on formative assessment. Baker (2014) examined some of the strategies employed by three writing instructors in an American university to overcome the burden of grading and providing feedback

in the area of assessment. Crossouard and Pryor (2008) used activity theory as their lens in analysing the formative assessment in a doctoral programme in a university in the UK, using qualitative methods. The limitation of this study was that too many sub-activity systems were applied to explain the community of practice.

Another piece of research which applied activity theory was conducted by Cross (2010). Cross expanded the concept of language teacher cognition by applying Vygotsky's (1981) genetic analysis and Engeström's (1987) model of activity theory. The major contribution of Cross (2010) was to develop a framework to synthesise the contexts, for example, education policy with teachers' cognition and action, where the contexts contradicted the beliefs within the activity system. It is also essential to explain the relationship of each element and its interactions with the cognitive process within an individual when an action is being performed.

Another recent article on written corrective feedback from the perspective of CHAT was written by Lee (2014), in which two major issues were revealed through the lens of Activity Theory. The first point was that the socio-cultural contextual factors, especially institutional policies and students' expectations hindered teachers, from applying the beliefs regarding the best practices of providing feedback into practice. The second issue concerned the limitations of using conventional ways of providing feedback using pen and paper. The first limitation was that students were unable to apply the feedback provided by the teachers because the communication was solely from the lecturers to the students. As a result, students often misunderstood the feedback. Secondly, the students were prevented from engaging with the feedback as the teachers tended to correct every error on their students' behalf. Students felt that their learning needs were not met as they passively receive the feedback without much reflection. Thus, Lee suggested incorporating mediated learning experience (MLE), whereby the students' views of feedback and their learning experiences were taken into consideration when providing feedback through process writing. A number of concepts were also introduced by Lee to ensure the MLE was conducted successfully. The first concept is intentionality in feedback. Intentionality means that the teacher should intentionally provide

some strategies for students to resolve writing problems. The feedback provided must be based on the purpose, the goals and the aims in the course structure or syllabus. When receiving feedback, students need to be “reciprocity” or actively involve and engage with the feedback through oral conferencing. After receiving feedback, through the concept of transcendence, the students should be able to apply the feedback in the next assignments through the process of writing multiple drafts. The final step is through diagnostic feedback or “meaning” where students should be given the chance of reflecting the significance of the task and if they have accomplish the task based on the requirements of the syllabus. Lee’s (2014) points are relevant to research questions (c) and (f) in Section 2.7 and will be addressed in chapter 4, and the implications discussed in Chapter 6.

To summarise, Engeström (2001) outlined five principles of the Third Generation of CHAT theory. The first principle is that the prime unit of analysis of the activity – in this case the activity of providing feedback – should be a “collective, artefact mediated and object oriented activity system” (Engeström, 2001, p. 136). In other words, the activity of providing feedback in a tertiary context is not solely provided by the individual lecturers but by the community of practice. The students are mediated by the students’ artefacts, which are the students’ marked assignments and lecturers’ feedback, while object oriented refers to the process of improving students’ written work. The second principle involves the multi-voicedness of the activity systems. Multi-voicedness refers to the different beliefs and principles which are practiced within an activity system. When the ‘voiced’ (spoken or written) belief systems of one activity system collide with those of another activity system, conflicts arise. The third principle involves historicity. The community in an activity system consists of diverse cultures, ideas and perceptions, and each member is heavily influenced by his or her own culture and history. When an individual performs a task based on their personal views and perceptions of how things should be done, conflict arises, especially when the actions are contradictory to those of other individuals within the same community. The fourth principle is in regard to the importance of contradictions, and the fifth principle acknowledges the possibility of expansive transformation. “As the contradictions of an activity system are aggravated, some individual participants begin to question and

deviate from its established norms. In some cases this escalates into collaborative envisioning and a deliberate collective change effort” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). Contradiction is deemed essential, because it provides an impetus for encouraging change and development within an activity system. Thus, when conflicts or problems arise, ideally it is essential that the members of the community collectively reflect before contributing to collaborative discussion. The reflection could be done through two ways. The first is where everyone thinks and discusses collaboratively as a group. The second method is that each individual member should reflect privately and then contribute collaboratively when they meet for discussions. Thus the cultural-historical context is re-examined in order to comprehend the diversity of views, and therefore to promote positive change – the possibility of expansive transformation. After reflection, it is also necessary to reconceptualise and modify the activities within the activity system to achieve a “wider horizon of possibilities” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137).

The model proposed by Engeström (1999) raises a number of issues. The first issue concerns the division of labour. Few studies have been conducted which focus on the division of labour in the activity of providing feedback in tertiary contexts. In one such study, Li (2012) suggested that one of the key factors causing divergence between tutors’ beliefs and practices about feedback on students’ written assignments in a New Zealand university was caused by the unequal power relationship between these low-status tutors and their lecturers who were their line managers. The lecturers had the authority to determine the grades and to regulate the tutors’ methods of providing feedback, which often conflicted with the tutors’ beliefs and contextual knowledge based on their practical working experience.

The second aspect concerns cultural diversity. Staff and students from various backgrounds and cultures are members of a university community, whether employed or enrolled. As a result, misunderstandings can arise within an activity system because of an ineffective or unequal distribution of knowledge. Moreover, the potential for misunderstanding is increased when two or more universities from different cultures seek to collaborate on assessments; they may have only limited understanding of each other’s regulations and

conventions, and even less knowledge of the historical factors that gave rise to them.

The third issue regards multi-voicedness, a concept proposed by Engeström (1999). Each individual within an activity system has his or her own voice, but that voice is often silenced by a higher authority. From another perspective, information from the higher authority is often not made clear to those lower in the hierarchy, and a lack of sufficient consultation means that the flow of information is only one-directional. Thus, an effective distribution of cognition requires the establishment of two-way communication channels to avoid unnecessary confusion or conflict.

Another limitation of Engeström's model is that the theory was applied to the analysis of only two systems within parallel cultures. Barnard (2010) refined the model proposed by Engeström (1999) to analyse activity systems in diverse cultures, as illustrated in the following figure:

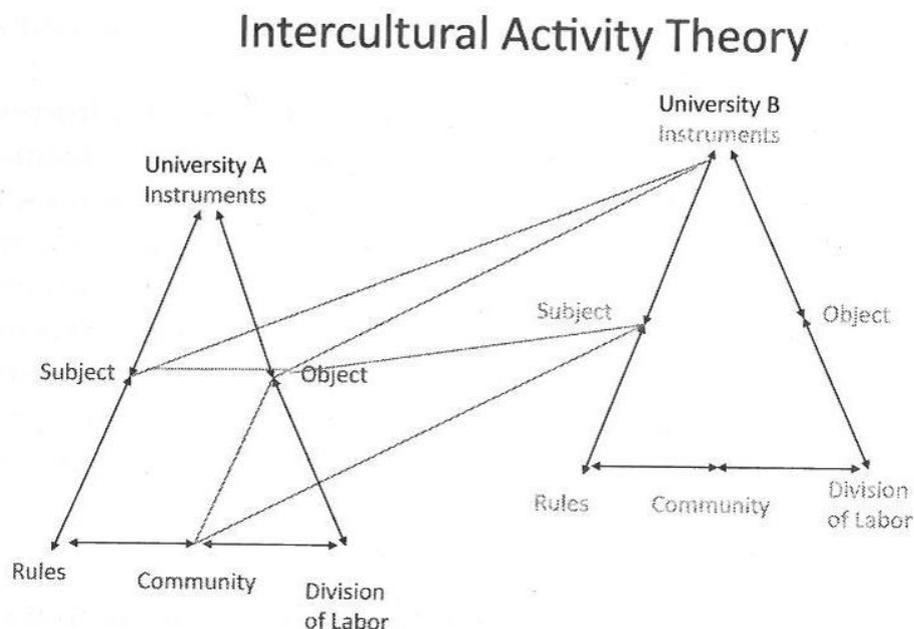


Figure 6: Intercultural Activity Theory (Barnard, 2010)

Due to globalisation and the increased interest in pursuing higher education from Asia, many Western universities collaborate with Asian universities to increase the numbers of students or to conduct research. Barnard (2010)

modified the activity theory to analyse two higher learning institutions from two different countries that were collaborating in terms of conducting research, promoting their courses to students, and sharing knowledge. The two triangles in the model symbolised the interactions between two different activity systems, which would then form a new culture. The new culture can be illuminated only after each activity system is analysed individually and the divergences of both cultures are highlighted, in order to pave the way for the “hybridising” of the cultures. According to Barnard (2010), the number of triangles can be many, but only two are illustrated here so as to reduce the complexity of the diagram.

To conclude, the studies of teacher cognition have expanded, from relating teachers’ actions with teachers’ beliefs and knowledge to the inclusion of other aspects such as lecturers’ reflections and the sources of teachers’ beliefs. However, few studies on teacher cognition in the area of feedback and assessment have been done from the perspective of the activity theory proposed by Barnard (2010), where the activity systems of diverse cultures are compared and contrasted in order to resolve conflicts. Limited studies have been conducted either in international or Malaysian contexts, or to examine the factors which influence the English language and science lecturers’ beliefs and actions in the provision of written feedback and assessment. In addition, to my knowledge, no studies have been undertaken to make comparisons of the assessment activities within the system and across systems. Moreover, very little attention has been paid to examine lecturers’ reflections on student’ responses to their feedback, which would be useful in assisting lecturers to decide whether to change or retain their beliefs and actions in the provision of written feedback. I will attempt to acknowledge all of above-mentioned points in the present study.

2.7 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has presented a comprehensive analysis of both methodological and theoretical aspects of teacher cognition in relation to the activity of assessment and written feedback in institutes of higher education, and particularly in the context of undergraduate assignments in Malaysian

universities, where English is used as a medium of instruction. This literature review suggests that intra/inter-institutional and language policies in Malaysia may play an important role in influencing the lecturers' practices of providing written corrective feedback to students. Although lecturers' practices may be shaped by these policies, they may potentially face inner conflict. The cause of this conflict may be the result of providing written feedback which goes against their beliefs about providing "good feedback." In addition to the review of theories and studies of teacher cognition, this chapter includes a review of students' perceptions of effective feedback. The learning needs of students are often ignored, and their perceptions of effective feedback not considered by the lecturers or acknowledged in institutional policies. The literature explored in this chapter points to a need for the co-construction of knowledge between students and lecturers in terms of delivering effective feedback. The involvement of students in the activity of co-constructing feedback with lecturers encourages student ownership of their learning. As a result of co-constructing feedback with students, lecturers can increase their pedagogical knowledge after reflecting on students' reactions to their written feedback.

The chapter above reviews a number of studies conducted in the areas of EMI, assessments, writing pedagogies, feedback, teacher cognition, the zone of proximal development, and activity theory, and the following gaps have been identified.

Firstly, although research has identified that lecturers' teaching philosophies are influenced by the lecturers' beliefs of best teaching practices, limited studies were conducted on the socio-cultural factors that may influence the beliefs and practices of providing formative assessment and written feedback in second language context where EMI is used. The majority of studies conducted have been mainly focused on the beliefs and practices of teaching grammar. The second area of concern is the lack of comparative studies of studies on English and science lecturers' beliefs and practices when providing formative assessment and written feedback. Another area of concern is that it seems that no studies have been done on the impact and implications of using EMI in a private Malaysian tertiary context especially in the area of assessment and feedback. The lecturers' choice of using certain types of written feedback and

the usage of EMI could affect students' overall learning and writing process. The impact of implementing EMI in the provision of feedback could be positive in terms of encouraging students' learning or negative; for example, impeding students' understanding of the feedback and motivation to learn. Another gap identified is the study of the mismatches between students' beliefs about effective feedback and the beliefs of their subject lecturers on the same topic. Even fewer studies have examined lecturers' reflections on their practices of providing written feedback after receiving students' responses to that feedback. The existing studies examine both students' and lecturers' beliefs but the students' responses towards their lecturers' feedback were not feedforwarded to the lecturers for further reflection and actions for improvement. Additionally, limited research and analysis have been conducted on teachers' beliefs and practices about feedback from the perspective of activity theory, based on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory which is addressed mainly in research question (f). Another gap is the lack of comparative studies where two institutions from two different cultures collaborate and solve conflicts surrounding the best practices for assessment and feedback. From the methodological point of view, the majority of the existing studies employ surveys, questionnaires and self-report as the data collection methods. A gap has been identified as scarcities of studies that employ multiple data collection procedures, such as think-aloud and stimulated recall.

All of the research gaps mentioned above will be covered in the present study, through an exploration of the following research questions:

- a) What are the beliefs of English and science lecturers about giving written feedback on students' written academic assignments?
- b) What are the lecturers' observed practices in providing feedback on written academic assignments?
- c) What are the factors that influence lecturers' beliefs about good feedback, and to what extent do these factors influence lecturers' actual practices of providing written feedback?

- d) What are the students' beliefs about the value of their lecturers' written feedback, and what are students' responses towards the actual provision of their lecturers' feedback? To what extent do students' beliefs match those of the lecturer?

- e) What are the lecturers' reflections about their students' responses of the value of feedback?

- f) How can a theoretical framework of distributed cognition be expanded or refined to account for convergences or divergences of belief among lecturers and between lecturers and students?

The next chapter will provide a detailed description of my research methods, data collection methods and the approaches to analyse the data.

CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The theoretical background of the methodology applied in the present study is presented in Section 3.1 and the relevance of applying a case study approach is explained in Section 3.2. This is followed, in Section 3.3, by a discussion of the complexity related to collecting data using elicitation and introspection techniques. The contextual background of the research site, the faculties, the arrangement with partner institution, the assessment and feedback procedures, the participants (both the lecturers and their students) and their background information are then described in Section 3.4, followed by a detailed description of each data collection procedure (Section 3.5). Section 3.6 describes the ethical concerns and the procedures for obtaining ethical approval to conduct the study. Section 3.7 explains how the gathered data were organised and transcribed while Section 3.8 provides an explanation of how the data were subjected to an analysis based on grounded theory to allow the findings to be interpreted from the socio-cultural perspectives of the Zone of Proximal Development and Cultural Historical Activity Theory. Section 3.9 reports the trustworthiness of the research which includes the explanation of the validity of the data presented. Section 3.10, the last section, presents the summary of this chapter, and a preview of Chapter 4.

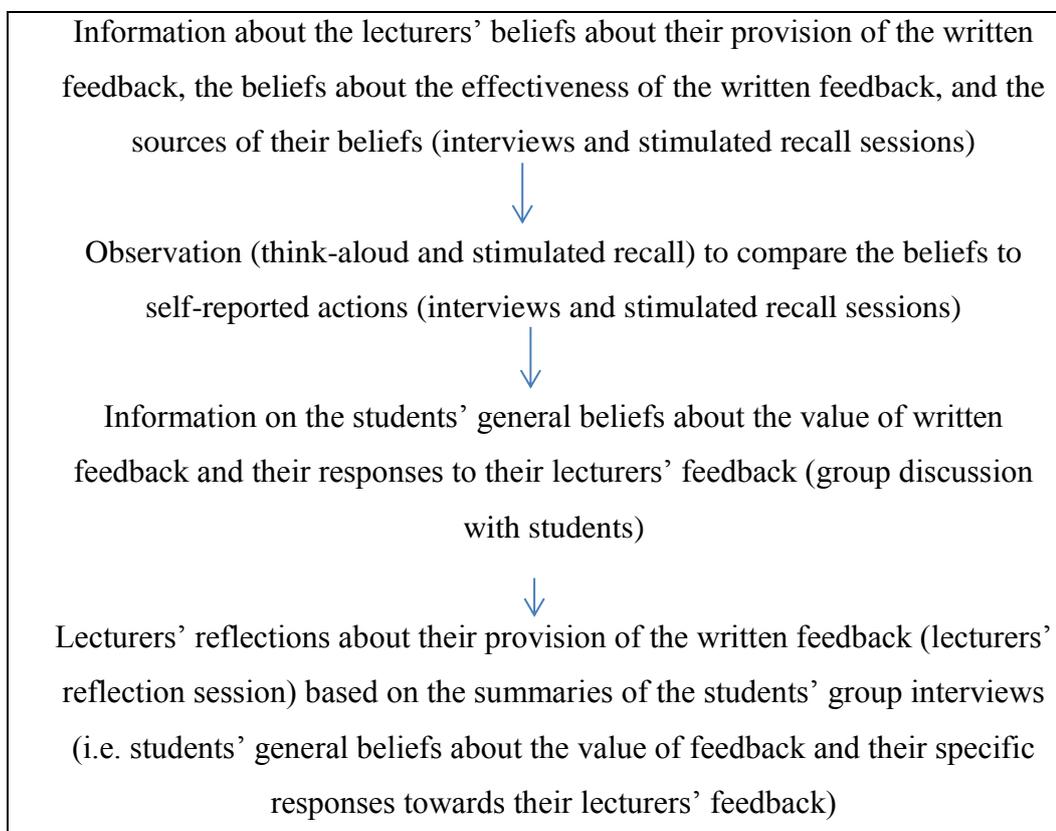
As this research explored the lecturers' and students' beliefs in relation to the value and the effectiveness of feedback, the lecturers' actual provision of feedback, and the lecturers' reflections on the students' responses to feedback, it was deemed more appropriate to use an interpretative approach to scrutinise human behaviour. This research project collected qualitative data and subjected them to a process of grounded analysis within a case study approach. Table 3.1 on the following page summarises the research questions and the data-gathering methods used:

Table 3.1 Research questions and methods used

Research questions	Data gathering methods
What are the beliefs of the English and science lecturers about giving written feedback on students' written academic assignments?	Individual interviews Think-aloud Stimulated recall Lecturers' reflection session
What are the lecturers' observed practices in providing feedback on written academic assignments?	Think-aloud & examination of lecturers' written feedback Stimulated recall
What are the factors that influence lecturers' beliefs about good feedback, and to what extent do these factors influence lecturers' actual practices of providing written feedback?	Individual interviews Think-aloud Stimulated recall
What are the students' beliefs about the value of their lecturers' written feedback, and what are students' responses towards the actual provision of their lecturers' feedback? To what extent do students' beliefs match those of the lecturer?	Students' group interviews to elicit general beliefs about the value of feedback and students' responses towards lecturers' actual feedback
What are the lecturers' reflections about their students' responses of the value of feedback?	Students' group interviews to elicit general beliefs about the value of feedback and students' responses towards lecturers' actual feedback Lecturers' reflection session
How can a theoretical framework of distributed cognition be expanded or refined to account for convergences or divergences of belief among lecturers and between lecturers and students?	All the data gathering methods mentioned above are compared and contrasted.

Thus, the research design is summarised in the table below, as a method for seeking answers to address the research questions above:

Table 3.2 Research design used



The next section describes the nature of the qualitative research employed in this study.

3.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative researchers perceive that knowledge is gained through the observation of humans in society, and the data collected is in the form of thick description (Geertz, 1973), which takes into consideration the socio-cultural context (Vygotsky, 1978). In order to elicit the information from my participants, it was essential for me to observe them in their context, as the natural setting influenced my participants to react in a certain way (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) define the interpretative paradigm as being:

typically used for providing an in-depth understanding of the research issues that embraces the perspectives of the study population and the context in which they live... Qualitative research is conducted to understand behaviour, beliefs, opinions and emotions from the perspective of study participants themselves, understand and explain people's view and behaviour, understand processes, such as how people make decisions, uncover the meaning that people give to their experiences, understand social interactions among people and the norms and values shared by them, identify the social, cultural, economic or physical context in which activities take place, give voice to the issues of a certain study population, provide depth, detail, nuance and context to the research issues, and study complex issues. (p. 10)

Qualitative study was introduced due to the limitations of positivist research, whereby research is verified through stages of experimentation and statistical analysis to confirm or disconfirm one or more hypotheses. In such research, the views of the participants are not taken into consideration (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Silverman, 2013). Qualitative research uses various types of research styles, for example "case study, ethnography and grounded theory" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. xii).

Nevertheless, there are some limitations to qualitative research. To begin with, positivist researchers consider the field of qualitative research as subjective, and it is perceived as 'soft' research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) because this approach does not use statistics or experiments to verify the findings of the study. Another critique is that the views from the participants could be biased, and there are no standardised test results to verify the participants' claims (Weyers, Strydom & Huisamen, 2011). The limitations mentioned above are addressed in this study through the systematic triangulation of the qualitative data which were collected and applying criteria for validating the trustworthiness of such research, which are discussed in detail in Section 3.9.

3.2 Case study research

I chose to employ a qualitative case study paradigm in the present study. According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2003), a case study is the “most widely used approach to qualitative research in education” (p. 433), and studies on the teaching and learning of L1 and L2 writing have increasingly employed a case study approach (Duff, 2008).

Creswell (2013) defines a case study as

a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observation, interviews, audio-visual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes. The unit of analysis in a case study might be multiple cases (a multisite study) or a single case (a within-site study). (p. 97)

My research fits a case study approach according to Creswell’s (2013, p. 98) identification of a case study. My research started through the identification of a specific case, which was a Malaysian private university (“an organisation”), and within two different faculties (English and sciences), in partnership with various Western universities in the UK, Australia and the US, and examining the lecturers’ activities of providing assessment and written feedback in progress, together with their students’ reactions towards the written feedback during a specific time of six months. My case study fits the “intrinsic case” (Stake, 1995), cited by Creswell (2013, p. 98), “to understand a specific issue,” where the purpose of my study is to understand the viewpoints and reactions of two different groups of people (Bryman, 2001; Creswell, 1994) towards a specific issue (the value of written feedback). The first group consisted of the English and science lecturers who provided written feedback, in a context where English was used as the medium of instruction. The second group of people was the students in their attempt in comprehending their lecturers’ written feedback, and suggestions provided to bridge the gaps mentioned. In terms of the data collection methods used, I included interviews, observations,

meetings with students, introspective methods (think-aloud), stimulated recall and documents (students' marked assignments).

Merriam (1998, p. xii) suggests that a qualitative case study is used as a technique to try to comprehend a particular phenomenon and the people involved. Stake (2000, pp. 439-440) emphasises that the context in which the research is conducted is essential and should be taken into account. Case studies are both descriptive and heuristic, as they "offer insights into the phenomenon under study. Philosophical assumptions underlying a case study draw upon the qualitative rather than the quantitative research paradigm" (Merriam, 1988, p. 21). Thus, the process of how the phenomenon is created is more essential than the outcomes.

Finally, new insights and knowledge about the process of teaching and learning gained within any context may promote a greater understanding of the theoretical issues involved (Duff, 2008). Thus the case may be "instrumental" (Stake, 2005) in theory development: the present study has allowed certain refinements to be proposed to key socio-cultural perspectives in regard to the provision of feedback on students' written work, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Several criticisms have been made against a case study as a research style. Some of the limitations of a case study include the findings that the data could not be generalised and that the results of the study could be misleading because inaccurate information could be provided (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Both the researchers and the participants could be biased in the research. For example, the researchers could unintentionally impose preconceived ideas while interpreting the data. Some researchers also may manipulate the findings by selecting only the results that agree with their assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). Some researchers overgeneralise the findings, applying the results from one particular context to other contexts, in which they may not apply (Merriam, 1998).

The participants, on the other hand, may be providing inaccurate information, based on their unreliable memory or ideas that they have wrongly interpreted

(Cohen et al., 2007). This is one of the weaknesses of qualitative research that places too much emphasis on the idea that the participants are the key to knowledge, and which may lead to distortion. It is also difficult to analyse the findings from case study research, because the amount and variety of the data means that an adequately thick description could be too overwhelming and time consuming (Duff, 2008). Overall, the limitations of conducting a case study tend to focus on threats of reliability and validity. Such threats may be addressed by conducting multi-method data collection, which is one of the strengths of a case study. The multi-method data collection enables verification of the claims made by the participants through a systematic process of grounded analysis (Stake, 2000).

3.3 Approaches in collecting data by elicitation and introspection

This section introduces my approaches in collecting the data through elicitation and introspection techniques.

I decided to use elicitation as a major tool in my research, as Johnson and Weller (2002) stress that this technique is successful in obtaining information in the area of “beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, judgements, emotions, feelings, and decisions” (p. 492). I used the “bottom up” approach (Johnson & Weller, 2002, p. 494) to obtain information by using elicitation through various techniques, for instance, “questionnaire, summary of interview data, think-aloud and students’ marked assignments”. Parallel with the actions of eliciting information from the participants, I was also using the “top down” approach. This means that I went through the process of validating the information given by the participants (Johnson & Weller, 2002, p. 494) through analysing the mass of data, clarifying and verifying any discrepancies from the previous responses. (See sections 3.5.4 and 3.5.5 for the details regarding the issues in collecting data by elicitation and introspection.)

3.4 Contextual background regarding the research site

The research was conducted in a private university college in Malaysia. The university signed partnership agreements with a number of universities abroad,

specifically in the UK, the US and Australia. English was used as the only medium of instruction. I was a former employee at this university (refer to Section 3.9.1), during which I acquired the contextual information but I was not able to obtain the documentations and agreement from the partner university as they were private and confidential.

3.4.1 The structure of faculties/departments in the private university-college and the participants involved in the study

This private university college has several faculties, some of which were working with partner universities.

Faculty of Languages (FL)

At the time of data collection, the function of the Faculty of Languages (FL) was as a service department, which catered to the English language needs of the mainstream students. The types of English programmes offered by FL were based on the requirements of the partner universities, the English language needs of the other faculties, and the directives of the management.

For example, the British partner universities required all undergraduate engineering students to complete a compulsory English for Academic Purposes (EAP) study skills course. In this EAP course, students were taught how to give an oral presentation, the techniques of writing a laboratory report, email, letters and memos, and conducting a mini research project. Students were required to obtain a minimum of B- in order to be able to enrol in the British university to do a programme in engineering. If they failed to do so, students would then need to take the IELTS test achieving the benchmark of a Band 6.

The British partner universities also had different assessment requirements for the different types of programmes. For example, the Business programme required the English lecturers to conduct a peer review system, where samples of the final examination papers would go through second marking by the lecturers teaching the same subjects, and the final process of moderation would be done by the partner universities.

Faculty of Science (FS)

The Faculty of Science (FS) catered to all the mainstream students' needs for science and mathematics subjects required by the partner universities. In addition, FS was allowed to run its own science degree programmes and to collaborate with various partner universities, mainly from Australia, United Kingdom and New Zealand, where students could transfer their credits in their final year in their respective countries.

All the partner universities (especially from Australian and British universities) sent their representatives to attend the examination board meetings. The Australian and British moderators moderated only selected samples of students' marked final examination papers. However, the FS lecturers were empowered to set their own assessments.

Faculty of Engineering and Technology (FET)

FET was considered one of the prestige faculties, which generated high income for the institution. The main partner universities (especially from British universities) sent their representatives to attend the examination board meetings and moderate some samples of all the assessments (the students' marked assignments and final examination papers) (Please see Chapter 4.3).

Based on their expertise, each lecturer in FET was given a different responsibility in teaching various engineering subjects to diploma and postgraduate students. All the teaching staffs were required to have at least a Masters degree in their specific fields in order to qualify for the teaching post. The Engineering lecturers were given the freedom to design their own assessment, as the number of students in the engineering classes was also relatively small, with an average of 20 or fewer students.

The partner university from UK, who were offering the engineering programmes, did not impose the peer review system on the engineering lecturers, but required samples of the marked assignments to be compiled and

submitted to the head of the engineering programme in the Malaysian university for the inspection of the moderators.

In this study, the lecturers were placed in two major groups: the English lecturers, who were placed with the English department, and the science lecturers, who belonged with either the Faculty of Science or Faculty of Engineering and Technology.

3.4.2 Assessments and feedback procedures

I was unable to obtain the official documents from the partner universities about partnership agreements regarding assessment as they were private and confidential. However, during the lecturers' individual interviews, it was found that the methods of conducting assessment were done differently in the respective departments. For example, in the interview, the English lecturers claimed that some of the programmes required all the English lecturers teaching the same subject to co-construct the assessment for the approval of the partner university. Some assessment for the other programmes had already been determined by the chief paper examiners and the lecturers were required to follow the assessment set. The chief paper examiners were appointed by the Dean of the Faculty in the Malaysian university. (See Section 4.3 for the details).

The science lecturers however, had more autonomy in designing their own assessment. However, they were answerable to the overseas moderators. For example, they had to change their assessment if the moderators were unhappy with the questioning technique or the way the lecturers provide grades (see section 4.3 for more details).

3.4.3 Lecturer participants

The lecturers who volunteered for my research were recruited through the distribution of a questionnaire. I encountered a number of difficulties in recruiting participants, which I have described in detail in Ng and Brown (2012, pp. 37-38). A total of ten lecturers volunteered for this research

project. Five lecturers were from Faculty of Languages (English), while five were from the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Engineering and Technology. Biodata for each of the lecturers can be found in Appendix A.

All of the five lecturers teaching English (herewith abbreviated as E1, E2, E3, E4 and E5) were Malaysian females. Out of the five lecturers, three were of Chinese ethnicity (E2, E3 and E5); E1 was Malay, while E4 was Indian. E1, E3 and E4 were within the age range of 30-39, while E2 and E5 were in the 40-49 age category. All five each obtained a Masters and four had more than ten years' teaching experience degree (E1, E2, E3, E5), while one (E4) had six to ten years' teaching experience. Although E1 and E2 had many years of teaching experience, they had been teaching in the research site for one to three years. All of the English lecturers except for E5 worked full time. They assisted the university to meet the language needs of diploma and undergraduate students, as required by the partner universities abroad or the requirements of the local programmes offered in the university.

The demographic details of the science lecturers (herewith abbreviated as S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5) were very different from those of their English colleagues. Malaysian Chinese males seemed to dominate the science field, with one Malaysian Indian female. S2, S3 and S4 were within the age range of 30-39, while S1 is in the 50-59 age groups, and S5 is placed in the 40-49 age category. In terms of their education background, both S1 and S2 were currently pursuing their doctoral degrees, and they held Masters qualifications in their relevant fields. The other three lecturers (S3, S4 and S5) had doctoral degrees. S1 and S5 had more than ten years' teaching experience and had also served the same number of years in the research site. S2 had been in the research site and had been teaching six to ten years, while S4 had been teaching in the research site for one to three years. Although S3 had four to five years' teaching experience and had been teaching in the site for one to three years, he held positions as the Head of Programme in Industrial and Mechatronics in the Engineering faculty and as senior lecturer. The other lecturers in the sciences held positions as senior lecturers due to their long service (i.e. S1, S2) or their qualifications (especially S4 and S5). The lecturers in the science department taught either

diploma or undergraduate students in the fields of science or engineering programmes.

3.4.4 Students enrolled in the research site

The majority of the students studying in the research site were Malaysian Chinese who had either completed their secondary school studies in the Chinese Independent High Schools or the National Secondary Schools. Students would have passed the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) if they were from the Chinese Independent High Schools, or the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)/Malaysian Certificate of Education if they were from the National Secondary Schools, before enrolling to study at the research site. The research site required certain entry requirements including English from the students, which is summarised in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Students' entry requirements

Name of examination	Entry Requirements
SPM/O Level	5 Cs including English
UEC	4 Bs including English

Students from the National Secondary Schools were required to have a credit in English as well as four other subjects, while students from the Chinese Independent High Schools were required to have four Bs in any subjects, one of which must be English. The English language requirement for students from the Chinese Independent High Schools was based on the English subject from the Unified Examination Certificate (UCE), while students from the National Secondary Schools were required to pass their English Language subject through the Malaysian Certificate of Education examination, which was based on the British General Certificate of Education (O-Level).

3.4.5. Student participants

The majority of the students who participated in this study were Chinese Malaysians. The number of students who participated in this study varied according to the size of the class or the availability of the students. The English students were from various programme ranging from Information Technology, Business and Administration to Engineering. The science students were mainly from the engineering and applied sciences departments. Students majoring in science disciplines would complete their degrees overseas during their final year of studies, either in UK or Australia. The information regarding these students can be found in Appendix C. The next section describes the procedures of collecting the data for the research.

3.5 Procedures

A table summarizing the lecturers' participation in the various data gathering methods is placed in Appendix B while another table detailing the students' participation in the group interviews is placed in Appendix C. The explanations of the participants' involvement are described in detail along with the different data collection methods in Sections 3.5.1. to 3.5.7. Figure 7 summarises the procedures of my six months of data collection, in chronological order from July to September 2009. This is followed by an explanation of the reasons for my choice of the data collection methods, which comprised questionnaires, interviews, think-aloud, and stimulated recall, according to the type of data collection methods. The oral data collection procedures, both with the lecturers and the students, were all conducted in English, the common lingua franca, and audio recorded.

Identify scope of research, research questions and research site



Questionnaire (for scoping and collecting background information about respondents from research site). Interested participants (lecturers) fill in consent forms and questionnaires

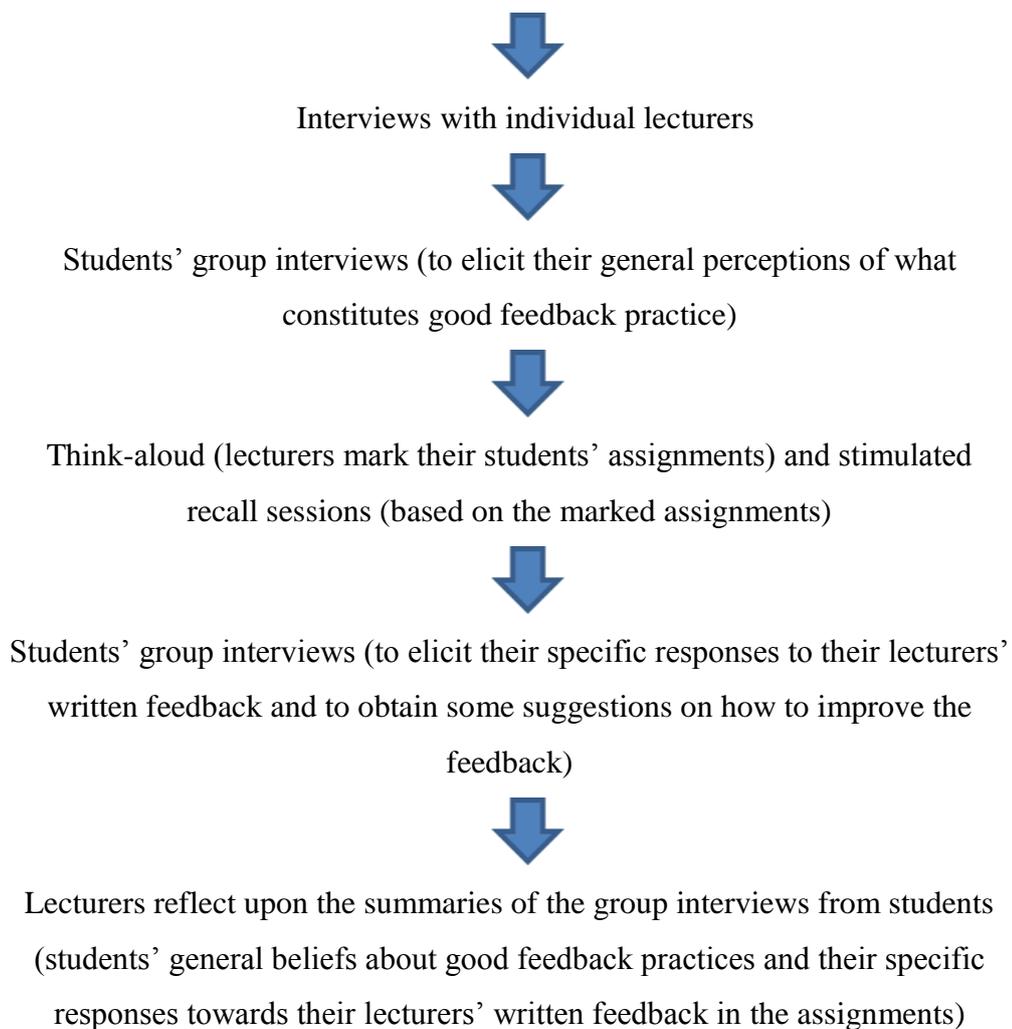


Figure 7. Procedures of data collection

3.5.1 Questionnaire for the lecturers

The overall aim of this phase of the research was to elicit lecturers' beliefs about the value of feedback in light of the lecturers' observed practices within a private university in Malaysia. As a first step in the multi-method strategy, I decided to use a questionnaire (see Appendix K).

The questionnaire in my research was intended to serve three purposes. Firstly, it aimed to obtain some background information about the demographic characteristics of the respondents (Creswell, 2005). Next, it sought to elicit the lecturers' general attitudes towards feedback (Brown, 2001) and the self-reporting of their practices of providing feedback to inform my subsequent data collection. This enabled me to elicit and examine abstract, cognitive processes,

individual preferences and values (Brown, 2001; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010; Wagner, 2010). Finally, the volunteers were invited to participate in the subsequent phases of the research (or scoping the respondents, as suggested by Cohen et al. (2007)). The ethical procedures of getting the participants to sign the consent forms are described in Section 3.6.

The use of questionnaires has its limitations. One of the limitations is that the answers provided by the participants may not reflect the actual stance of the participants (Creswell, 2005). Another limitation is that the data gathered from the survey is rather limited if closed-ended questions are used and if the open-ended questions are used, it is difficult to categorise the answers (Cohen et al., 2013). I decided to include more closed questions than open-ended questions because I was able to obtain and triangulate further information subsequently.

3.5.2 Lecturers' interviews: Beliefs

Once the lecturers had signed the consent form (Appendix J) and completed the questionnaire (Appendix K), the next step was to follow up with the individual lecturers' interviews.

Three reasons prompted me to use individual interviews in this study. The first was to enable clarification of the results gathered from questionnaires (Kerlinger, 1970). Secondly, interviews gave me the opportunity to obtain richer data by asking about issues that were not addressed in the questionnaire (Richards, 2009), and by probing or eliciting respondents' specific beliefs about an issue (Powney & Watts, 1987; Richards, 2009; Tuckman, 1972). The third purpose of the interviews was to obtain several types of information: the respondents' background; their beliefs about providing feedback and the sources of those beliefs; the lecturers' practice of providing feedback; the lecturers' perceptions of the value of feedback; students' beliefs and expectations concerning the lecturers' feedback; details about grades; the issue of multiple drafts and the problems encountered while providing feedback or marking; and, finally, getting the respondents to provide suggestions to overcome the problems.

I decided to use semi-structured questions in the lecturer's interview (Appendix L), for various reasons. These questions are open ended and allow flexibility so that the direction of the interview can be changed if the occasion arises. This format enables other unexpected issues to be explored, which in turn permits additional or modified questions to be incorporated into the set questions (Borg, 2006; Merriam, 1998).

When I met each individual lecturer for the interview, I explained the purposes and the aims of the interviews. The duration of each interview varied, depending on the lecturer; the average interview lasted approximately half an hour, although one was only 20 minutes and another last for approximately one hour and 15 minutes.

In two instances, there was not enough time to conduct interviews, and this was one of the limitations of the interview sessions. One English lecturer had commitments to teach at another institution, while a science lecturer had other duties to fulfil as Head of Programme. In both cases, the interviews were unavoidably rushed. Nevertheless, I was able to obtain more details from the Head of Programme by conducting an additional session of interview and collecting other data collection methods; for example, stimulated recall, think-aloud and reflection sessions, since he was a full-time staff member.

Another limitation of any interview is the "truth value" of the interviews. Respondents may provide answers that do not reflect their actual beliefs or views. Moreover, respondents may either try to please the interviewer by providing the desired answers (Fontana & Frey, 2005; McKay, 2009), or the participants may choose not to reveal the truth due to a lack of trust (Cohen et al., 2007). A report on these limitations is included in Section 3.9.1. under the topic *my role as an insider*. Even though my respondents may have been fluent in English, I was aware that the Malaysian hierarchy system, and gender and age factors (Johnson, 2002), may have affected the content of the interview (Denzin, 1989). To illustrate this point, when I was interviewing older males or males in position of authority, they seemed to emphasise the positive aspects of providing feedback.

Another issue is that an interview is also seen as a platform, whereby both the researchers and the participants would discuss issues and come to an agreement based on the context given (Fontana & Frey, 2005). I was aware of all these issues, and therefore reminded myself to attempt to be neutral and not impose my influence or opinion during the interviews.

In addition, Measor (1985) suggests some strategies that could be applied to mitigate the limitations of “truth value.” The best way was to establish good relationships with my participants, in order to encourage them to express their thoughts freely without any inhibitions. Another strategy was to be patient and wait for my participants to respond.

Another problem encountered in the interviews was the relevance of the information provided by the participants. As researchers observe, some respondents may talk a lot, but the information provided might not be related to the study or it might include too much detail (Johnson & Weller, 2002). In the interviews I conducted, a few participants chose to speak minimally and did not provide much information. Thus I needed to use different probes to encourage people to speak, and to use strategies that would redirect the participants back to the focus of the study, if the content of the interview had been diverted (Johnson & Weller, 2002).

In short, “there is no single interview style that fits every occasion or all respondents” (Converse & Schuman, 1974, p. 53), and I acknowledged this by being flexible, to suit the purpose, sociocultural factors and context of the research.

3.5.3 Students’ group interviews: General beliefs

A group interview is defined as the “systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting” (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 651). Group discussion is another form of qualitative data collection that is gaining popularity in educational research (Cohen et al., 2007), in which participants interact with the researcher to provide collective answers to the issues raised. I decided to use group interviews or group discussions twice, for

two different purposes in this research project. The first purpose was to elicit students' general beliefs about good feedback practices, and the second was to elicit students' specific responses towards their lecturers' written feedback.

The group interview was conducted because the number of students in a class was large, and it was, therefore, not practical to conduct individual interviews. Also, group interviews or discussions have permitted the researcher to obtain a range of perspectives and rich data from many students, as each one provides different information (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Compared to the individual interview, the group discussions enabled me to save time (Cohen et al., 2007; Fontana & Frey, 2000). Arksey and Knight (1999) claim that the information given by the respondents in the group discussion is more reliable, as other students could provide "cross-check" with their peers, both to agree or disagree, and this influences their responses during their interviews.

Group interviews can be used to triangulate and validate other data gathered through alternative methods (Fontana & Frey, 2000). The type of interview questions used in the group interview can be varied and not restricted to only one type. A mixture of structured and unstructured questions can be used in the group interview (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Similar to the lecturers' interview, I had a checklist when I interviewed the students so that I would not miss out any important points (Appendix M). At the same time, I was also using semi-structured questions in the students' group interviews or discussions, to enable the emergence of other issues I could not anticipate before the study.

The group interviews to elicit students' general beliefs about the value of feedback were conducted in different ways. The lecturers made the decision on how the students' interviews should be conducted. For example, the majority of the students' group interviews were conducted during their class lessons, where the English or science lecturers (E1, S1, S3, S4 and S5) left the room and handed the class over to me to conduct the interviews. These interviews were conducted either in the last half an hour before the class ended, or during the first half hour, at the beginning of the class or the lab sessions. Thus, the majority of the student participants were selected on the basis of convenience sampling. Two of the English lecturers (E4, E5) preferred me to conduct the

group interview separately, in an empty classroom. These two lecturers personally selected the students to participate in the group interviews. All the students in S2's class participated in the group interview; nevertheless, the interviews were conducted in his presence during the lab session. Since the students were busy making models of lifts (elevators), I had to conduct the interview in four separate groups. E3 was hospitalised on the day I had made arrangements for the class interview, and as a result all but two students had left the class. Nevertheless, the two students were willing to participate in the interview. I took the opportunity to interview the students, as I did not know whether or not I would have a further opportunity to gather data from this lecturer's class (due to E3's poor health history, I was aware that she could be hospitalised for a long time).

Before the group interviews with the students were conducted, I explained the purposes and the aims of the interviews. The duration of each interview varied, ranging from approximately ten minutes to approximately half an hour. The average interview session lasted approximately twenty-five minutes.

Conducting a group interview has its challenges. Some students tended to be dominant, making them more likely to lead the entire discussion. In order to resolve this issue, I practised interviewing skills, so that I could encourage passive respondents to participate and persuade the dominant respondents to allow opportunities for the other group members to contribute.

Some students may chose to withhold some information or opinions (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Fontana & Fry, 2000; Morgan, 1997), especially if they fear that the researcher will report something negative to their lecturers, and as a result the lecturers might dislike them. During the interview, I reassured the students that names would not be revealed to the lecturers. In addition, I provided students with an example of a summary of a group student interview and told them that their lecturer would receive the students' report in a similar format. As a result, some of the students appeared to be open about their perceptions of good feedback.

3.5.4 Lecturers' think-aloud practices

I included think-aloud sessions, a format in which “participants state their thoughts and behaviours [verbally]” (Block, 1986, p. 463). The think-aloud sessions were conducted while the lecturers were marking their assignments. This method assisted me to simultaneously obtain data about both the participants' cognitive processes and their associated actions (McKay, 2009). A number of previous studies have specifically used “think-aloud” procedures to investigate lecturers' perceptions of feedback in writing (e.g. Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Diab, 2005b; Lee, 2008b; Kumar, et al., 2009).

The think-aloud technique was appropriate in this study. The lecturers' thought processes of providing the feedback were recorded and observed, and this would enable me to answer one of the research questions: to examine the extent to which the lecturers' beliefs about providing feedback were put into practice. The advantages of observation were that I was able to experience the lecturers' processes of providing feedback to students, and to obtain additional information about the respondents. In addition, unusual actions were also noted through observations (Creswell, 1994). The think-aloud sessions enabled me to compare and contrast different lecturers' “responses towards students' writing” (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 13).

Kumar (2005) recommends before performing the actual think-aloud session to conduct warm-up sessions with the participants, so that they can become familiar with the think-aloud methods. However, Ericsson and Simon (1993) refute this view, for they feel that the participants would then form strategies for the actual think-aloud sessions, rather than performing the action naturally. Kumar (2005) suggests providing other forms of training, such as solving problems in mathematics, for which he used an introspective technique. I was interested in incorporating Kumar's advice into my study, because in the Asian context it is considered peculiar to speak to oneself, and I wanted my participants to become familiar with this idea. Thus, I decided to incorporate the warm-up or training sessions in my think-aloud pilot studies, which I conducted twice: once in New Zealand, and again on the research site itself.

At the research site, I obtained some think-aloud transcriptions and the marked assignments from two lecturers from different departments as samples for my participants' reference as a form of training (Appendix O). Out of these two lecturers, one was not involved in the actual study. Before using the samples, the lecturers' and students' names, student identity numbers, programme codes and subject titles were omitted from the marked scripts, as well as the think-aloud transcripts, to protect the identity of the lecturers and the students.

In the actual think-aloud data collection, I made appointments with the lecturers to enquire if they were willing to perform the think-aloud. If the participants agreed to participate, then I would ask if they were confident to conduct the think-aloud session or if they would prefer to have a look at the samples for guidance first. "Face issue" was another problem that I had to resolve, as questioning their confidence might sound insulting to some groups of people; for example, participants who were older than myself, participants who held positions of higher authority, and participants whose qualifications were higher than mine. I used discretion by posing indirect questions to elicit information from these groups of people; for example, I asked "Are you familiar with the concept of think-aloud?" or "in your opinion, what are the procedures of doing the think-aloud?".

All but one of my respondents asked to look at the samples. I provided the samples of the think-aloud transcriptions and the marked assignments, depending on the type of courses the lecturers were teaching (that is, content lecturers would be given a sample from the content lecturer or an English lecturer would be given the English sample) (Appendix O). The time used to read the samples varied from one participant to another. Some participants took longer to read the samples (ten minutes), while some skimmed through the samples.

Once the participants were confident, a training session was conducted, ranging from half an hour to one hour. I requested that the participants randomly pick a few pieces of their students' written work, both for the training and the actual think-aloud session. I provided instructions for performing the think-aloud exercise, which were adapted from Gass and Mackey (2000) (Appendix N).

Because some participants had limited availability, two did not do the training, and some marked only one assignment. The majority, however, marked two assignments before performing the actual think-aloud session. All the training sessions, as well as the actual think-aloud session, were audio-recorded.

One of the issues of conducting the think-aloud method is whether the researchers are present or absent whilst the participants are performing the activity. Kumar (2005) argues that the observers' effect may prompt the participants to condition themselves to perform their best, which does not mirror their actual cognitive process. Thus, he suggests making the context of performing the think-aloud exercise as natural as possible, by leaving both the recording device and the participants to themselves. When the participants are mentally ready to conduct the think-aloud session, they are able to perform to their maximum capacity (Kumar, 2005). Before returning to Malaysia to collect my data, I consulted one of my colleagues in New Zealand regarding this issue, who used the think-aloud method in her research. She explained that if she left her participants alone with the recording device, they did not think-aloud as much as when she was in their presence. She discovered later that her participants felt that they needed a person to talk to when they did the think-aloud exercise, for it was not natural for them to talk to themselves. Based on my colleague's advice, I was present in six of eight participants' think-aloud sessions in the research field. Two of the participants were not comfortable with the idea that I should be present with them during the think-aloud session. Complying with their wishes, I provided them with the recording device. These two participants did not undergo any training, nor did they read any samples. Although they were able to perform the think-aloud sessions fairly well, I had some problems doing the follow-up stimulated recall, which I describe in Section 3.5.5. As for the other participants, while they were doing the training and the think-aloud sessions, I was a non-participant observer. I made field notes and, subsequently, reflective notes (Bogden & Biklen, 1982) with thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973), which subsequently helped me in the stimulated recall sessions, which will be discussed in detail (Section 3.5.5) whereas if I had left my participants alone, I suspect that my think-aloud and my stimulated recall data would not be rich with information. I did not attempt to prompt the participants during the actual think-aloud process in order to avoid distorting

the data collection; if I had prompted them, the participants may have been forced to provide data which was not a true reflection of their cognitive process (Kumar, 2005).

The think-aloud technique has several limitations. It has also been suggested (Kumar, 2005) that a theoretical concern associated with think aloud is that of reactivity: the think-aloud protocol may not accurately represent thinking. In these sessions, the participants are required to do a primary task (provide feedback on a piece of written work) and a secondary task (to verbalise their thinking processes). It has been suggested (Schooler, Ohlsson, & Brooks, 1993) that the secondary task may compromise the first. Thus, any inferences regarding the relationship between thought and word must necessarily be partial and tentative. Nevertheless, while thought may thus be filtered through as it emerges into speech – and, according to Kasper (1998, p. 138), it may be more of a reflection of the short term memory than the thought process – it is a more direct conduit than self-reports solicited by interview.

Another limitation of the think-aloud activity is that in the process of transcribing the data, important features of the spoken communication may be eliminated; for instance, “false starts and self-repairs may indicate alternative plans, increased pauses, fillers, and a slow speech rate may suggest a high processing load” (Kasper, 1998, p. 359). Kasper (1998) suggests that all the verbal data should be carefully and systematically coded and analysed. A variety of data coding systems have been created to investigate verbal reports, and the grounded analysis of the think-aloud data would adopt insights derived from these systems. To mitigate some of these limitations, the transcribed protocols were triangulated with the field and reflective notes, as well as the interview, questionnaire and subsequent stimulated recall data.

3.5.5 Lecturers’ stimulated recall: Reflection

Stimulated recall is “one subset of a range of introspective methods that represent a means of eliciting data about thought processes involved in carrying out a task or activity” (Gass and Mackey, 2000, p. 1).

Borg (2006) and Woods (1996) suggest that the method usually involves the playback of an audio or video recording of specific instances of lecturers' activities to stimulate the recall, reflection on, and verbal explanation of their actions. Normally, think-aloud activity is recorded and transcribed into a "protocol": a "written record of thoughts verbalized while a task is being performed" (Borg 2006, p. 220) or "a version of verbal report in which participants state their thoughts and behaviours" (Block, 1986, p. 463). While such protocols may assist the researcher in making reasonable inferences and interpretations of cognitive processing, they are of very limited utility for eliciting the reflections of the participant because of the necessarily fractured, abbreviated and often unintelligible nature of private speech (Vygotsky, 1986). Gass and Mackey (2000) suggest that it is essential that the stimulated recall is done quickly, if possible, to retain the memory after an activity is conducted. The participants may not be able to recall their thoughts of performing certain actions and may resort to falsifying the report (Gass & Mackey, 2000; McKay, 2009). Therefore, in my research, I chose to conduct the stimulated recall session immediately after the think-aloud. During my stimulated recall pilot studies with the same participants in the think-aloud pilot session (both in New Zealand and Malaysia), I realised that it was not possible for me to transcribe the lecturers' verbalisations on the spot, and it was not practical to play back the sections of the think-aloud session, as it would be too time consuming. Therefore, during the actual stimulated recall procedure, I decided to use the marked students' assignments to stimulate the participants to describe their actions and thoughts instead. In addition, I used the field notes which I had taken during the think-aloud observations, to help lecturers to recall their decision-making when providing specific feedback earlier on. Similar to the other data collection methods, the duration for the stimulated recall varied from one participant to another. Some lasted approximately half an hour, while others extended to approximately 45 minutes. The session was audio-recorded, and a summary of the discussion was provided to each participant for validation. The data thus provided enabled me to make reasonable inferences about the relationship between the lecturers' beliefs and their practices (Borg, 2006). In this research, these were framed in terms of (a) strong convergence between beliefs and practices; (b) limited convergence; and (c) divergence. Triangulation of this data with other data, especially that which was obtained

from the transcribed think-aloud session, further validated the study, with particular reference to Research Question 2.

Stimulated recall is not, however, without its problems. As mentioned earlier, two of the participants did the think-aloud exercise without my being present. This caused inconvenience for me, as I had to rely on the marked assignments as the stimulus, and I did not have a chance to observe the lecturers' marking. One lecturer was employed full-time so was more readily available than others and I able to make follow-up appointments to clarify certain issues, so I encountered few problems. However, I did have more difficulty with a part-time lecturer, who had limited time on campus and did not reply to my emails in which I had asked for clarification about specific issues.

As mentioned earlier, another limitation of this data collection method is that participants may choose to fabricate their answers. The participants may be led to create an answer; for example if I were to insist that the participants provide an answer, they may feel pressured to provide information, even though they are unable to recall their actions (Gass & Mackey, 2000). In this eventuality, I did not probe further, but merely acknowledged such limited responses. In addition, I tried to avoid asking the reasons for certain behaviours that may have encouraged the participants to devise their answers.

Another potential problem is to ensure that the lecturer's mind focuses on the specific think-aloud session. Thus, where it felt necessary, I used such prompts as, "What were you thinking at this point?" or "Do you remember what were you thinking when you provided this feedback?"

It was also essential that I used the right probes or used indirect questions, so that my participants would not be offended whenever I wanted to clarify certain feedback or issues that arose. Despite the limitations, the think-aloud sessions provided useful information which I was able to incorporate with the data collected by other means, to establish the extent of divergence or convergence between the participants' professed beliefs and their actual practice.

3.5.6 Students' group interviews: Responses to lecturers' feedback

Before meeting the students in groups to elicit their responses to their lecturers' feedback, I discussed with each individual lecturer his or her preferences in how I should present students' marked assignments with written feedback. Each lecturer had different approaches to presenting feedback; for example, E1 and E3 wanted several samples of marked assignments, which included their examples to be presented to the students. (Please see Appendix P). The majority of the lecturers wanted the students to respond to their own feedback. S4 wanted his sample feedback to be retyped to protect the identity of the student through the handwriting. The students' names were removed from the marked assignments and copies were made for the students to discuss the usefulness of the written feedback. The samples of the marked science assignments are placed in (Appendix Q). The major reason students were not given the opportunity to respond to their lecturers' feedback on their own writing was due to ethical concerns about discussing individual students' work. It was also impractical in a group situation to elicit each student's responses towards his or her lecturer's feedback.

The purpose and the aims of the research were explained to students before the meetings were conducted. The different samples of feedback were distributed to the students according to their disciplines (that is, English students were given the sample feedback provided by the English lecturers, while the science students were provided feedback from their science lecturers). Students were then instructed to read, reflect on and explain the meaning of the feedback. If students were unable to understand the feedback, they were required to provide suggestions as to how that feedback could be improved.

3.5.7 Lecturers' reflection sessions

All the data collected from the students' meetings – to elicit their perceptions of effective feedback, and their specific responses to their lecturers' feedback – was summarised, and all the points were presented to the individual lecturers. The lecturers were asked to respond or to provide comments to the points presented. Each of the reflection sessions was done differently with different

lecturers. I did not have enough time to transcribe the group meetings with the students who were taught by the English lecturers while I was collecting the data in Malaysia. Only when I returned to New Zealand was I able to complete the transcriptions, and I sent the summary to the English lecturers concerned. I sent an email to each of the lecturers, requesting them to respond to the points raised by the students. E1, E3 and E5 responded to my email. E2 did not perform the think-aloud session; thus, I was unable to conduct meetings with the students to obtain their specific responses to their lecturers' feedback. E4 did not respond to my emails, although she was reminded several times.

As for the science lecturers, I was able to obtain the lecturers' reflections face to face as I completed the transcriptions of all the students' meetings.

3.6 Ethical concerns and procedures

This study involved the study of persons; therefore, ethical approvals were sought based on the requirement of the "Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulation 2008" of The University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee. The application to administer the preliminary study or survey, and a description of the in-depth study, were given approval by the FASS (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) HRE Committee on 15 October 2009 (Appendix D), while the letter to seek permission to conduct a survey to recruit participants for the in-depth study at the research site (Appendix E) was given approval on 20 November 2009 through email (please refer to Appendix F).

A letter seeking consent from the President in charge of the research site to administer the preliminary survey and providing an explanation of the in-depth research to be conducted in 2010 was delivered via email as an attachment and by airmail on 22 October 2009. On the same day, the President gave a positive reply via email. The consent form was signed (Appendix G) and attached with the email (please refer to Appendix F). When I returned to Malaysia at the end of February 2010 to administer the survey, and to conduct the in-depth research, I personally met the President with a letter detailing the descriptions of the in-depth study (Appendix H), and he signed another consent form to

allow me to conduct the in-depth research, which was dated 3 March 2010 (please refer to Appendix I).

Before the in-depth research was conducted, from March 2010 to 30 August 2010, the letter seeking permission and the copy of the signed consent form by the President were distributed to all the deans and directors (which also included the other faculties besides the English faculties), so that the upper management were all aware and well informed of my research (Appendix E).

The lecturers were also given the letter and consent forms (Appendix J) explaining the details of the research along with the questionnaires (Appendix K). The participants were reassured regarding confidentiality, anonymity, the code of ethics, and the responsibility of the researcher and the participants' rights to withdraw themselves from the project, along with their data, with no questions being asked. In addition, participants were asked if they would like to have a copy of the research findings.

All but three of the lecturers signed the consent form. Of the three who were reluctant to sign the form, two decided not to participate in the in-depth research while one participated in the research by giving verbal consent.

3.7 Organising and transcribing data

All the lecturers' questionnaires were scanned and placed in a computer folder named "Questionnaire," and the folder was subdivided into English and science, with the pseudonyms of the lecturers. All the audio-recordings were stored digitally in the form of mp3 files, according to the data collection methods (that are, teacher interviews, student interviews, think-aloud, and stimulated recall). These folders were further divided into subfolders according to the different faculties (English or science) and the pseudonyms of the lecturers. All of the mp3 files mentioned above, as well as the scanned questionnaires, were then stored in the main file entitled "Actual research at the research site" in my laptop.

All of the data collected from the lecturers' questionnaires were stored individually and on the basis of faculties. All the digital audio-recordings were transcribed manually into Microsoft Word, and the organisation of the transcribed audio was also done according to the same method as the audio-recording. The only difference was that all the transcribed files were placed in the main file entitled "Transcribed data from research site." The transcription conventions were completed according to Du Bois (2006). This information appears in Table 4.1 (Section 4.0). All the transcriptions were summarised and verified. The organisation of the summary and the verified data were organised in the same way as the transcribed files. The main file for the summary of the transcribed data was "Summary of transcribed data", and "Verified data" for the verified data. The marked students' assignments without names were scanned and placed in a file entitled "Marked students' assignments." The students' responses were placed in a file entitled "Students' responses." The English lecturers' responses to the students' responses were kept in a file entitled "Reflection via email," while the science lecturers' responses towards the students' responses were kept in a file entitled "Reflection session."

3.8 Data analysis

The data for my analysis included questionnaires, interview transcripts, summaries of verified interviews, non-verified think-aloud transcripts (English lecturers) and verified think-aloud transcripts (science lecturers), stimulated recall transcripts and summaries of verified stimulated recall, marked students' assignments with students' names being removed, summaries of students' meetings to obtain their general responses to what constitutes effective feedback, and students' specific responses to their lecturers' feedback.

Generally, my approach to analysing the data was using a grounded theory method, which is mainly used in analysing qualitative research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) define grounded theory as "the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained and analysed in social research" (p. 1). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), the main purpose of grounded theory is not to validate existing theories, but to generate ideas or theories from collected data; an example is the think-aloud data from the lecturers, and the interview sessions

with the students. The analysis of my data was done immediately through the identification of open coding and emerging themes after the first data had been collected (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 1998; Dey, 1999). During the analysis of data, I did not apply any conceptual framework that might hinder the emergence of themes and ideas (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As the process of collecting data continued, a constant comparison of data was conducted through coding manually. The procedures taken to analyse the data were summarised and presented in a table (Appendix R).

My pre-analysis began through coding the lecturers' questionnaires, based on a range of emerging themes, for which full details are provided in Appendix S. The main themes identified from the questionnaire were the teachers' attitudes, the teachers' reported beliefs, and the sources of the lecturers' beliefs. These provided useful constructs for the interview sessions. I began the coding of the interview transcriptions by highlighting and then listing keywords, which summarised the main idea of the different sections of the interviews and placed them into codes and themes. A sample of the coding and the emerging themes of one lecturer was placed in a table in Appendix T

I coded the other individual lecturers' interview transcripts in the same way. Each lecturer's transcript was then summarised into headings, in the form of themes and subthemes. In order to make the comparison between the interview data of the lecturers from the two faculties, I placed all the themes and subthemes in the form of a checklist as presented in Appendix U. Guided by the checklist illustrated in Appendix U, I eliminated the additional and insignificant subcategories and finalised the major themes and categories. The process of analysing the interviews with students was the same as the process of analysing the interviews with the lecturers. The themes and subcategories that emerged in the students' interviews were similar to those of the lecturers, in terms of the purpose of the feedback, the foci of feedback, and motivating feedback. The next step involved the analysis of the lecturers' think-aloud transcripts.

A coding sample of one of the think-aloud sessions with one lecturer is provided in Appendix V. The think-aloud transcript for each lecturer was deconstructed into categories such as: associated actions, actions versus beliefs,

the issue of addressitivity (where I analysed the lecturers' verbal thoughts in terms of directing the specific communication to the intended audience, for example to the students, to me as a researcher or to the lecturers themselves) and strategies used to provide their written feedback (as illustrated in Appendix V). I referred to either the verified summaries or the summaries of the lecturers' interviews and transcripts to match the lecturers' associated actions, and I made notes in the "actions versus beliefs" column. The notes on the action versus beliefs became the main findings of the lecturers' convergences or divergences of their beliefs and their actual practices of providing written feedback.

The coding procedures for the stimulated recall were similar to the coding of the interview sessions, and a number of categories and themes emerged. Appendix W showed an example of a coding from one lecturer's stimulated recall session. The major themes that emerged during the stimulated recall sessions were "issues that arose during the think-aloud sessions," "symbols used to correct errors," and "factors which influenced beliefs." In order to make the comparison between the interview data of the lecturers from the two faculties, I placed all the themes and subthemes in the form of a checklist as presented in Appendix X. Guided by the checklist illustrated in Appendix X, I eliminated the additional and insignificant subcategories and finalised the major themes and categories.

The analysis of the students' responses to the lecturers' specific feedback was done based on the feedback provided on the marked assignments. The students' responses were arranged according to the highlighted errors and the comments made by the lecturers.

Finally, the major theme that emerged from the lecturers' reflections on their students' responses was whether the lecturers would retain or change their methods of providing feedback.

All the data gathered from the multi-data collection methods described in 3.5 are presented in Chapter 4. These findings were then compared and contrasted with the findings of other existing studies. The grounded analysis of these datasets was a time-consuming and exacting process, and it was only during

this period that it seemed possible that a plausible explanation of the issues relating to convergence and divergence could be found from a socio-cultural perspective. Thus, the data were re-interrogated to explore this possibility in increasing depth, and eventually a holistic interpretation was deemed possible. This interpretation is explained in Chapter 5.

3.9 Trustworthiness

One of the critiques of qualitative research is a supposed lack of validity and reliability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Silverman, 2013). The manner of data collection, data interpretation and data reporting in the qualitative study is highly subjective. Kirk and Miller (1986) make the following comments: “In the case of qualitative observations, the issue of validity is not a matter of methodological hair-splitting about the fifth decimal point, but a question of whether the researcher sees what he or she thinks he or she sees” (p. 21). Therefore, it is essential for the qualitative researcher to ensure trustworthiness (Toma, 2011); that is, to ensure that the research is conducted in a manner which is credible and valid. Trustworthiness could be established in a number of ways. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research, Lincoln (2005) suggests that the qualitative study should be “sufficiently grounded, triangulated, based on naturalistic indicators, carefully fitted to theory (and its consequences), comprehensive in scope, credible in terms of member checks, logical, and truthful in terms of its reflection of the phenomenon in question” (p. 579). Cohen et al. (2007) note a number of ways to certify the research; for instance, “content validity, construct validity, internal validity, external validity and many others” (p. 133). In my research, I sought to make my study trustworthy by: establishing my position as a researcher in the research field; piloting my data collection methods; conducting member checks through respondent validation; triangulation; and being truthful in my reporting of the data.

3.9.1 Role of the researcher

My roles as a researcher in the research site were those of both an outsider and an insider. I considered myself to be an outsider, especially when collecting

data from the science community. As I was not from the community of practice in the science department, I was unfamiliar with its associated beliefs and practices.

However, I had formerly worked for nine years as a senior lecturer at the research site in the English department, prior to leaving for the University of Waikato to further my study. I did not have power relationships with the participants, either the lecturers or the students. As an insider researcher, especially within the English department, I had anticipated a number of advantages as well as disadvantages when collecting the data at the research site.

One of the advantages of being an insider researcher was that I was able to recruit volunteers through personal contacts or through “friends of friends.” I was able to recruit volunteers from some faculties, especially the sciences, without difficulty. As an insider, I understood the mechanisms of the contextual and organisational structure in order to gain more access to my participants (Shah, 2004). Another benefit of being an insider was that I had the contextual knowledge that was necessary to link the reasons for my participants’ behaviour with the effects of that behaviour, and I might have the answers to the questions raised in the study (Griffiths, 1985).

My familiarity with the setting, and my contextual knowledge, especially in the English department, however, had its disadvantages. I might have overlooked some significant points emerging from the data; moreover I might not have explored issues which I took for granted as the norms or practice of the institution, or issues that were deemed as too sensitive to be discussed (Hockey, 1993; Powney & Watts, 1987). In order to overcome this problem, I endeavoured to be “open-minded, curious and empathic, flexible and able to listen to people telling their own story” (Hennick, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011, p. 9).

Another problem was that I might have been biased in my judgement when collecting the data by imposing my pre-conceived knowledge. Thus, when I was in the research field I was careful not to provide my views when conducting the interviews to avoid bias (Mercer, 2007).

Another limitation of being an insider was that the lecturers might have been reluctant to reveal the actual information, as they might have viewed me as a threat. I might have been perceived as a “spy,” intruding into the lecturers’ privacy in their teaching profession, and they might have been concerned that I would provide a report about the lecturers to the management. An example of this was when one of the science lecturers revealed some information regarding the moderators, when the audio recording was switched off. Moreover, the lecturers might have felt that they would “lose face”, or consider that they had been judged negatively (Shah, 2004, p. 569), especially if students revealed that their expectations of feedback were not being met. Most of the lecturers who had negative views about me conducting the research did not want to participate in the study. If the participants felt threatened in any way or wished to withdraw, I had to respect their wish to do so, and this had been clearly mentioned in the consent form (See 3.6, under Ethical Concerns and Procedures, for more information). In order to overcome the “truth value” problem, it was important to conduct multi-method data collection.

3.9.2 Piloting

Piloting is deemed essential, in order to verify the validity of the research conducted. All of my data collection methods were piloted.

The questions in the questionnaire were piloted to avoid ambiguity and to check the feasibility of the procedures (Gillham, 2000; Wilson & McLean, 1994). Once the questionnaire was designed, it went through two phases of *piloting*, involving thirty volunteers whom I requested to complete the responses and provide feedback on the clarity of the items. The first pilot was conducted with research students and others at the University of Waikato; a subsequently revised draft involved Malaysians who were teaching English but not at the research site. The final version included alterations to the wording of the instructions and the inclusion of more items relating to the respondent’s background. Additional questions were also added to elicit the lecturers’ attitude towards their provision of feedback, and some wording changes.

Despite the piloting, once I was in the research field, I realised that the questionnaires had some limitations. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were designed and intended for English lecturers. Nevertheless, I had extended my scope to the other lecturers from different fields, due to the poor response rate from the English lecturers (Please refer to Ng & Brown, 2012 for the detailed explanation). Even though I was aware of this situation, I did not change the content of the questions, due to the time constraint. If I had changed the questions, I would have had to pilot the questionnaire more before I could distribute the actual questionnaires to the lecturers. In order to solve this problem, I made sure that these issues were addressed with the lecturers in other fields, in the follow-up interviews and other data collection methods. I would ask lecturers about their beliefs and practices of providing feedback in their own contexts. Another limitation of the questionnaire was that the majority of the lecturers opted for the neutral stand in the five Likert scale. In order to overcome this problem, I decided to follow up the questions in the interview and via other gathering methods.

I piloted the interview questions in New Zealand, with nine people who had experience in teaching English. Initially I used some open-ended questions based on Lee's (2003) study, and some were developed from the lecturers' questionnaires. Based on the feedback received from the pilot study as well as the guidance from my supervisors, I changed the sequence of the questions to begin with lecturers' beliefs, followed by the lecturers' sources of beliefs; lecturers' actual practices of providing feedback; and emerging issues for students and others. When I was at the research site, after piloting the interview questions with a small number of lecturers, I decided to use a checklist so that I would not miss out any of the questions. I added some key words or specific questions to my checklist, based on issues which had been raised by pilot respondents on the research site, and which I considered to be important to the study.

The students' interview questions were piloted at the research site with a small number of volunteers who were my ex-students. I changed some of the wording in the students' interviews to make the phrasing clearer, and created a checklist so that no focal points or questions were missed out.

The piloting of the think-aloud sessions was done twice. The first piloting session was done in New Zealand with ten teachers, six of whom were of European origin, while four were of Asian ethnicity. All but one specialised in teaching English. Before I started my warm-up session with my participants, I provided some instructions, which included the meaning of think-aloud and the procedures for collecting the data. The instructions were adapted from Gass and Mackey (2000, p. 59). I gave my participants ten riddles, which drew upon their ability to solve problems using common sense, and mathematical or linguistic intelligence. My participants needed to choose two of the ten riddles, and to verbalise their thoughts when providing the solution to the riddles. After the warm-up session, I proceeded with the think-aloud session. Since my participants did not have any student assignments to be graded, I provided them with an anonymous student's assignment to mark which contains five paragraphs, approximately one-and-a-half pages long. While marking the student's written work, my participants had to verbalise their thoughts. I was present in the think-aloud sessions, along with my pilot participants. After the think-aloud session, I requested that my pilot participants provide me with feedback on the think-aloud activities in which they had participated.

Three participants expressed their discomfort at having to solve the riddles, as they felt that their intelligence was being tested, while one avoided doing the riddles completely. One of these three participants strongly suggested that there was no need for any training at all because the riddles could cause the actual think-aloud session to backfire, as the perception of being tested would affect the performance of the think-aloud session. Another participant, who had a bad experience with the riddles, suggested that I remove them completely. Another suggested replacing the riddles with some activities with which the lecturers were more familiar; for example, identifying errors made by students at the sentence level. Other suggestions, in relation to pacifying participants who made errors or were not able to solve the riddles, were common. Another strategy was to reduce the number of riddles from ten to four, and to use shortened versions to reduce the participants' stress. Three people suggested that training be provided, in the form of doing the think-aloud itself (a few paragraphs or a short essay) to save time.

The think-aloud pilot session in Malaysia was done with a total of eight lecturers, of whom six were content lecturers from various faculties (that is, two mass communication lecturers and one Malaysian study lecturer from the Faculty of Languages, one biology lecturer from the Faculty of Science, one law lecturer and one engineering lecturer), while two were English lecturers from the Department of Pre-University Studies. Despite the use of riddles as part of the training, my pilot study did not turn out as well as expected. All but one lecturer did not know how to perform the think-aloud. This is one of the limitations of collecting data using the think-aloud method, as noted by McKay (2009). Some of my participants were not very vocal. Perhaps they were so focused on the task of providing feedback that they forgot to think-aloud. Some were reading the content of the assignments most of the time and did not perform the think-aloud. I did not prompt them, nor did I provide any cues, such as “What are you thinking now?” or “What do you think is going on?” as suggested by McKay (2009, p. 255). I did not want to interrupt the participants’ thoughts while they were doing the think-aloud sessions, and besides, this was just a pilot study to test whether the lecturers at the research site were able to perform the think-aloud methods. After much reflection, I realised that the participants’ ability to perform the think-aloud was largely dependent on their individual personalities, and their level of exposure to think-aloud methods through conferences, education and books. I decided to do away with the riddles in my actual data collection, as they did not provide any guidance to my participants on conducting the think-aloud method at all.

In order to assist the lecturers to perform the think-aloud session, I decided that conducting some demonstrations on the method of thinking aloud would be a better strategy. I approached three content lecturers (in law, engineering and mass communication), each of whom I thought would be able to conduct the think-aloud activity successfully based on their educational background and personality. I explained to the three lecturers the purpose of the think-aloud session and sought their permission to use their think-aloud transcripts and their marked assignments as samples for the other participants in my research. The reasons for using the transcripts and not the audio or video recordings as demonstrations are as follows:

- a) Ethical issues: If the recordings are used, the participants might recognise the voices and may identify the speaker, whose think-aloud performance was being used as a model or example.
- b) Setting up the equipment for listening will take up a lot of time, compared to reading the scripts and marked assignments.

As expected, all three lecturers performed the think-aloud session very successfully. Since the samples I collected were all content-based subjects, I decided to return to one of my pilot participants, who was teaching English, to ask her to conduct another think-aloud session, so that I would have a sample for the English subject. By this time this participant's think-aloud had improved after going through the think-aloud sessions a few times. I was unable to recruit more English lecturers to assist me due to their reluctance to help.

During my stimulated recall pilot studies with the same participants in the think-aloud pilot session (both in New Zealand and Malaysia), I realised that it was not possible for me to transcribe the lecturer's verbalisations on the spot, and it was not practical to play back the sections of the think-aloud, as it would be too time consuming.

The pilot study on eliciting students' specific responses to their lecturers' feedback was done at the research site with two groups of students. The first pilot study was conducted with a group of engineering students, using anonymous samples of English assignments marked by a group of anonymous English lecturers. The second pilot study was conducted with a group of mass communication students, using their lecturer's feedback. The aims of the research were clearly verbalised to the students, so there was no need for me to modify the questions.

The pilot on the lecturers' reflections was done at the research site with two lecturers: one English lecturer from the Centre of Foundation Studies and an economics lecturer from the Faculty of Business Administration. The lecturers' reflections were done individually. The procedure was done in one sitting, and the summary of the students' meeting to elicit their views on the effectiveness

of feedback were presented first to the specific lecturers. The lecturers were then requested to reflect upon, and provide their responses to, the students' viewpoints. After that, the summary of the students' responses to the lecturers' specific feedback was then presented to the lecturers. The lecturers were then requested to reflect and respond to the students' reactions and suggestions for improvement. As the pilot study with the volunteers went well, I did not change the procedure or the data collection methods of eliciting the lecturers' reflections.

3.9.3 Respondent validation: validation of transcripts

After transcribing the lecturers' interviews, I realised that some sections needed clarification. I made a summary of the transcriptions and also placed a number of questions in the relevant sections to clarify issues with the lecturers concerned. Generally, the summaries of the interviews were sent to all lecturers via email for verification. I gave a time frame of three weeks for the lecturers to validate the summaries. Some of the lecturers responded to my email by making necessary amendments and also providing the answer to the questions for clarification. As for the think-aloud session and the stimulated recall sessions, the methods of respondent verification were different, based on the subject that the lecturers were teaching. I did not verify the think-aloud sessions with the English lecturers because I could understand the linguistic terms used in the sessions. Nevertheless, I sent the summary of the stimulated recall via email to the English lecturers. If there were some issues that needed clarification in the stimulated recall, again some questions were included in the summary. The English lecturers were given the same time frame as for the interview to validate and clarify the stimulated recall summaries. When considering data from the content lecturers, I was not sure of the technical terms used in the think-aloud and the stimulated recall sessions. I solved this problem by transcribing and printing out hard copies of the think-aloud sessions, and summaries of the stimulated recall sessions, and met those lecturers for face to face for verification. The lecturers read the printed copies and made the amendments by writing the corrections on the copies. If there were any issues that needed clarification in the stimulated recall, I would

interview the lecturers concerned, transcribe the conversation, and include the clarifications in the summarised stimulated recall.

3.9.4 Triangulation

Research which is performed based on one data collecting method does not ensure the validity of the research due to its limitations (Creswell, 2003). For example, some people may not be competent in performing think-aloud (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977); similarly, a questionnaire is unable to explore in depth the perceptions of an individual towards an issue. Thus, multiple data collection (using various methods to collect data) and the process of triangulation (the process of comparing all the data collected from various sources) are some of the techniques employed in qualitative research to ensure the validity of the research (Creswell, 1994; Duff, 2008; Hood, 2009; Toma, 2011).

In order to test the reliability of the data collected, I decided to include time triangulation and combined levels of triangulation introduced by Denzin (1970). I triangulated my data using time triangulation, by testing whether the duration of time altered the data collected (Cohen et al., 2007; Denzin, 1970). The gaps in conducting the interview and the think-aloud session with the lecturers varied from one to two months. I would examine whether there was any “synchronic reliability” (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 42); that is, if the behaviours of the lecturers matched their self-reported practices and beliefs. The reliability of the data was further tested using the combined levels of triangulation, whereby the results gathered from individual lecturers were tested against the results gathered from different lecturers within the department and the findings at the collective level, where the results were compared and contrasted between the two faculties.

3.10 Conclusion

This section summarises the methodological gaps which I intended to fill and the limitations of my data collection methods.

To the best of my knowledge, little qualitative research has been conducted, either in the international or Malaysian contexts, to obtain information about lecturers' beliefs and practices about their provision of written feedback for students' written assignments. The majority of the methods used to gather the data in the area of feedback and teachers' beliefs adopt experimental methods or self-report techniques. Even within the qualitative research, not many studies have been conducted using the think-aloud approaches (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Diab, 2005b; Lee, 2008b; Kumar et al., 2009). Moreover, comparative studies of language teachers' beliefs in different countries have been conducted, but no comparative studies have been done to compare science and English lecturers. Few studies use the lecturers' actual written feedback as a stimulus to elicit students' responses to this feedback. The majority of the studies about beliefs focus only on the beliefs of teachers and students. However, to the best of my knowledge, there has been no research done in the Malaysian context, where the students' responses to the lecturers' feedback is actually forwarded to the lecturers in order to elicit the lecturers' reflection of their feedback beliefs and practices.

However, two limitations might be identified in this study. The first limitation is that I was not able to validate the summaries of interviews with students, due first of all to time limitations, and secondly because students did not respond to my emails despite being sent reminders.

The second limitation is that the data collection was done in an extremely flexible manner, due to the availability of the volunteers (the lecturers were not comfortable with performing the think-aloud in my presence or they refused to participate in the think-aloud session), and because of unexpected circumstances that surfaced during the data collection (for example, the lecturer who fell sick).

The next chapter presents the findings of all the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR : FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of the study in four sections:

- 4.1. the lecturers' beliefs about providing written feedback;
- 4.2 convergences and divergences between lecturers' beliefs and their observed practices in providing written feedback;
- 4.3 factors that influence the lecturers' beliefs and practices in their provision of written feedback; and,
- 4.4 comparing the beliefs of students and lecturers.

After each finding is presented, the key points are discussed in relation to the existing literature review based on the research questions, with the exception of (f), which will be discussed in the next chapter:

- a) What are the beliefs of the English and science lecturers about giving written feedback on students' written academic assignments?
- b) To what extent do the English and science lecturers' practices of providing feedback reflect their beliefs about providing feedback?
- c) What are the factors that influence lecturers' beliefs about good feedback and to what extent do these factors influence lecturers' actual practices of providing written feedback?
- d) What are the students' beliefs about the value of their lecturers' written feedback and what are students' responses to the actual provision of their lecturers' feedback? To what extent do students' beliefs match the beliefs of the lecturers?
- e) What are the lecturers' reflections on their students' responses on the value of feedback?
- f) How can a theoretical framework of distributed cognition be expanded or refined to account for convergences or divergences of beliefs among lecturers and between lecturers and students?

To answer these questions, data was gathered using a variety of methods: surveys; individual interviews with lecturers and group interviews with students

to obtain their general beliefs about feedback; lecturers' think-aloud sessions; lecturers' stimulated recall sessions; students' group interviews to obtain their responses to their lecturers' feedback; and lecturers' reflection sessions to think about their students' responses to feedback in general and about specific feedback.

The participants in the research were first recruited through the distribution of a survey for lecturers, followed by individual interviews. Arrangements were also made to have group interviews with the students of the lecturers who had been interviewed (hereafter referred to as *Student Meeting 1*) to elicit their general perceptions of the value of feedback. Lecturers were then observed marking the students' written assignments through the think-aloud session, and the follow up with stimulated recall session, to clarify their practices in the provision of written feedback. The samples of written feedback were then shown to students in another group meeting (hereafter *Student Meeting 2*) to elicit their specific responses to their lecturers' written feedback. Finally, the summaries of the students' responses from Student Meetings 1 and 2 were shown to the lecturers in the reflection session, to elicit the lecturers' reflections and reactions towards the students' comments. Summaries of the data collection methods and the participants are provided in Appendices B and C.

Summaries of all audio-recorded data were sent to all participants for respondent validation. The transcriptions and other collected data were then subjected to a grounded analysis by open and axial coding, which permitted a constant flow of comparison and contrast among the data sets. The extracts from the lecturers' reflection session were retyped, and the marked assignments were scanned. The transcription convention in the extracts from the interview, think-aloud, stimulated recall and some of the reflection sessions presented in this chapter were adapted from Du Bois (2006) and are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 The transcript convention adapted from Du Bois (2006)

Meaning	Symbol	Comments
Pause	/	each / indicates a one-second pause
Terminative	.	finality
Continuative	,	continuation (comma)
Omission	“...words words.space... words, ...	Omission of words/phrases In the same turn, there were omissions of words/phrases at the beginning of a sentence. Some words/phrases were omitted after a continuation (comma)
Comment	((words))	Comment on the participants’ actions
Clarification	[words]	Clarification of the meaning of the pronouns
Vocalism	(COUGH)	Various notations: (SNIFF), (SOB),(LAH), (HMM) (ERR) etc.
Italics	<i>Words</i>	Participants reading aloud student’s work
Science lecturers	S1, S2, S3, S4, S4	science lecturers, 1-5
English lecturers	E1, E2, E3, E4, E5	English lecturers, 1-5
Students	L1, L2 (individual students) LL (many students)	L is the short form for learners; the numbers indicate the number of students
Researcher	I	Interviewer

4.1 Lecturers’ beliefs about the provision of written feedback

This section addresses the first research question as follows:

What are the lecturers' beliefs about giving feedback on students' written academic assignments?

This question was designed to investigate the English and science lecturers' perceptions of good practices in providing written feedback. This section summarises the findings obtained from responses by the ten lecturers to open-ended items in the questionnaires (see Appendix K, Questions 21 and 22), and from their individual interviews (see Appendix L, Question 1). Overall, in the key findings, there are five separate areas of focus that characterised lecturers' beliefs about providing written feedback: (1) the functions of the written feedback, (2) the provision of positive or negative feedback, (3) the focus of feedback, (4) the effectiveness of the feedback, and (5) feedback which encourages students' independence in making their own error corrections.

4.4.1 Lecturers' beliefs about the functions of written feedback

Firstly, the main functions of feedback identified by both the English and science lecturers were that it was: (1) a tool to assist students to learn more effectively; and (2) a way of justifying the grades given for various audiences (including students and moderators). In the following quotations from the data, participants identify these two functions of feedback:

Error is part of their [students] learning processes; learn from mistakes.
(E1, Questionnaire, p. 10)

To help students know where they have gone wrong in their writing. (E3,
Questionnaire, p. 10)

... all my marks I have to give specifications and when the script (ERR) the marked script arrive in Bradford, they will read my justifications, and they will give their point of view, whether they agree with my feedback or not? (S2, Interview, p. 3)

The Australian transfer degree programme, I, I have to give the feedback so that the moderator can understand why I give marks to certain, (ERR), certain sections. (S4, interview, p. 26)

Nevertheless, the need to justify grades for the moderators was seen, especially by the English lecturers, to impede the main purpose of feedback, which was to help students in their learning process.

It should be to enable students to improve their writing. However, lecturers are “distracted” from this purpose due to the need to fulfil requirements set by partner universities etc. (E4, Questionnaire, p. 10)

My key findings on the lecturers’ beliefs about the functions of feedback suggest that there were more convergences than divergences when comparing them to those of other studies. In terms of convergences, the findings in my study suggested that the partner universities and the institution itself were more influential than other factors in terms of moulding the lecturers’ beliefs about justifying grades. In this respect, my findings were similar with the findings of other studies; for example, the purpose of justifying grades via written feedback was explored in studies by Bailey and Garner (2010), Connors and Lunsford (1993), Hyland (2013a), and Ivanic et al. (2000). The lecturers’ perceptions of the purpose of feedback in Bailey and Garner’s (2010) study was to meet the specific requirements of the institution for auditing purposes by the local UK government, while the justifications provided by the lecturers in my study were for a number of audiences –for instance, for auditing purposes for the Malaysian Government and for the moderators from the partner universities. The claim of the English and science lecturers in my findings, of giving feedback to assist students’ learning, was evident in Li’s (2012), and in Tang and Harrison’s (2011) study.

A major divergence was that both the English and science lecturers in my study were concerned about justifying grades and assisting students in their learning, whereas in the study by Ivanic et al. (2000) the English lecturers were only concerned about assisting students in their writing, and the subject lecturers

were primarily interested in justifying grades. Another form of divergence was also evident in Mukundan and Ahour's (2009) study in a public Malaysian university where the ESL lecturers felt that feed-forward was essential in assisting students to write, while the English lecturers in my study did not indicate the practice of providing feed-forward. The term feed-forward in this context refers to the type of feedback whereby certain guidelines were provided to assist students to perform better in subsequent assignments.

4.1.2 Beliefs about the provision of positive or negative feedback

My findings seemed to suggest that the lecturers' beliefs about providing either positive or negative feedback varied within the English department. For example, two English lecturers perceived themselves as negative markers, which meant that they focused their feedback on errors, while the positive aspects of the students' work were seldom acknowledged.

That's one thing that I feel that my own style of feedback is not good because I tend to look at the negative. ... I have to admit I (ERR) am usually more of negative marker you know where I jump more on the mistakes than I jump on them more than I praise what has been done well ah yeah. (E3, Interview, p. 7)

Ah a blend of both but mostly negative (E5, Interview, p. 4)

E1 and E4, however, claimed that their feedback was balanced, using both positive and negative comments in different contexts; for example, "I like to tell my students that they have done a good job and then provide error corrections" (E1, Interview, p. 12). E4 would provide positive comments, for instance, "A good idea", "this is creative" or "that's new" (E4, Interview, p. 14), if she felt that the students had made an effort. If she could not understand what the student was trying to convey, she would make a remark like "I don't know what you are talking about" (E4, Interview, p. 14).

The science lecturers, on the other hand, perceived themselves to be constructive markers in that they provided feedback on the positive aspects of students' work as well as corrective feedback. S1 claimed that he was a balanced marker; for example, if a student provided good content, he would acknowledge the student's effort by giving praise. However, if he expected some information from students which was not provided, he would point out the error.

Let's say there are some good points and then I will say this is a good point. And some, I expected something, but they never mentioned, then I will say that you have missed out something. Then at the end sometimes they have not written a conclusion, and then I will mention that there is no conclusion, so whether there are good points or bad points I will try to raise it up to them, (LAH), for their attention. (S1, Interview, p. 5)

S3 stressed that feedback should be constructive, so that students could identify their errors without being demoralised.

Constructive feedback so that they will realise their error and make them learn ... and the feedback is not demoralising them you know (LAUGHTER). Like, that's why normally in my feedback, the comments are mainly positive feedback. Yeah although they have made some errors, I'll try to make them positive so because I, I realised actually negative feedback really demoralises the student also. (S3, Interview, pp. 5 - 6)

Similarly, in her stimulated recall session, S5 stated that she felt it essential to provide a balance.

A balanced feedback of pushing students is better for motivating them. (S5, SR, p. 15)

S4 added that negative feedback (in terms of highlighting the errors) was seen as a form of motivation for some students, prompting them to put work harder and not to take their lessons lightly.

Mostly positive, unless the mistake is too great, then the negative will come. (LAUGHTER). Because some of them, you really need to give them negative feedback (LAUGHTER). (S4, Interview, p. 7)

In relation to providing either positive or negative feedback, my findings suggested that there were more convergences than divergences when compared to other studies. For example, the findings about the English lecturers' perceptions that they were more negative in their provision of feedback, compared to the science lecturers, seems to converge with Connors and Lunsford's (1993) study. Another aspect of convergence is that the English lecturers in my study seemed to be more concerned about correcting students' errors. This finding seemed parallel with the writing lecturers in Tang and Harrison's (2011) study, where error corrections were deemed to be essential in written feedback. Another similarity to my findings may be found in Mukundan and Ahour's (2009) study in the Malaysian context; in both studies, the lecturers believed that the purpose of assessment was to assist students in their learning rather than providing feedback in the form of grades.

My findings when compared with the beliefs of English teachers in New Zealand, however, seemed to diverge from those in studies by Hyland and Hyland (2001) and Li (2012). The English teachers in Hyland and Hyland's (2001) study believed in the use of praise as a technique to motivate students' learning, while the tutors in Li's (2012) study tried to provide positive feedback as much as they could to reduce the impact of negative feedback on students' motivation and learning. Although the English lecturers in my study claimed that they knew the importance of providing positive reinforcement to encourage students' learning, in practice, they seemed to highlight errors rather than provide praise or motivating comments. Another divergence between English and subject lecturers was evident in Stern and Solomon's (2006) study, where they indicated that their comments consisted of personal and positive comments, whereas the English and science lecturers in my study did not indicate any personal element in their feedback. Some of the tutors in Tang and Harrison's (2011) findings revealed that the purpose of feedback was aimed at providing scores to measure students' achievement and this was another form of divergence in comparison with my study.

4.1.3 Beliefs about the focus of feedback

In terms of the focus of feedback, most of the English lecturers felt that a holistic approach was essential.

I do look at everything, the content, the language, the organisation. Yeah, so it is everything. (E1, Interview, p. 10)

I normally highlight the thesis statement and the topic sentences and, (ERR) glaring, (ERR), grammatical errors or spelling errors. So I focus on that. (E3, Interview, p. 6)

Ah both, (ERR), the errors and their ideas as well, organisation of ideas, so both errors, areas will be covered. (E5, Interview, p. 5)

An exception was E4, who claimed to focus on content:

When I first started teaching ... I used to focus more on grammar mistakes, spelling, sentence structure and all that kind of thing. Now, I think writing is not all about grammar and so I give more attention on how something is said. Like I said, I evaluate on content and how much thinking process would have gone into the content and how convincing the content has been and so you know, and, because of that I start commenting on other things. (E4, Interview, p. 8)

Although content was the focal point of feedback among the science lecturers, S1 and S5 felt that the English language was essential to a certain extent. S1, for example, felt that the ability to express and organise facts systematically was important.

At diploma level, we don't expect much of the citation (LAH). So what I expect them to do is, first there are certain facts which I more or less expect, main facts, okay. And then I look at the flow of the answer, how they explain or how they connect or how they argue facts, you see. So from there, how they present their facts, is the flow very fluent or

haphazard. The language is also a bit important to me. Sometimes they cannot express themselves, the language is poor. (S1, Interview, p. 4)

S5 would only make corrections on language errors if the meaning of the text was changed.

basically on content, but English does play a part because once your sentence structure is wrong, the meaning becomes wrong, I cannot give the students the mark for that. So I cannot get away from correcting their English totally. (S5, Interview, p. 4)

Although S3 emphasised that language would be the last priority in providing feedback, he was very concerned that students should avoid using personal pronouns and only use the passive voice in their writing.

... grammar is my last focus, actually. (ERR) but saying that my focus on grammar is how they [students] write the technical report; for example, in a technical report they [students] don't use the first person reference, I, we, our. This is the part I mark on it or I explain the procedure, we [scientists] don't use the active voice, we [scientists] use the passive voice. So on the grammar side, this is the main thing I look into, but overall ... the discussion is the main part I am looking into. This is what I normally tell the student that [ERM] on the calculations or the results part I don't pay so much attention. But how they [students] analyze the result is the thing that I look into. And in fact, in this area I give the most marks also. (S3, Interview, pp. 4-5)

In terms of content, he felt that student's ability to discuss his or her work was more important than the student obtaining accurate results from experiments.

S4's focus of feedback, on the other hand, was more on content than on language.

My focus would be the content so if sometimes they [students] do not have enough content I would actually advise them [students] to put in certain

things or include certain things into their writing. Grammar, grammar, I hardly correct them [grammar errors] unless they [students] have really really serious problems with grammar.... Then I will start off maybe with one paragraph and I will make a note that they [students] need to improve because I am not teaching them [students] language, you see (LAUGHTER). (S4, Interview, p. 7)

When he was questioned further about the reason for this belief, he commented:

And then the other one is that sometimes they [students] get annoyed if a lot of (ERR) a lot of the feedback given to them [students] is on language. They, they [students] do get annoyed. I do get complaints from students saying that, you know, why are they [lecturers] correcting our language, aren't they [lecturers] supposed to correct, (ERR), our content and things like that? (S4, Interview, p. 9)

Based on S4's beliefs about his role as a science lecturer and his students' expectations, his duty was to provide feedback on the content area. Correcting language errors was perceived to be the English lecturers' duty. He claimed that students would get annoyed and complain if the feedback on language was given too much emphasis rather than the content area.

Overall, the English lecturers' perceptions of the focus of feedback in my study suggested both convergences and divergences in relation to the findings of other studies. The English lecturers' preference for providing impressionistic or holistic feedback seemed to match the ESL lecturers' preference for holistic feedback in Mukundan and Ahour's (2009) study. My findings also converged with Ferris' (2014) study, where the English lecturers believed that holistic aspects of writing, for example, content, language and focused corrective feedback were essential in assisting students' learning. My findings also illustrated some divergences from the other existing studies. One example of divergence was illustrated in the English lecturers' claims that they provided comprehensive feedback or unfocused CF rather than the focused WCF, because of the perception that good writing should be reflected in all aspects of writing, including content and grammar. My finding diverged from the study

conducted by Mukundan and Hour (2009) in the Malaysian context, where the ESL lecturers in their study considered language feedback (that is, grammar and syntax) to be less important than feedback on content, vocabulary and organisation. Another form of divergence was that the academic writing lecturers in Ferris's (2014) study had a tendency to believe that the provision of feedback on higher order concerns, which focused on content and ideas, were more essential. My findings also seemed to be parallel with the English lecturers in Tang and Harrison's (2007) study, which suggested that perhaps contextual factors, such as the lecturers' perceptions of the students' negative attitude towards learning English, also influenced the lecturers' beliefs about the focus of their feedback.

The findings of the science lecturers' perceptions about the focus of feedback, on the other hand, revealed more divergences than convergences in comparison with other studies. A number of divergences in my findings were different from those identified in Hyland's (2013a) study. In Hyland's (2013a) study, the lecturers indicated that their students were responsible for their own language proficiency, while the science lecturers in my study did not emphasise anything about their students' English language proficiency. Another divergence was that the science students' critical thinking and their ability to engage in discussion were not clearly indicated in Hyland's (2013a) study, but the applied sciences and science engineering lecturers in my study perceived their students' ability to think critically as essential. In Hyland's (2013a) study, it was considered essential for lecturers to fulfil the criteria stated in the syllabus, but the English and science lecturers in my study seemed to be only indirectly concerned about the criteria. My findings also diverged from Li's (2012) study, where the tutors in Li's (2012) study believed that a combination of content, language and formal feedback were essential.

In terms of convergences, the science lecturers in my study perceived that the students' ability to demonstrate their knowledge of science was more essential than using the appropriate expressions or correcting language errors. The findings in the present study converged with Hyland's (2013a) and Jacob's (2007) studies, where some of the content lecturers were reluctant to provide feedback on the English language. The refusal to do this was due to the

perception that the English lecturers were responsible for providing language feedback, while the content lecturers were responsible for disseminating knowledge in their specialised fields (Hyland, 2013a; Jacob, 2007).

4.1.4 Beliefs about the effectiveness of feedback

The English lecturers seemed to emphasise the ineffectiveness of their own feedback. For example, three English lecturers perceived that feedback could be a waste of time, as students were more interested in grades, and thought that students' work did not improve as a result of the feedback.

I can see the same mistakes repeated again and again. So only a small percentage of students, the very good ones, will actually improve, okay. To me that's how I see if they take the feedback seriously or not. If they don't make, (ERR), any changes then they are not bothered. (E1, Interview, p. 4)

(ERR), I would say that it is an endless task (LAUGHTER) because, (ERR), I believe that the majority of the students don't really take our feedback seriously unless it seriously jeopardise their marks and they are not happy with their marks. Otherwise, you know, they just let it pass. (E3, Interview, p. 13)

Our students are more interested in the marks they get most of the time, I feel that and, ah, most of the time they expect to see what their marks are. I, I don't really think that they are interested in what you write. (E5, Interview, p. 3)

E4 was not sure if the feedback was effective, due to the short duration of the course, which made it difficult to make an effective evaluation. Nevertheless, she gave an example of a student whom she had taught for three consecutive semesters, in three different courses. She could see that the student had improved, but she did not want to assume that the student had improved because of her feedback.

E2 believed that the effectiveness of the feedback depended on the students' attitude to receiving comments. Some students expected feedback from the lecturers, while some students did not read the feedback provided.

That depends on the students. Like I said, some students are very ambitious. They will chase after you for more feedback. But some students have the "don't care type of attitude" and they don't even read your feedback. (E2, Interview, p. 10)

The majority of the science lecturers seemed to be positive about the provision of feedback as feed-forward, a type of feedback that incorporated suggestions to assist students to improve in their subsequent assignment.

Yes, yes, depends on students. Some students are very eager to learn, they come and ask you and even after the assignment, they will ask you again, [AHH], where I've gone wrong, why my mark is so low, so you have to explain to them why, you see. So sometimes I will tell them what I expect... So some students come back, they improve the first assignments. But some students of course, they still commit the same error if they don't learn. Some didn't ask you. (S1, Interview, p. 5)

... for the first time in the report, there are a number of red marks in the report and the second time over, I can see, not all but some of the students would take this feedback seriously. I, I could see how they change it, yeah. (S3, Interview, p. 3)

Hmm. So far I think, after one semester of training, I can really see they have, (ERR), adjusted to the scientific writing style, cause it's different you see and, (ERR), they know what is referencing and they don't make that many mistake when they do referencing. And they understand the importance of referencing. And the expressions also improve. I wouldn't say a lot, at least you can see improvement. (S4, Interview, p. 9)

However, one science lecturer disagreed with her colleagues:

I really do not know but, (ERR), sometimes okay I just, (ERR), recently gave them a set of questions and I, I have no time to go through with them, but I have given them the answer on the sheet but that day I happened to have a little time so I said okay, (ERR), you have read through the answers but I can see on their faces that they have not read what I have written. So, so, I, I don't know whether they have gone through the things that I have written or not. Hmm. (S5, Interview, p. 16)

Overall, the findings about the English lecturers in my study suggested convergences in relation to the findings of other studies, in terms of the perceived effectiveness of their feedback. The English lecturers' negative perceptions of the effectiveness of their own written feedback concurred with those who believe that feedback which focuses on error correction is unproductive. For example, Truscott (1996, 2007) has consistently argued that error correction is not productive, and has advocated doing away with it, claiming that correction impedes the development of students' writing. Another form of convergence was where the English lecturers in my study and the English tutors in Tang and Harrison's (2011) study indicated that they were also not sure of the effectiveness of WCF. Another form of convergence was where the tutors in Tang and Harrison's (2011) study perceived that WCF was necessary for students' language improvement; the English lecturers in my study perceived WCF as a form of learning, whereby students were made aware of their language errors so they could avoid repeating them.

The findings about the science lecturers in my study, however, seemed to diverge from most of the existing studies in terms of the perceived effectiveness of feedback. For example, the science lecturers in Hong Kong and the UK felt that the students were not interested in the feedback (Glover & Brown, 2006; Higgins et al., 2002; Hyland, 2013a). Higgins et al. (2002) revealed that the science tutors in their study considered it a waste of time providing detailed feedback for average students, as these students were not interested in receiving it. Glover and Brown (2006) revealed that the bioscience lecturers in their study perceived that students were only interested in grades and therefore providing detailed feedback was unnecessary.

4.1.5 Beliefs about providing feedback which encourage students' responsibility for correcting their own errors

In relation to their beliefs about whose responsibility it was to correct errors, the majority of English and science lecturers thought that it was the responsibility of the students to correct their own errors. However, students were still highly dependent on the lecturers for error correction.

They [students] expect us to correct the mistakes, okay, which I don't believe in because we [lecturers] just have to highlight the problem and they [students] should correct their mistakes. But actually students expect us to tell, to do the corrections for them. Okay so, (ERR), in a way, students are less independent. (E1, Interview, p. 4)

At this level, tertiary level, I believe that we cannot be spoon-feeding them. There isn't enough time for that and by right they should be independent autonomous learners so you know the onus is on them to figure out what the mistakes are. (E3, Interview, p. 9)

... and in fact as a student or as a future engineer they should know that before submitting a report they have to read through the report and find out, at least, if not the technical error but at least those obvious grammatical errors they should be able to correct themselves first before submitting their report. (S3, Interview, p. 6)

However, some of the English and science lecturers felt that students needed to be guided, because the students were weak either in the content area or in their English language proficiency.

I think error correction, I think it is not something they can handle on their own even now. They need to know they are making a mistake. If they are talking in a certain way and making all those mistakes, they don't know. It's very difficult for them to find out or look up something they don't even know. I think. I usually just tell them. Like spelling and all, I know, I

go and tell them to look it up in the dictionary, I know they are being lazy. But structures I usually correct it for them. (E4, Interview, p. 12)

S1 mentioned that students were not always sure of their lecturers' expectations when attempting their first assignments. For instance, students might sometimes misinterpret the questions, and provide inappropriate answers. In addition, students were unsure about correcting their own content errors, and S1 therefore had to guide them through class discussions.

They do not know the mistake and they are sometimes are not sure what you expect them to do also, ... or they may sometimes (ERR) misinterpret the questions so we have to give the feedback ... to show them whether they have done according to what the question wants or not. Sometimes they just describe something and they deviate, they never come back to the actual question that is required, so in the end you don't tell them, they also don't know. (S1, Interview, p. 4)

S4 mentioned that he had always been correcting students' referencing or language errors, especially if he knew that the students were not capable of amending their own mistakes. However, if he felt that students were competent in making the changes to the errors, he would request that they make the corrections themselves by making a note or placing a question mark.

There should be a balance. For example, if it's the writing style, you know they use the wrong expression and things like that then normally I am quite generous, but sometimes I figure out if they should know then I would just put, (ERR), a question mark or make a note that they should correct it themselves. (S4, Interview, p. 7)

S5 felt that it was important for the lecturers to assist students to be aware of the content errors, because students were unable to recognise their errors and that was the reason for students making them in the first place.

You can give them some guidance otherwise I don't think they can, they make the error in the first place, for me, (LAH), because they make the

error in the first, they do not know how, so if you don't give them the guidance or the answer, okay they are not going to get it. (S5, Interview, p. 6)

Overall, the findings from the English and science lecturers in this study suggested both convergences and divergences in relation to the findings of other studies, in terms of providing feedback to encourage students' self-reliance in correcting their own errors. These findings seem to suggest that, despite the beliefs that they should be responsible for their own learning, students were perceived to be incapable of doing this. My findings were similar with those of Tang and Harrison (2011) in terms of the socio-cultural aspects, for example, the societal expectations of lecturers. Lecturers in both contexts are expected to provide feedback, because in their specialised fields they are considered to have authority over students. The only difference was that the tutors in Tang and Harrison's (2011) study believed that their students had advanced English proficiency and were therefore able to correct their own errors. However, the lecturers in my study perceived that students had lower English proficiency and were unable to self-edit their errors.

In summary, the English lecturers appeared to have negative views regarding the effectiveness of their written feedback, in contrast to their science counterparts. Nevertheless, feedback was seen by lecturers from both departments to be a form of guidance for students, and as a form of justification for the grades awarded. The English lecturers believed in the importance of holistic marking, while the science lecturers focused primarily on content and dealt with language issues only if the meanings of technical terms were unclear. In relation to the correction of grammatical and syntactical errors in student writing, the majority of English and science lecturers felt that, although the students needed some guidance, they ought to be responsible for their own error correction.

4.1.6 Summary in relation to the other studies conducted: The lecturers' beliefs about providing written feedback

To summarise, all the lecturers in my study believed that the function of the feedback was to assist student learning, and to justify grades, both to students and to the overseas moderators from the partner university. My findings seemed to agree with the majority of the studies reviewed. The only divergence was that the function of feedback as a form of feed-forward was not evident in my study. My data seemed to suggest that the English lecturers' beliefs in providing error corrections rather than positive feedback, seemed to agree with Harrison and Tang's (2012) study in the Chinese and in most Asian cultural contexts, where the correction of errors was viewed as essential to the students' learning process. However, my findings seemed to diverge from the majority of the studies conducted within New Zealand –and perhaps other Western countries – where praise and motivation were seen as important tools in promoting student self-confidence and autonomy in learning.

In my study, the English lecturers' tendency to focus on holistic marking due to time constraints, and the students' negative reactions towards learning English influencing the lecturers' feedback practices, were similar to the other studies reviewed. The science lecturers' reluctance to provide English language feedback, due to the perception that this was the responsibility of the English lecturers, was a finding that agreed with those of studies conducted in Hong Kong and Europe (Hyland, 2013a; Jacob, 2007). The obvious divergences were as follows: (1) the science lecturers in my study did not emphasise their students' own responsibility and fluency in English language proficiency; (2) the science lecturers' emphasis on content, the ability to discuss, and critical thinking, were more important than the students' ability to write well; and (3) both the English and the science lecturers were indirectly concerned that the students developed abilities to match the criteria stated in the syllabus or assessment.

Overall, the English lecturers in my study were either negative or unsure about the effectiveness of their feedback, while the science lecturers were more

positive about theirs. My findings from the science lecturers seemed to differ from the other studies, where the science lecturers in Hong Kong and Britain indicated negative perceptions about the effectiveness of their feedback (Glover & Brown, 2006; Hyland, 2013a). In terms of encouraging students to be more self-reliant in correcting their own errors, the English and science lecturers in my study had divergent views, depending on the socio-cultural context and their students' English language proficiency. My findings seemed to differ from students within the Chinese context; Chinese students were perceived as competent enough to self-edit their work, while in my study lecturers considered students to have low English proficiency and to be less competent in correcting their own errors.

4.2 Convergences and divergences between lecturers' beliefs and their observed practices in providing written feedback

This section addresses the second research question as follows:

What are the lecturers' observed practices in providing feedback on written academic assignments?

This question seeks to investigate the extent to which the English and science lecturers' beliefs about providing written feedback could be substantiated during the observed individual think-aloud sessions. The organisation of this section focuses on the convergences and divergences of the five major findings in regard to the lecturers' beliefs: (1) the purposes of feedback; (2) the motivation for providing the feedback; (3) the focus of feedback; (4) the perceived effectiveness of the feedback; and (5) the type of feedback that encourages students to be more independent in the correction of their own errors. The beliefs and the observed practices within each department (English, then science) will be presented first. This will be followed by an exploration of the extent of convergence and divergence between the two departments, in Section 4.2.6. The key findings of this study are then compared and contrasted with the existing studies in Section 4.2.7.

4.2.1 Differences in belief and observed practice in terms of the functions of providing feedback

The English lecturers' beliefs about the aim of written feedback generally diverged from their practice in the think-aloud sessions to a certain extent. For example, the lecturers' belief that the purpose of feedback was to assist students in learning was observed to a certain degree. The lecturers were observed trying to provide appropriate feedback, especially in the area of highlighting errors. For lecturers, the actual process of providing feedback involved the cognitive process of identifying, analysing and highlighting errors. E1, for example, went through the process of comprehending the students' work first, and thinking of appropriate ways to highlight mistakes.

TA Extract#1 (E1)

Because//// in cities because of the following because of the following benefits for, because of okay, this is also wrong, because of //////////////several factors like. (E1, TA, p. 5)

Sample Feedback 1 (E1)

Nowdays people are move prefer to live in a city because of the following ^{several factors like} benefits for (higher education) ^{value} career development and facilities. ^{what things} Those things are good in city and easy to get so that people are move to city. First of all ^{is} in a point of higher education we can find higher standard of school in each district of the city for their children. for example, private or gornvements schools, rich

(E1, Marked assignment, p. 1)

Based on the extract above, E1 thoughts were verbalised through repetition, as a strategy to comprehend the student's work and analyse the errors. This was followed by an eight-second pause to make the correction on behalf of the student, by simultaneously verbalising and changing the phrase to "several factors like."

In the next TA extract (#3), E4's think- aloud revealed the process of trying to comprehend a student's choice of using a transitional word before trying to think of an appropriate word as a replacement.

TA Extract #3 (E4)

"Nevertheless? ///////////////Why nevertheless? ////////////// It will not be effective in doing group projects. ///Nevertheless? The employees will become restrictive // as it just promotes one sided conversation. Nevertheless not inappropriate here but I can't think what it is because I don't think it's really a related idea, is it? (AH). ////////////////. (HMM) consequently. //////Maybe consequently. ////// Maybe, I am not sure. Consequently, the employees will become restrictive as it promotes one side's conversation and this may lead to disagreements and conflicts as leader". (E4, TA, p.1)

Sample Feedback 3 (E4)

Autocratic leadership is synonymous to dictatorship where ^{one} just a person has the authority over the followers. Since ^{that person's} their decision has to be taken as ^{the} golden rule and should never be questioned, so their subordinates will just work according to their rules. Autocratic leader has full control of those around him and believes to have complete authority to treat his workers as he wants. ^{to} Autocratic leadership works efficiently during emergency and stressful situations as the manager will take ^{paraphrase!} the reins in hand and direct workers to move forward. It will also be effective in doing group projects where the leader will determine the ways ought to be done, divide job among members and set the deadline for completion of the project. ^{Consequently?} Nevertheless, the employees will become restrictive as it just promotes one sided conversation. This may lead to disagreements and conflicts as leaders would exploit their

(E4, Marked assignment, p. 1)

E4's strategy of highlighting the student's incorrect usage of a transitional word and suggesting a better word involved pausing approximately ten to twelve seconds on two occasions. She thought aloud, comprehending the relevance of the word "nevertheless" in the sentence through a series of questions, before pausing for another 35 seconds to think of a better transitional word. She verbalised the word "consequently" to herself, paused to underline the wrong word ("nevertheless") and wrote the word "consequently" with a question mark before reading the entire sentence again with the corrected word.

In the next TA extract (#4), E5's strategy was to analyse the errors made by the student before highlighting the errors, using her linguistic knowledge of transitional words.

TA Extract #4 (E5)

Okay, the first topic sentence (HAH) wrong words have been used. // I think what he meant is /// popular instead of famous. // Wrong preposition // Wrong word forms // Wrong sentence structure because he has used (ERR) /// wrong auxiliary verb. (E5, TA, p. 1)

Sample Feedback 4 (E5)

First of all: advertising method is the most famous way ^{www} in promotion ^{prep wf} the product of company to public, why ^{in this generation} can't I say so? According to a survey ~~that~~ made by anonymous company, ~~because~~ most of the ^{being} human could not live out their life ~~without~~ ^{with} watching television programmes, ~~therefore~~, taking public transportations, ~~and~~ reading newspaper and so on. There are all daily activities that we keep on repeating in our ^{our} day life. In addition, ^{we} company companies ~~have~~ ^{lose} sense all of these, so that they ~~started~~ ^{need to} to promote their products in advertising way and ~~this~~ ^{bring up} this brings up ~~the~~ a huge opportunity to its company on sales. Advertising method consists of ^{or} advertise on television, ^{or} publish their product on public transport and ^{or} publish in newspaper. Among all the ways that company use to advertise ~~and promote~~ its product, advertisement on television is the best way to promote ~~their~~ product due to the technology today which is very high-tech compared to last few decades and ~~the generation~~ youngsters in these day do not like to read newspaper. Therefore, advertising has become a ^{or} must to company ^{or} promoting their new ^{or} product to public because ^{or} of advertising can ^{or} makes its product more attractive and shows in ^{or} the ^{or} creative way.

Handwritten notes on the left margin:
 need to rephrase this sentence
 an explicit product to public
 concluding sentence

(E5, Marked assignment, p. 1)

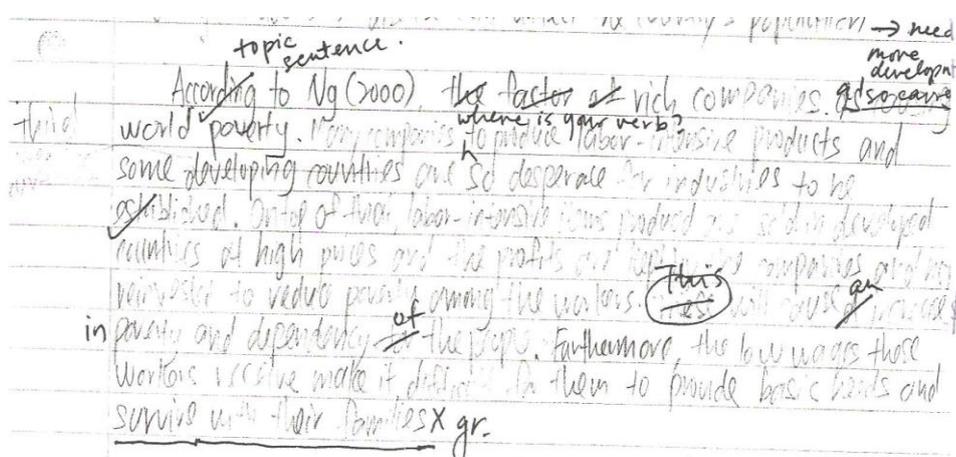
E5's method of highlighting the student's errors involved analysing the errors first. This was followed by the identification of errors using linguistic terms (preposition, word forms, and auxiliary verb) after short pauses. The pauses were also made to highlight the errors through circling and the use of abbreviations (for example, www, prep, wf, ww).

However, some lecturers chose not to highlight errors due to certain circumstances. For example, in the following extract (#5), E3 was about to provide the written correction for the student when she suddenly decided against the idea:

TA Extract #5 (E3)

There is no such thing as *will caused* after will or modal, it must go back to the infinitive form. So I am going to cancel off the d // // // // maybe I am going to just announce in class, but just make an announcement to the class that next time when they use modals, they should not use // (ARR), they should use the infinitive after the modal. Okay (ERR) *these will cause*. (E3, TA, p. 10)

Sample Feedback 5 (E3)



(E3, Marked assignment, p.1)

Perhaps E3 foresaw the possibility of the same errors being committed by other students. Perhaps she did not want to highlight the errors repeatedly for the individual student, as this would have taken time and effort. Instead, she decided to point out this error when she gave general oral feedback in class. In this extract, E3 used her subject knowledge of grammar rules and linguistic terms – for instance, “modal” and “infinitive” – to guide her in her feedback. The filler “ahh” was used when trying to think of the right linguistic term.

When E4 felt that the student had misinterpreted the content of the article, she reread the article before deciding to accept the student’s answer, as portrayed in Extract #6 (E4):

TA Extract #6 (E4)

The decision has to be taken as 'a golden rule' and should never be questioned. Wow. //(ERR) is that what the // article says? The decision has to be taken 'as a golden rule' and should never be questioned. So I don't correct this /// because I think this person, I don't think the students mean to copy directly but then I think there is no other way to express this statement. //The decision has to be taken 'as golden rule' and should never be questioned so their subordinates will just work according to their rules. //It's pretty well summarised. /// (E4, TA, p. 1)

She proceeded with the reading. At the end of the sentence, she used the interjection “wow” to indicate her surprise at the student’s strong statement. She reread the article to confirm whether the student had misinterpreted the information in the article. She then decided that she would not make any correction for the student, and that the student did not intend to plagiarise the article. After pausing for three seconds, she commented that the information was summarised appropriately.

As noted in all of the samples of feedback and think- aloud extracts, the majority of the lecturers chose either to highlight errors and/or provided answers to the student’s errors. E1 was the only lecturer who provided limited suggestions, in the form of comments, at the end of the student’s assignment. Her comments were verbal and written, as evidenced in TA Extract #7 and Sample Feedback 6.

TA Extract #7 (E1)

(ERR) ((write and say at the same time)) please (ERR) look into your supporting details. Most of your /// are not // not very // improve sentence structure or // (HMM HMM HM HMM HMMMM. Okay content /// four, language seven, /// three point five, organisation two point five // Okay done, that’s done. (E1, TA, p. 7)

Sample Feedback 6 (E1)

Please look into your supporting details. Most of your points are not very relevant to the topic. Improve sentence structure.

(E1, Marked assignment, p. 2)

The think-aloud was fragmented as she wrote the comments. Maybe she was thinking of ways to provide appropriate feedback. The fillers “hmm hmm hmm” were used, perhaps to think of how to provide grades. Although there was no evidence of justification of marks presented in the think-aloud session, she added the following comment during the stimulated recall:

For this course, because it is not moderated, this work is not moderated, that is not for the external party. It's for, it's more for, err, myself and for the students because sometimes students will ask “miss why do I get this?” So with the feedback, it is easier for me, (ERR), to refresh my memory. Why did I give the marks to justify myself to the student? (E1,SR, p. 8)

This extract illustrated that feedback may have been given by the lecturer to justify grades to students, rather than to external moderators.

Two English lecturers provided evidence of how marks were awarded, rather than providing feedback to the students during the think-aloud. The justification given was addressed to me and the lecturer's own reference, rather than for the students or the moderators as claimed, which is illustrated in TA Extracts #8 and #9.

TA Extract #8 (E3)

Okay, so what is he going to get. (LAUGHTER). (AH) content ///, (AH) his content //// is not very good, he has many times, he has used talked about solution rather than problem and causes of poverty. ///. So content is two for poor, ah, organisation //// (AH) will give him, thesis statement is right on top even though I told them not to but, (ERR) //// organisation is also not that good //but never mind since he tries to write a thesis statement and topic sentence, I will give him a three, which is average. /

Ah vocabulary, he actually lifted a lot from the text given, /// actually whatever is his own work, err, horrible so, (ERR), would give him another two, which is poor and language // is also poor, so it will be two, so two, plus three, plus five, err, plus four, so nine. Nine over ten, ah, this one will be, I have to fail him. Okay. (E3, TA, pp. 4-5)

E3's self-regulation while thinking aloud could be seen through her consideration of the main criteria; for example, "ah content," "ah organisation," "ah vocabulary," which guided her in the provision of marks and of justifications for the specific criteria awarded. Some fragments, for instance, "actually whatever is his work", "he (ERR) horrible", and the intervening pauses, were indications of thinking aloud. The metacognitive activity was present through the act of adding up the grand total of marks. However, during the stimulated recall session, E3 mentioned that the student's work, which she had graded during the think-aloud, was not a formal assessment in the coursework. Students wrote the essay as a practice. Overall, the act of providing justification in the think- aloud was for me, as the observer, and also for her own reference.

E4's justification was also addressed mostly to me, as illustrated in the following extract:

TA Extract #9 (E4)

We are only looking at all three articles for five marks. ///. You know, so it is just that we want them to go through this process // and we want this process to be graded. So thereby the five marks you know, so looking from the general point of view, ///I think he deserves at least 3.5. //////////////// alright // that is basically what I look at // when I am marking a summary or paraphrase. ///. This one is not very bad ///. The way I look at it is /// it may have all the grammar mistakes and all that, but for me the objective is to get them to paraphrase it and to write it in their own words and not just copy and paste parts of the article. Work in that sense is pretty okay. (E4, TA, p. 9)

She began the justification by explaining the background of the division of marks for the particular assessment to me. A long pause (approximately 20 seconds) followed the awarding of marks, which probably indicated her inner thoughts behind justifying the grades, based on her personal belief that the ability to paraphrase was the main focus of the assessment.

The science lecturers' beliefs and practices seemed to converge in terms of providing constructive feedback and reducing student errors in written assignments.

The science lecturers were like the English lecturers, in that they highlighted the errors and/or provided answers for students; at the same time, other forms of cognitive activity were present during the think-aloud sessions. The main activity was comprehending the information conveyed by the students (see, for example, S1, S3 and S5).

S1 paused in TA Extract #10, perhaps to comprehend the language and the content provided by the student.

TA Extract #10 (S1)

The next point, *the other problem of slow supply exist in construction sector is the professional of the construction industry // like the architect, civil engineering and the quantity surveyor //*. The sentence is not clear here. *The other problem of slow supply exist in construction sector is the professional of the construction industry like the architect, civil engineers /// and the quantity surveyor because the client or developer need to wait the architect and civil engineer, engineering design about the building or structure after that the client and the developer estimate this design.* The sentence is too long, it is not clear. *//*.

(S1, TA, p. 2)

Sample Feedback 7 (S1)

The other problem of slow supply exist in construction sector is the professional of the construction industry like the architect, civil engineering and the quantity surveyor because the client or developer need to wait the architect and civil engineering design the drawing about the building or structural, after that the client or developer need to estimate the design if the design over their budget the architect and civil engineering need to change their design this process are take a lot of time. If the client or developer is agree the design the quantity surveyor just start to provide the bill of quantities and tender. The purpose of the tender is selects the suitable contractor, the project manager, architect or quantity surveyor advertising in local newspaper or technical paper. So that construction project is takes a lot of time in the procedures and complete compare with the manufacture industry.

(S1, Marked assignment, p. 2)

Although initially S1 mentioned that he did not fully comprehend the main idea presented by the student after reading and pausing for 24 seconds, he kept on reading. It was possible that he was hoping to be able to draw a conclusion after reading the entire paragraph. Finally, he commented that the sentences were too long and unclear. However, he did not highlight these errors at all in his written feedback, as illustrated in Sample Feedback 7.

In the next example in TA Extract #11, S3 also used pauses and questions, to comprehend the student's work.

TA Extract #11 (S3)

This can be seen clearly from the head against the flow rate /// graph. /////.
(ERR) I am not sure how to change this part. Surely something is missing.
///. ((Typed and verbalised at the same time)) the sentence is not // giving
clear /// (ERR) // clear ideas to the reader. //// What graph is that? ////
((Verbalised and typed at the same time)). It would be best /// if you can
insert /// a graph ///// that you mentioned here. Okay. (S3, TA, p. 2)

Sample Feedback 8 (S3)

Pump in series can be identified by adding the head of each pump. The flow rate of the pumps that are arranged in series-series pump is the same from the inlet of the first pump to the outlet of the second pump. This can be seen clearly from the head against flow rate graph.

Conversely, the parallel pump increases the flow rate of fluid but constant in head in each of the pump. This too can be visualized in the head against flow rate graph.

Procedure

The TecQuipment H32 was switched on by pressing the green button. Pump 1 had been set up to test its performance. The speed of the pump was set to 1(750 rev/min). Gate valve was opened to the fullest. Stopwatch started when the water diffuser gate was closed. Time was recorded when the reservoir reached 5L. At the same time, delivery pump pressure was recorded. Results were recorded in the table. The experiment continues by switching to the following test set:

1. Performance of pump 2 at the same fixed speed of pump 1.
2. Performance of a single pump, range of 3 speeds.
3. Performance of two pumps in series, fixed speed.
4. Performance of two pumps in series, different speeds.
5. Performance of two pumps in parallel, fixed speed.
6. Performance of two pumps in parallel, different speeds.

Height between the water surface of reservoir and the pump inlet was measured.

Formatted: Justified

Comment [K4]: The sentence is not giving clear ideas to the reader. It would be best if you can insert a graph that you mentioned here.

Formatted: Justified

Comment [K5]: You may need a graph here to support your claim.

Comment [K6]: Heading has been changed

(S3, Marked assignment, p. 3)

He read and paused for three seconds to think- aloud the word “graph,” after which he paused for six seconds in TA Extract #11. In the assignment, the student mentioned a graph, but the graph was not provided. As a result, S3 was unable to fully comprehend the information provided because of the absence of the graph. He remarked that he was not sure how to rephrase the sentence for the student. After pausing for approximately seven seconds, he wrote and verbalised at the same time, questioning the student about the graph and suggesting that a graph be included for clarity (in Sample Feedback 8).

S5’s strategy of comprehending the student’s writing was through verbalising the summary of the student’s work, pausing and reading, as in the following extract.

TA Extract #12 (S5)

Okay, he separated his experiments up into experiment 1, experiment 2, which is fine. So here he started to demonstrate Mendel’s first law that is fine. And I just didn’t like the way he put the second aim, which is to interpret, what are you interpreting? /// so I asked for his reasons. Not that he

needs to interpret the actual data because that is the aim. ////. ((Flip the page)). The other aim is this side. //////////////. Okay, that is fine. Alright, he has mentioned both. It is independent and fragmental. (S5, TA, p. 1)

Sample Feedback 9 (S5)

Experiment 1

Title of experiment: Transmission Genetics – Monohybrid Crosses

Aims:

- 1) To demonstrate Mendel's First Law using a computer stimulation.
- 2) To interpret maize F₂ data obtained.

*You are ~~not~~ interpreting for a reason what is
The reason*

(S5, Marked assignment, p. 1)

As she was summarising the student's work, S5 felt that the student's explanation of the aim was unclear, so she posed a question to help the student rewrite the aim for clarity (Sample Feedback 9). However, she later discovered that the aim was further elaborated on the following page. She paused for eight seconds to read, and after she was able to comprehend the content provided, she finally accepted the student's answer.

Other salient cognitive activities involved the lecturers' analysis of the errors and their thoughts in response to the errors.

In one of the think- aloud sessions, when S4 doubted the accuracy of the content presented by the student, he asked himself a question to clarify his thoughts, as shown in the following extract:

TA Extract #13 (S4)

Biotechnology existed since B.C. when men already knew how to plant crops. /// [HMMM] I thought that is 8000 B.C.? /// *so I am going to ask for a reference. (S4, TA, p. 1)*

Sample Feedback 10 (S4)

Biotechnology existed since 10,000 B.C. where men already knew how to plant crops and breed animals. The discovery of fermentation, where this natural process involved microorganisms for the production of food and medicine, ^{defining} was the beginning of biotechnology. Archeologists revealed that there are evidences of Babylonians, Egyptians and Romans using selective breeding practices to improve livestock in 8000B.C. A few centuries into the future at 6000B.C, men were brewing beer, fermenting wine and baking bread with the help of yeasts followed by yoghurt and cheese making with the help of lactic-acid producing bacteria (Wikipedia, 2010).

This is not the most reliable reference. Would be good if you could also include a ~~second~~ second ref.

(S4, Marked assignment, p. 1)

After reading the text, he paused for three minutes because he doubted the accuracy of the information provided by the student. He paused for another four minutes, perhaps to think of an appropriate response to the error. After the pause, he verbalised his intended written feedback. He put an inverted “v” after the word “animals” and wrote “(ref)”, a short form for reference (Sample Feedback 10).

S5 was observed making the correction on behalf of the student, followed by analysing the reasons for student’s error, evident in TA Extract #14.

TA Extract #14 (S5)

Where is the F1 statement here? Is the F1 phenotype tally with my expectations but what are his expectations (AH) he did not clearly bring it out? /// *But actually it is here, actually it is down here /// *it is just that it is not clearly brought out. He expects it to get 9: 9: 3: 1 ratio. /// *Okay, when they are doing the Chi Square table, they have to state a null hypothesis, and his statement is genes undergo independent***

assortment in dihybrid crosses chi square. It doesn't make sense but if I just cancel out the chi square, it makes sense so I just cancel it out for him okay /////. I don't know why the chi square statement is there. Whether it is a typing error or whether he thinks it is the part of the sentence. I am not sure. (S5, TA, pp. 4-5)

Sample Feedback 11(S5)

Results:

I. Kangasaurus Genetics

Table 1. Record of a Kangasaurus Experiment

1. Cross CC female x cc male
2. Phenotype of F₁ males : pointed chin shape
3. Phenotype of F₁ females: pointed chin shape
4. Record F₂ ~~or test-cross data~~

✓
Would be good
to mention
 χ^2 -test

(S5, Marked assignment, p. 2)

Initially, she was searching for the student's hypothesis. After pausing for four seconds, she finally found the statement, but it was unclear. She also discovered another error made by the student, which was to mention the Chi Square. She was bewildered by the student's decision to include the Chi Square, and tried analysing the causes of the student's error. Thus, the lecturer finally decided to strike out the error on behalf of the student.

When comparing all of the science lecturers' practices in providing suggestions for further improvement, S1 seemed to provide the least amount of written feedback to help the students improve their learning. As observed in Sample Feedback 7, the errors were not highlighted in written form although the errors were mentioned verbally. In contrast, S3's feedback was filled with suggestions and feed-forward to minimise errors in the future (See Sample Feedback 8). He suggested that the student should include a graph for clarity, and included comments at the end of the student's assignment, as depicted in TA Extract #15.

TA Extract #15 (S3)

Report. This is where am I coming to err ((verbalise and type at the same time)) Make sure you/// follow exactly the /// (OPPS, OPPS) format given to you. /// In terms of the /// discussions, you may need to make more // critical analysis of the results. ///We do not present the results // without any // analyses of the results, ///// so make some interpretations /// of the results, and if you can, // compare // the results with the // theory, or any // available works. ///In addition, ((I have to comment on the presentations – verbalised without typing)) we need to // label the // figures, graphs and tables, with /// appropriate captions, so that the //reader will be able to follow the //// works. I am looking forward // to a better report from you, and do come and consult me // if you need // further help // in getting a // good report done. Right. Okay, done. (S3, TA, p. 8)

S3's strategies of providing comments and suggestions were based on his pre-established criteria. He began by requesting that students adhere to the given format of the report. The use of the first plural pronoun "we" was used, perhaps to lessen the authoritativeness of his tone, and perhaps to draw the student's attention to the writing norms and practices of the science community. He ended the feedback on two positive notes. Firstly, he motivated the student to submit a better report in the future; secondly, he invited the student to consult with him if the student needed more assistance.

S3 and S5 were the only science lecturers who provided justification for the marks that they awarded. S3 was very systematic in the provision of justification, and he was the only lecturer who referred to his marking schemes.

TA Extract #16 (S3)

Right now, I've got to give some marks here. ///// Right, track changes. /// The last page now, my marking here on the introductions and theory let's look through back again. /// The theory doesn't seem to be copied from the lab manual. But if you see here, it does really lack a lot of things. // Okay, talking about the centrifugal pump I am expecting some sort of, (ERR), history of this pump // and a little bit of, (ERR), equations

to be presented here. // and, (ERR), what exactly this, (ERR) // pump is used as well and on, (ERR) // efficiency of the pump and everything // So // the maximum mark I will give out of 15 will be five marks although it is not copied from the lab manual but, (ERR) // not any research has been done so // to be awarded from the range six to ten. So / five marks I will give /// now the results in calculating this, (ERR), let's check back again and see //. Obviously, it is not presented professionally because the numbers are not in the same line but the unit's missing. // and tables and graphs are not properly labelled and captioned which I couldn't really follow what // the students are presenting//. Soooo, let's check on the ///, definitely not on the nine to ten marks, basically eight marks are shown in the necessary calculations. Not really so I will give five marks overall. Minimal presentations on results. ///. Now discussions. (AHH) ///. Okay demonstrate the ability to measure the results in the independent and critical way, in depth discussion is presented, on the variance of the results with theory, or the effect of the changing of any parameters to the results. Further discussion is presented on the improvements /// of the accuracy if there is any discrepancy, but in looking at this; I didn't even understand what he is talking about. ... definitely, within the range from zero to ten. In fact can see basically the reading of the results as well. // Soooo, /// say five marks maximum? //// Now format of presentations, is, (ERR), in the first place I have been mentioning that all my format has been changed, where all my headers have been changed, the cover page has been changed, /// and, (ERR), the yeah, the font size as well //. My standard font size is Times Roman size twelve and this is times Roman size six in the reference //. Any other places? (ERR) //The last //// so the maximum I will give is. Let's check. Basic format structure is presented. Not really. Lack of standard format, structure and incomprehensible, yes. So five marks I will give. So total up will be five plus five plus five plus five, 20 out of 60 // which is a fail. (S3, TA, pp. 4 -5)

Based on the above extract, S3 used strategies similar to those of E1; he mentioned the main criteria to guide his thoughts in providing justifications of the marks given. The only difference is that S3 read his criteria and looked through the student's work again. Before awarding the marks, he explained his

expectations and judged whether the student had met the criteria. In the theory section, the student did not meet his expectations and he assigned a low grade. In the criteria relating to the following “results” section, he commented that the student did not present the report professionally because the numbers were not in the same line, the unit was missing and tables and graphs were not labelled properly. He was frustrated because he could not understand what the student was trying to convey. He went back to his marking scheme and thought to himself about what marks to award the student. In terms of discussion, he commented that he was not able to understand what student was trying to convey. As for the format of presentations, he compared his preferred format with the format the student had presented. He complained that the student had changed the original formatting. He totalled the marks and observed that the student had failed. Overall, S3’s cognitive process helped him to award marks based on his beliefs about what constituted a good report, and guided him to provide comments for the student for future improvement (the comments were provided immediately after the justification of marks were provided). As the think-aloud was done in my presence, the justifications also were directed to me.

S5 was also very systematic in the provision of justification, as depicted in the following extract, even though no references were made to any criteria.

TA Extract #17 (S5)

Okay, again there is some slight mistake here. I will give him two, intro //. Okay, his intro is much better as compared to ... [ERRM] ///////////////. Okay, I will give him 5.5 //. Materials and methods, really good but /// except that he missed out the chi square testing. So 5.5 results ///////////////. His hypothesis is not stated so there should be some deduction of marks there err this is quite a major mistake. His conclusions from his chi square are incorrect, here is also incorrect, here he is also incorrect. So like he doesn’t know what he is testing. He is just using he has (ERR) the steps without knowing what he is testing. LAUGHTER okay err // ((flipping pages to look through)) Results 9 because he has done a serious error and his null hypothesis is not stated properly. Probably gene and genotype they are getting mixed up between these. These are terms okay

//////. The discussions are not very great but not too bad so I will give him, he has covered all (ERR) nine, three, three, one. The epistasis, he explains it. The epistasis is the reasons for the ratios (ERR) he explains why the results are not accurate and why he did the chi square, what is the necessity of the chi square test, okay so I would give him like twelve for discussion. Conclusion minus one mark for that. Okay two for references, one because there are no citations in the text for these references including for this reference... Okay so 1 mark. Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, 20, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. (S5, TA, pp. 2 -3)

Her strategies in the grading process were to highlight errors and justify the marks according to each criterion, which was in her head. Two comments were positive, while the others all related to errors. Then she calculated the total of the marks awarded for the assignment. Like S3, S4's justification was based on her beliefs about what constituted a good report. However, S4's justification was done for my benefit rather than the moderators or for the students. The reasons for this claim were the lack of the pronoun "you" to address the students, while the use of first and third person pronouns suggested that the intended audience was the lecturer herself, and me as the observer. In addition, no notes or comments were provided to justify the grades, either for the students or the moderators.

Overall in my study, the findings in regard to the English and science lecturers' observed practices in providing feedback suggested both convergences and divergences in relation to the findings of other studies. The awarding of grades by all the lecturers in my study during the think-aloud session was seen by them as an indirect method of assisting student learning in the form of measuring their achievement, and this agreed with the findings in other studies (Glover & Brown, 2006; Li, 2012; Orrell, 2006), whereby the subject lecturers believed that awarding grades was more important than feedback that supported students' learning processes. Another element of convergence was the lack of suggestions for improvement and feed-forward provided by the majority of the lecturers in my study despite the claim that feedback functions as a tool to assist student learning; this was also evident in Li's (2012) study. The lecturers' justifications of the grades for the approval of overseas moderators in my study were not clearly

evident. The results of my findings diverged from those of Li (2012), which revealed from the tutor's observed practices that the function of feedback was to justify the grades to different audiences, including the students, the lecturers who were in charge of the course, and the tutors.

4.2.2 Differences in belief and the observed practices about the provision of positive or negative feedback

This section reports data relating to the observed practices of providing encouraging or negative feedback. This is followed by consideration of affective factors which emerged during the think- aloud sessions of the English and science lecturers. The data presented in this section was gathered from the individual lecturers' interviews and compared with the observed practice in the think- aloud sessions.

In terms of the convergences between beliefs about, and practices of, providing motivating feedback, in the think-aloud session the actions of two lecturers (E3 and E4) were consistent with their stated beliefs during their interviews. E3 reflected her previously stated stance as a negative marker as follows:

TA Extract #18 (E3)

Okay, finally his conclusion. *Finally, governments should be improving health, education and the living standards of all people in order to reduce world poverty.* Why does this sounds so much like /// the ending like // the other kid's essay? ///. (E3, TA, p. 11)

After reading the student's conclusion, she stated that she believed that the student had copied another student's work which she had seen earlier, during the training for the think- aloud session.

On the other hand, E4 portrayed herself as a balanced marker during the think-aloud. She seemed to carefully choose her words to motivate the student to do his or her best in future assignments; for example, when she realised that the student did not make an attempt to paraphrase, she underlined the phrase and wrote "not-well paraphrased," while making the following comment:

TA Extract #19 (E4)

Okay, clearly this here is not ///. I don't want to say that this is copied.// because it is not direct copying. It is not like word for word copying, it is just not well paraphrased (E4, TA, p.4)

Some divergences were evident in terms of providing positive reinforcement in the written feedback, to encourage students. For example, during the interview E1 voiced the belief that she was a “balanced marker”, but this was not reflected in her provision of written feedback during the think-aloud; instead, she seemed to be a negative marker. She did not provide any encouraging comments for the student during the entire think-aloud session, and the written feedback consisted of pointing out errors. Perhaps she felt responsible for pointing out errors, to assist the student in subsequent assignments. E5 was more positive in practice than she said she was in her interview. She verbally acknowledged the student's efforts to include interesting facts, especially the supporting details in the second paragraph. Another example of being positive was verbally praising the student for providing a good explanation in the third topic sentence. She also provided two examples of positive written feedback for the students; for example, “an appropriate concluding sentence” (Sample Feedback 4) and “supporting details are relevant and specific – good.”

The science lecturers, especially S1, S3 and S4, asserted during their interviews that they provided constructive feedback; this seemed to agree with their actual practices during the think-aloud sessions, as indicated in the following paragraphs and examples.

During S1's think-aloud session, the only positive verbal comment acknowledged a student's effort in the introduction section; in the written feedback he wrote “OK”. Otherwise, throughout the think-aloud session, he verbally pointed out the types of errors, for instance, “the problem is the construction of the sentence here”; “the sentence is not clear here”; and “discussion quite bad for this particular assignment”. Possibly the student was weak, and he felt he had to point out the errors, because the student had not reached his expectations.

During the think-aloud session, S3's style was to keep on pointing out errors, especially in terms of format and language. A number of very politely written suggestions were made to assist students in producing a better assignment in the future, through the use of modals, for example, "you may need a graph here to support your claim", or "it would be best if you can insert the graph that you mention here", or "it would be great if you can use a conjunction". At times, his suggestions were very direct, for example, "you need a label for the figure, together with a caption" or "refer to my comments and adjustments in Table 1" or "this is best performed by using an equation editor, and to be presented in the mathematical form". When he did not understand what the student was trying to convey, he wrote "which graph exactly are you referring to?" and "don't get what you mean here. I take it as a fragment." At the end of the assessment, S3 provided some comments (TA Extract #15), which were both directive and polite. Perhaps S3 was assessing a weak student and he had to point out errors most of the time. S3 sounded positive towards the end of his comment.

During the think-aloud session, S4 chose to be positive orally, as illustrated in TA Extract #20. Whenever the student provided accurate information or a correct in-text citation, S4 would say "Correct. One mark," and place a tick next to the content provided, although he did not actually write any positive comments. When he doubted the information provided by the student, he requested a reference. When the student provided a reference from Wikipedia, he provided his own point of view, followed by a polite suggestion to include a second reference by using a conditional phrase (if) and a modal verb (could), which were reflected in the following think-aloud session (see Sample Feedback 10):

TA Extract #20 (S4)

A few centuries into the future at 6000 B.C., men were brewing beer, fermenting wine, baking bread oh for this one definitely you need a reference because earlier I saw some 4000 B.C. //// and she used Wikipedia. This is not the most reliable reference ((say and write at the same time)). Would be good if you would also include a second reference. //// Wikipedia is not a good reference. /// (S4, TA, p. 12)

Whenever he came across a reference, he seemed pleased that the student had made an effort to include an in text-citation, even though at times the student made errors in citation; for example, he mentioned “ah with a reference” or “correct. //// Reference should only have last name so correcting, removing the first name.” At times S4 laughed, especially when the student met his expectations or put in extra information which was not expected.

By contrast, S5 kept on providing her views about why students made certain errors, highlighting students’ errors and making corrections during the think-aloud session. At times, although she was perhaps annoyed with her student for plagiarising another student’s work, she tried to be tactful. She rebuked her student by writing the following comment,

You know it is a F1 x f1 why do you say test cross? If you say test cross, you need 10 check 1:1 ratios. (reference) (S5, TA, p. 4)

However, during the think-aloud session, she managed to provide a positive comment to the student, as follows: “you did a lot of work to look for this – but you need references and you need to connect ideas better (p.4).” The suggestions were at times polite – for example, “would be good to mention __ test (Sample Feedback 11)” – and other times directive; for example, “you need to do X2 to prove (S5, TA, p. 4).”

Overall, most of the negative feelings during the think-aloud sessions were expressed verbally, rather than in written form. In terms of the emotional reactions towards students’ errors, the English lecturers (E1, E3 and E4) seemed to be very transparent and more expressive in revealing their true

feelings, as compared to their science colleagues. The number of expressions among the science lecturers was smaller, compared to the English lecturers.

It seemed that the English lecturers (with the exception of E5) responded negatively whenever language errors were identified; for example, E1 laughed and used a Malay word to express herself.

The city also provides its inhabitants (LAUGHTER). Inhabitants pulak. (E1, TA, p. 6)

The word “pulak” is an expression to show that something, or certain words, are not suitable in the context. Perhaps E1 felt the word “inhabitants” was wrongly used and she was laughing at the student’s error.

E3 was frustrated by the student’s poor English language proficiency, and stated that the grammar and lack of organisational skill was “horrible”.

TA Extract #21 (E3)

Because if people lack of knowledge they were ...they cannot not they were. They were cannot improve their living standards? ... Okay it’s, this is grammatically oh dear this is grammatically horrible... and organisation nightmare as well... (E3, TA, pp. 8 - 9)

In another example, when E4 spotted an error, the response was negative, which is evident in the following extract:

TA Extract #22 (E4)

The manager will then rest the final. Will then rest the final? Will rest the final decision himself indeed. (AHAH) (LAUGHTER) //// sorry it is not very nice of me ///. Ugh. Rest /// this probably suggests that this person is paraphrasing. ///. And also err and then ////////// rest the and then let? /// the final decision rest //// for a while and rest on himself? (E4, TA, p. 5)

She found the student’s errors humorous. However, she quickly apologised to the student, perhaps when she realised that she was being observed by me. In

her comments, she then linked the error with the student's effort to paraphrase the article. She continued reading the student's work and then repeated the phrase that contained the error.

When students made errors in content, certain types of emotion were elicited in the English lecturers. For instance, when E3 realised that the student made an error in terms of the content, she pointed this out; at the same time, she was concerned about whether or not the student would understand the feedback, as shown in the following extract:

TA Extract #23 (E3)

Okay. In addition, we should focus on providing education programs and technical skills to train workers // to improve the quantity and quality of products for export. /// This is also, I am going to put another bracket here and say that it is for solution, not for cause. Solution, not causes. Okay I am going to put a cross and then solution and not cause./// hopes he understands. (E3, TA, p. 11)

In another example, E4 was surprised to read a sweeping statement and she was not sure if the student had misinterpreted the information in the article. However, she later accepted the work after rereading the article (see TA Extract #6).

The science lecturers showed little reaction towards students' English language errors, but their reactions to students' content errors were more obvious. S3 seemed to be sarcastic and agitated as he encountered errors in the discussion section, in which he wrote cursory questions such as "so?", "then?" and "and?", which could be interpreted as being very sarcastic. He indicated his agitation through his tone of annoyance, particularly when the student did not adhere to the fixed format which had been posted online for the students' reference (TA Extract #16).

S5 reacted negatively when she saw that the wrong hypothesis had been repeated in another section of the assignment, She verbally expressed her annoyance in the think- aloud session, as follows:

TA Extract #24 (S5)

He records down or puts down F2 or test cross but I have put down a statement here because they follow the lab manual exactly without any thought so they have actually done an F2, not as test cross because the lab manual allows you to do an F2 or a test cross so just put down a statement, you know you have done F1 so why do you mention this when you haven't done it yet? (S5, TA, p. 4)

When S5 realised that the repeated errors were caused by the student's attempts to plagiarise the lab manual, she became angrier, and made the following comments during the think- aloud session:

TA Extract #25 (S5)

Again I see the chi square. It is the same null hypothesis whether they cut paste, cut paste, cut paste. I don't know because it is basically repeating, it's repeating the same thing they just said. (S5, TA, p. 5)

S5 verbally accused the student of copying the lab manual throughout the think-aloud session. The student was supposed to conduct a chi square test; however, the test was not conducted and the wrong ratio was used. As a result, the conclusion, or the results of the experiment, was inaccurate. S5 explained that the student had copied the lab manual without thinking seriously about the requirements of the assignment.

Overall, the findings in my study, in relation to English and science lecturers' observed practices in providing either positive or negative feedback, suggested both convergences and divergences in relation to the findings in other studies. While the English lecturers in my study believed that their feedback was positive, their feedback actually became more negative during the think- aloud session. Emotions such as humour, frustrations, annoyance were sometimes expressed in the process of think-aloud and the actions of providing written feedback (see Li (2012) for more examples of lecturers' expressions of emotions during the think-aloud process). My findings resembled those of a wider study by Read et al. (2005), on 50 history lecturers from 24 UK

universities, which revealed that the actual feedback provided by lecturers' actions was different from their beliefs about giving feedback. The beliefs and practices of two English and two science lecturers in my study, however, were consistent. The consistency of beliefs and practices of the lecturers in my study was similar to those in Li's (2012) study, where the majority of the subject tutors' provision of positive comments reflected their belief that they should not provide negative feedback. The tendencies of the English lecturers, in my study, to be negative in their comments concurred with Connors and Lunsford's (1993) study, in which English lecturers provide negative rather than positive feedback. My findings in this respect diverged from the English lecturers in Hyland and Hyland's (2001) study, who used positive feedback as part of their strategy to highlight errors. Another form of divergence from Hyland and Hyland's (2001) study was that the majority of the English lecturers in my study did not praise students, even though the students' work was perceived to have met their expectations.

4.2.3 Differences in belief and the observed practices of the focus of feedback

This section presents findings on English lecturers' practices of providing feedback in the different areas of focus on formative feedback, which could be based on pre-set criteria. It was observed that the English lecturers' actual feedback practice diverged from their stated beliefs during their interviews, that a holistic consideration of the overall assignment was essential. During their think-aloud sessions, there was a strong emphasis on lower order concerns such as language, grammar, content and paragraph organisation (thesis statement/topic sentences/transitional words).

In the think-aloud sessions, feedback on content was provided via two methods. The first method was to point out the relationship between the topic sentence and the supporting sentences. E1, for example, provided comments beside the paragraph if the content was repeated or not properly developed. She also emphasised the need to relate the content to the question, through general written comments (Sample Feedback 6).

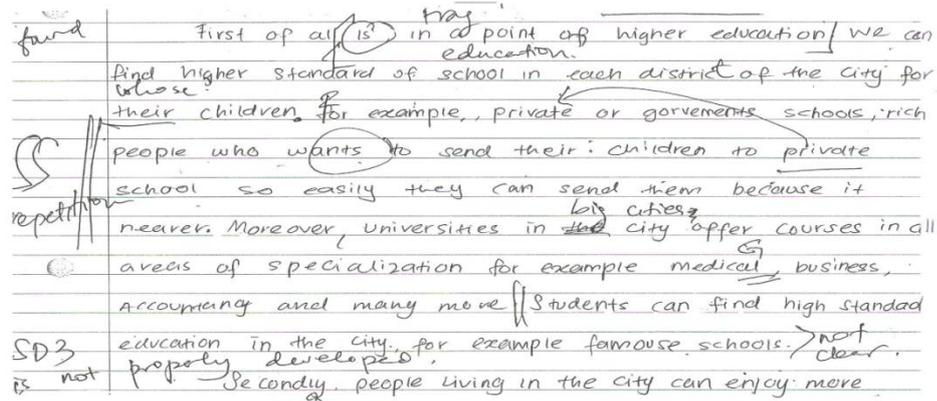
TA Extract #26 (E1)

Sentence structure/// for example ////////// okay (ERR) /// Repetition here (E1, TA, p. 1).

TA Extract #27 (E1)

Business, accountancy and many more. //// Students can find high standard education institute for example, famous school ////////// Not clear. (HMM) SD3 is not properly developed. (E1, TA, p. 1)

Sample Feedback 12 (E1)



(E1, Marked assignment, p. 1)

Secondly, the feedback on content was provided by asking questions. E5 wrote questions rather than directives in order to highlight content error; she wrote, for example, “who should come out with the idea?” to clarify the ambiguity of the information provided by the student. Likewise, E1 also posed questions when addressing the student; for instance, writing “what things?” to show that the student’s information was not clearly stated (Sample Feedback 1).

One aspect of writing on which the English lecturers (E1, E3, and E5) seemed to place considerable emphasis was the students’ ability to construct thesis statements and topic sentences. For example, during the think- aloud session,

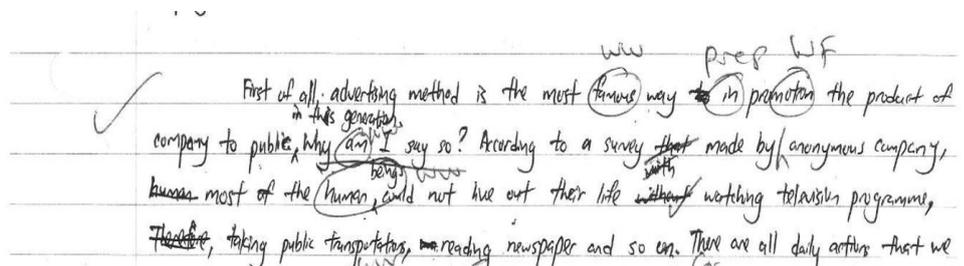
E1 was observed writing “Thesis St is not found” on the student’s assignment (Sample Feedback 1). In another example, E5 made a verbal comment during the think-aloud, that “The thesis statement is a bit simple” (p. 1), but she did not provide written feedback on this; this indicated that she was addressing me, as well as herself, rather than the student. E3’s focus on the thesis statement was very apparent in Sample Feedback 16, where she was concerned about the student’s placement of the thesis statement at the beginning of the paragraph.

All of the English lecturers, accentuated accurate grammar in their feedback in the think-aloud session. E1, E3, E4 and E5 were seen highlighting grammatical errors in students’ written work (Sample Feedback 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14).

TA Extract #28 (E5)

Three grammatical errors//where the students should be using gerunds.
(E5, TA, p. 1).

Sample Feedback 13 (E5)



(E5, Marked assignment, p.1)

E4 mentioned that she would focus on content errors; for example, during the think-aloud she suggested omitting the opinion from the summarised article, in which she addressed the students using the pronouns “you” (Sample Feedback 14).

TA Extract #29 (E4)

It’s not making sense. // Is this your opinion? // (ERR) // if it is, then you shouldn’t // include your opinions here. (E4, TA, p. 2)

Sample Feedback 14 (E4)

opinions, hence this can help to motivate employees and there will be a positive impact on teamwork as well as ^{the} work environment. There will be high possibility that the decision is inappropriate as decision is well-thought ^{out} upon from all angles. Furthermore, the chances of ~~getting succeeded~~ ^{Succeeding} are also very limited.

not making sense - is this yr. opinion? - if it is, then you should include yr. opinions here.

(290 words)

(E4, Marked assignment, p. 1)

In their interviews, the science lecturers' collective opinion that content was the most important aspect of feedback seemed to be confirmed by their comments during the think-aloud sessions. Although all lecturers were concerned about the content, they did not practise their beliefs; for example, S1's practice of providing feedback was to mention the limitations of the content provided (Sample Feedback 7).

The construction stage includes preliminary activity, pre-contract stage, tender, design and construction stage and project closeout. /////////////// This particular point is not very strong. (S1, TA, p. 2)

The error was only highlighted verbally to the student after 13-second pauses, but written feedback was not provided.

In another example, S3 felt during the interview that the content in the discussion section of the lab report was the most important; thus the marks allocated in this section held the highest weighting in the lab report. Critical thinking was indirectly assessed in the discussion section. S3's emphasis on critical thinking was exemplified in the student's ability to analyse the result, which was reflected in his comment at the end of student's written work (TA Extract #16). When he was probed further about his expectations about good discussion during the stimulated recall, S3 mentioned that students needed to be able to compare their results with the existing research done by others, or with any of the theories presented in the textbook. Another aspect of critical thinking

was students' ability to present arguments in a critical way, such as identifying the reason for a wrong hypothesis or the failure of an experiment.

On the other hand, S4 (Sample Feedback10 & TA Extract #30) and S5 (Sample Feedback 15 & TA Extract #31) checked the content by searching for instances of the correct use of scientific terminology and the statement of accurate facts. According to S4, the word "beginning" was an example of incorrect terminology.

TA Extract #30 (S4)

The discovery of fermentation, where this natural process involved microorganism for the production of food and medicine, was the beginning of biotechnology. /// Define the beginning. /// Okay define the beginning, it is not was the beginning. Beginning is actually plant breeding / but defining the beginning is actually the fermentation. Defining. / (S4, TA, p. 1)

S5 highlighted errors made in scientific terminology and symbols, as follows:

TA Extract #31 (S5)

Okay, here // in this table, I don't like the way they have put AB together, it should be A // proper /// B Smooth /// small A, yellow, big B, small b, wrinkles. //. Okay, they have, what I would put it as separately, they have put it together ///////////////. Same thing here so I want to make this ///////. Together. Okay /// this is not the same as genotype. //. Okay, this one he just missed out one of the genotypes, it should be there as well, might as will put it in for him. (S5, TA, p. 5)

S5 disliked the student's way of presenting the terminology, so she made the correction on behalf of the student. After pausing for ten seconds to read, she spotted the same error in another section of the same assignment. She decided to make the correction again. She paused for 32 seconds, perhaps to think of appropriate feedback. She finally decided to explain the difference in meaning of the terminology used, and wrote "gene is not the same as genotype" at the right hand side of the column.

Sample Feedback 15 (S5)

Gene is not the same as genotype

Phenotype	Number	Ratio suggested by data
Purple	403	9
Yellow	273	7
Total	676	9:7

5. (a) Purple : Yellow = 9 : 7 ✓
 (b) 2 gene loci. ✓
 (c)

Gene Symbol	Gene effect
AA / BB	A, B Yellow kernels
AB	Purple Kernels

D)

Parental generation	Phenotype	Genotype
Parent No.1	Yellow	AAbb ✓
Parent No.2	Yellow	aaBB ✓
F ₁ generation	Purple	AaBb ✓
F ₂ generation	Purple	AaBb/AABB/ AaBB/AABb ✓
	Yellow	AAbb/aaBB/Aabb/aaBb

abb

(S5, Marked assignment, p. 7)

Another convergence of beliefs and practices among science lecturers was evident in their personal beliefs about providing feedback on language errors. To begin with, S1’s claim about providing language feedback in the interview was confirmed through the entire think-aloud session. S1 kept verbalising the student’s language errors: “The sentence is too long, it is not clear.”, “The grammatical mistake ///////////////. So the sentence. The problem is the construction of the sentence here.” “Again this is the language problem.” (S1, TA, p. 1).

In another example, S3 stated in the interview a belief in the importance of accurate technical writing, which converged with his practice in the think-aloud session. He corrected language errors by rewriting some of the phrases into the passive voice, introducing more accurate word choices, and correcting spelling. Sometimes he would provide an explanation of a language error, but expect the student to make his or her own corrections. When he was probed further during the stimulated recall session as to his beliefs about the rules of technical writing, he replied that these rules were standard expectations in a technical report. Usually the focus on language was in the students’ initial stages of writing the reports. When students progressed further in the course, the

tendency to provide feedback on language decreased, because students were already aware of the type of language used in writing a technical report.

Another convergence between beliefs about feedback and actual feedback-giving practices was evident in S4 not focusing his feedback on language. S4 claimed in the interview that feedback on language was the lowest priority. During the think-aloud session, he highlighted and corrected only one language error (Sample Feedback 10). Most of the time, he was more concerned about the content provided by the student (Sample Feedback 10 & TA Extract #13, TA Extract# 20, TA Extract# 30).

In the interview, S5's beliefs about providing language feedback converged to a certain extent with her actual practices during the think-aloud. The belief that spelling and grammar should not be taken into consideration, especially if the errors did not impact on the meaning, was expressed in the think-aloud session. When she felt that the student used the wrong word, she suggested an alternative; for example,

So here I don't like the word investigated so in the conclusion, it is not conclusive. So I prefer that we show or demonstrated this kind of word. (S5, TA, p. 5)

Three interesting observations were made in relation to the focus of feedback during the think-aloud sessions among science lecturers. The first was related to referencing. Although accurate referencing was not formally assessed by S3 and S4, S4 actively made some written and verbal comments regarding students' use of citations (Sample Feedback 10 & TA Extract #13 & TA Extract #20). During the training for the think-aloud session, S3 acknowledged efforts made by students to include proper citations in the assessment. When asked in the subsequent stimulated recall sessions about their beliefs about providing feedback on referencing, both S3 and S4 stated that citations and referencing were important, because students need to do research when completing their studies abroad (S3), and that their referencing would be graded (S4). Both lecturers felt responsible for familiarising students with the referencing system. In addition, S3 expected students to read, paraphrase and cite other people's

work, rather than simply copying and pasting. Students were expected to compare their work to existing studies, as part of their discussions. On the other hand, in her criteria for the assignment, S5 allocated two marks for references during the think-aloud session. In the margin, she wrote short comments about providing references. During the stimulated recall session, when she was asked about her practices of providing feedback for references, she said that since it was the student's first attempt in referencing, it was unfair to allocate a large number of marks for the references.

The second interesting point that emerged from the think-aloud data was that S1 was the only science lecturer who seemed concerned about the organisation of the text, especially the introduction and the conclusion of the student's essay. He commented, "The, err, this introductory is quite okay", and "so the conclusion of this student is quite poor in the sense that it's never recommended any action to speed up the slow supply of the construction project." In the stimulated recall session, he mentioned that his definition of an A-grade paper was one that started with definitions, included all the major facts and arguments, and provided a proper flow of explanation from one stage to the next.

The third interesting point relating to the focus of feedback among the science lecturers concerns formatting. During the interview, S3 did not mention anything about the importance of formatting, such as the font size of the headings or the labelling of the graphs. However, during the think-aloud session, S3 repeatedly referred to the incorrect use of formatting (Sample Feedback 8, TA Extract #15, TA Extract #16). When S3 was asked in the stimulated recall session why format was so important, he said that he liked everything to be standardised, because this made it easier to him to read the report. During her interview, S5 also mentioned she was concerned about formatting, and that marks were allocated for each section because the format is standardised among all scientists. However, unlike S3, she did not focus at all on the format of the report during the think-aloud session.

Another form of divergence between beliefs and practice was evident in the focus of feedback. Overall, the science lecturers believed language to be less

important than content; however, during the actual practice of providing feedback, language issues were taken into consideration in certain contexts when the language changed the meaning of the scientific terms. The main focus of the feedback from the science lecturers was on content, discussion, references, and scientific terms. One science lecturer paid more attention to the formatting and the presentation of the lab report.

Key findings of the observed practices in terms of the focus of feedback in relation to the literature review

Overall, the findings relating to the English and science lecturers in my study suggested both convergences and divergences in relation to the findings of other studies in terms of the focus of feedback. My findings suggested that the English lecturers believed that they were holistic in their marking, but in practice they focused on highlighting sentence-level errors. This was also true in studies conducted by Ferris (2006), and Montgomery and Baker (2007), where the writing lecturers provided more feedback on lower order concerns in students' drafts. The tendency of the English lecturers in my study to focus on error corrections seemed to match with Lee's (2014) findings where the Hong Kong teachers focused on unfocused WCF. However, the results of my study seemed to be different from the focus in Min's (2013) study, where the writing instructor directed her feedback onto lower order concerns, but changed her approach to focus on content feedback after reflecting on her approaches of providing feedback. My findings on English lecturers were also different from those of Ferris (2014), where the lecturers were consistent in providing feedback for higher order concerns. The English lecturers in my study seemed to indicate errors through a mixture of direct coded feedback and unfocused feedback (See samples feedback 1-16) . Limited comments were provided by the English lecturers in the side margins of the page. These findings diverged slightly from those in a study conducted in a Malaysian private university, where indirect un-coded feedback and comments in the side margins were provided (Nordin et al., 2010).

When a comparison was made between the practices of English and science lecturers in their provision of the written feedback, my findings were similar to those of Sterns and Solomon (2006), where the English lecturers tended to

provide more feedback on language as compared to lecturers from other faculties and departments. On the other hand, the science lecturers in my study seemed to be consistent in their beliefs about providing feedback on content rather than language. Language issues were taken into consideration in certain contexts, such as when the language changed the meaning of the scientific terms.

4.2.4 Lecturers' perceptions about the effectiveness of the feedback

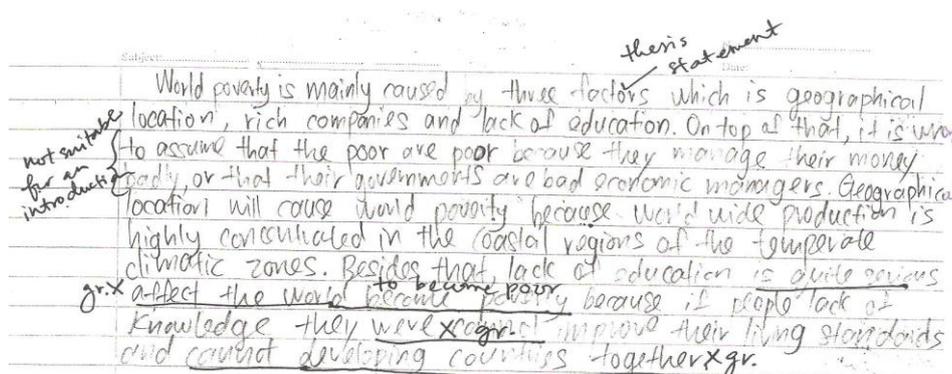
The English lecturers' perceptions about the effectiveness of feedback during their interviews focused on the negative and seemed to converge with their negative reactions to errors during the think-aloud session (please see Section 4.2.2.). The following extract illustrates E3's reactions to a student's errors:

TA Extract #32 (E3)

World poverty is mainly caused by three factors which is organization, err, sorry geographical location, rich companies and lack of education.

///Why did he put the thesis statement so far, so high up? /// I thought I told these people that the thesis statement should be the last sentence of the introductory paragraph. Never mind, I will tick thesis statement and tick the right thesis statement to show that at least he has a thesis statement. (E3, TA, p. 8)

Sample Feedback 16 (E3)



(E3, Marked assignment, p.1)

Her previous feedback about not placing the thesis statement as the first sentence of the paragraph seemed to have been ineffective, when she spotted the same error in the student's work.

The science lecturers' perceptions of effective feedback in the interview seemed to diverge from their actual practices during the think-aloud observations, as they were clearly upset by their students' errors (See Section 4.2.2). However, S4's views about the effectiveness of feedback converged during the think-aloud session. S4 felt that some improvement was evident in the student's subsequent assignment; his excitement was expressed in his tone, and he laughed whenever students made an effort to include references in the assignment.

Looking through her reference, //////////////// [HMMM HMMM] her reference list seems to be alright. LAUGHTER. (S4, TA, p. 13)

My findings seemed to suggest that the majority of both the English and Science lecturers felt that their feedback was ineffective. These findings seemed to converge with Lee's (2014) findings of Hong Kong English teachers complaining that their students kept on making the same errors even though the errors had been highlighted many times.

4.2.5 Differences in belief and practices in encouraging students to be responsible for correcting their own errors

This section discusses the issue of providing feedback in ways that enabled students to correct their own errors; it also investigates methods of correcting errors, such as providing cues or answers for students.

In their think-aloud sessions, E1 and E3 sometimes contradicted the beliefs expressed in their interviews, about helping students to be independent learners. For example, E1 sometimes provided a correction by rewriting a phrase like "several factors like" to replace "because of the following benefits for" (Sample Feedback 1). E1 also rewrote an incorrect expression used by students from

“standard of school” to “standard of education”, as illustrated in the following think-aloud extract:

TA Extract #33 (E1)

We can find higher standard of school ////. In each district of // in the city for their chil. (UGH LAUGHTER). We can find higher standards. Maybe not school but education (HUH). (E1, TA, p. 5)

E1 repeated a phrase, to try to think of a better, alternative word, and once the word was identified, she used the modal “maybe” as a suggestion. During the stimulated recall session, when she was asked if she used any strategies to provide direct or indirect feedback, she said that sometimes she would provide some answers. To some degree, it depended on the extent of the repair that was necessary; for example, if the error related to sentence structure, she would provide indirect feedback, such as “rephrase” or “not clear”, so that she did not have to rewrite entire sentences for students.

As for E3, when she first started marking students’ work, she was determined to stick to her belief of not “spoon-feeding” the students by correcting their errors. For example, she wrote “not suitable for an introduction” when she felt that it was not up to her expectations. However, after encountering more errors than she had expected, she decided to assist students further by correcting the errors; for example, she underlined “affect the world become poverty” and rewrote “to become poor” and explained that she wanted to help the student a little, as demonstrated in the extract below:

TA Extract #34 (E3)

Because // poverty because oh become poverty because. Okay I will extend the line of wrong grammar a bit further okay, because there is no such thing as affect the world become poverty. /// Affect the world // to become poor. Ah okay, so I will just write to affect the world to become poor to help him out a bit. (E3, TA, p. 8)

During the think-aloud session, E4 was the only lecturer who was fairly consistent in her beliefs about providing corrections to the student’s

grammatical errors. However, when the issue related to paraphrasing and content (Sample Feedback 3), the lecturer expected students to take responsibility for their own corrections.

E5 may be considered as someone who put her beliefs into practice, that students needed to be guided in terms of more autonomous self-correction. All the errors in the student's essay were either underlined or circled and coded with abbreviations (Sample Feedback 4, p. 13).

The decision about providing either indirect or direct feedback was largely influenced by contextual factors, such as whether the student needed help because of low English language proficiency, or if the lecturers felt that they were responsible for making corrections.

Of the science lecturers during the think-aloud sessions, S1, S3 and S4 were consistent in providing feedback based on their beliefs about providing different types of feedback, either to promote student responsibility in correcting errors. This was evident in the following examples, taken from the think-aloud sessions.

S1's reported beliefs about guiding students was expressed verbally, when he explained the type of errors and made suggestions for improvement; however, limited written feedback was provided. For example, in the written feedback, all of the errors were underlined, with no indicators provided (indirect feedback); two errors were corrected and two brief comments were given on two types of errors.

In his think-aloud session, S3 clearly confirmed his belief that students needed to take full responsibility for correcting errors in their assignments. For example, during the think-aloud session, he provided suggestions for improving future assignments (TA Extract #15). When S3 was asked during the stimulated recall to clarify his style of providing feedback, he claimed that his method was to provide more suggestions rather than answers. He always advised students that there were no right or wrong answers in the discussion section, but that it

was a matter of interpretation. Normally, the correct solutions were not provided unless a student had the wrong theoretical concept.

During the think-aloud session, S4 practised his beliefs about providing feedback to guide students in the assignment. Although he corrected some inaccurate in-text citations and errors in the use of language, he consistently provided more detailed suggestions and comments (Sample Feedback 10 & TA Extract #20)

S5 believed that students were not aware of their own errors, thus they needed to be guided. When the student made a content error, she struck out the error and rewrote the correct answer (Sample Feedback 11). At times, cues were given to the students to improve their assignments (Sample Feedback 9). In the stimulated recall session, S5 said that she would sometimes rewrite a whole sentence for a student, because the student would not be able to do it alone.

Overall, the findings relating to the English and science lecturers' observed practices in relation to content and language errors – either providing actual corrections or encouraging students to be responsible for their own corrections – suggested both convergences and divergences. My findings suggested that the English and science lecturers' decisions either to correct errors, or to provide feedback encouraging students to be responsible for their own error corrections, were based on the students' English language proficiency. This finding seemed to agree with the studies by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2011) and Yoshiyuki (2011). Another possible reason influencing the lecturers' decisions to correct the majority of student errors could be the influence of socio-cultural factors. In Malaysia, lecturers are perceived as authoritative figures who are expected to correct errors. These findings were also reflected in Lee's (2009, 2011) studies, where lecturers were expected to correct every error committed by students. However, the Hong Kong teachers seemed to provide all corrections to every error (Lee, 2009, 2014), whereas the lecturers in my study provide the corrections only when they felt that their students were unable to make their own corrections.

4.2.6 Summary of the convergences and divergences between English and science lecturers' beliefs and their observed practices in providing written feedback

To conclude, consistency between lecturers' beliefs and their actual practices was evident mainly in the provision of positive and negative feedback, and the intention to provide feedback which assisted students to be responsible for their own error corrections.

However, there were more divergences between the beliefs and practices of providing written feedback among both the English and the science lecturers. The first divergence was illustrated in the perceived purpose of providing feedback. Even though the lecturers believed that feedback was provided to assist student learning, limited suggestions were provided (to assist student learning), and feed-forward for further improvement was not apparent. The lecturers were mostly observed analysing the students' errors first, before choosing appropriate ways of highlighting them. Claims that feedback was provided to justify grades for the stakeholders, for moderators or peer reviewers were not really evident, as few notes were written on the students' written assignments to communicate this type of information. If the lecturers provided justifications at all, it was in verbal form, and the purpose was both to justify the grades to me and to function as a verbal reminder for themselves before awarding grades.

Another form of divergence was illustrated through the focus of the written feedback in relation to different disciplinary requirements. Although the English lecturers' beliefs that holistic marking and feedback were of central importance, it was observed that the English lecturers focused more on organisation and language. The science lecturers considered content feedback to be more essential than language feedback, but they were observed focusing on references and formatting as well as content. The focus of content feedback among the science lecturers converged based on the specific requirements of each scientific field. Language feedback was provided by science lecturers only when the syntax was wrong, or when incorrect usage of word changed the meaning of the content.

In terms of encouraging students to be responsible for correcting their own errors, there were divergences in some of the practices of the English and science lecturers. These divergences were evident particularly when the lecturers perceived that students were not able to make the corrections to their own errors and therefore wanted to help them. Another form of divergence was evident when providing either positive or negative feedback. Some of the lecturers diverged from their beliefs when they became frustrated that students did not meet their expectations.

4.2.7 Summary of the key findings on lecturers' observed practices in providing written feedback, in relation to the literature review

To summarise, a number of convergences and divergences were identified in relation to the literature review, regarding the lecturers' observed practices in providing written feedback. One of the convergences of my study, in comparison with existing studies, was seen in the functions of feedback in assisting student learning. Although lecturers claimed that feedback was essential to student learning, it was observed that few suggestions or instances of feed-forward were provided. The focus of feedback was another area of convergence. The similarity could be observed from the English lecturers' decision to focus on lower order concerns rather than their claims about focusing on holistic marking converged with many studies. The tendency of the English lecturers to focus on language feedback, as compared to the science lecturers, was another area of convergence. My data suggested that the English lecturers' decisions to provide the type of feedback which encouraged students to be more self-reliant in correcting errors were based on their students' level of English proficiency.

Evidence of divergence in my studies, in comparison with existing studies, pertain to three major areas. The first divergence is that the claims that feedback was a form of justification for the partner universities and the local institution were not evident during the think-aloud sessions with the lecturers. Another divergence was illustrated through the practice of providing either positive or negative feedback among the English lecturers. The English lecturers in my study appeared to be overly concerned about highlighting errors, at the expense of praising

students. In contrast, English lecturers in Western countries seemed to be more encouraging and generous in their praise, providing students with further motivation to achieve. Another divergence is illustrated by data from the science lecturers in my study, who seemed to be less concerned about the ability of students to write proficiently, as compared to other studies where the subject lecturers were concerned about student writing and put in extra effort in provide feedback on both language and content. (Connors & Lunsford, 1988, 1993; Orrell, 2006)

4.3 Factors that influenced lecturers' beliefs and practices in providing written feedback

This section addresses the third research questions, as follows:

What are the factors that influence lecturers' beliefs about good feedback and to what extent do these factors influence lecturers' actual practices of providing written feedback?

These questions seek to investigate the factors that might influence English and science lecturers' perceptions of the best practices in providing written feedback. The second part of the research question includes discussion of other factors that might encourage or hinder lecturers from implementing their beliefs about written feedback in students' written assignments during the think-aloud observations.

The data seemed to suggest a number of factors influencing the beliefs and feedback practices of English and science lecturers. To begin with, the cultural-historical factors, as suggested by Borg (2006) in the model below, had some influence on the English and science lecturers at the research site.

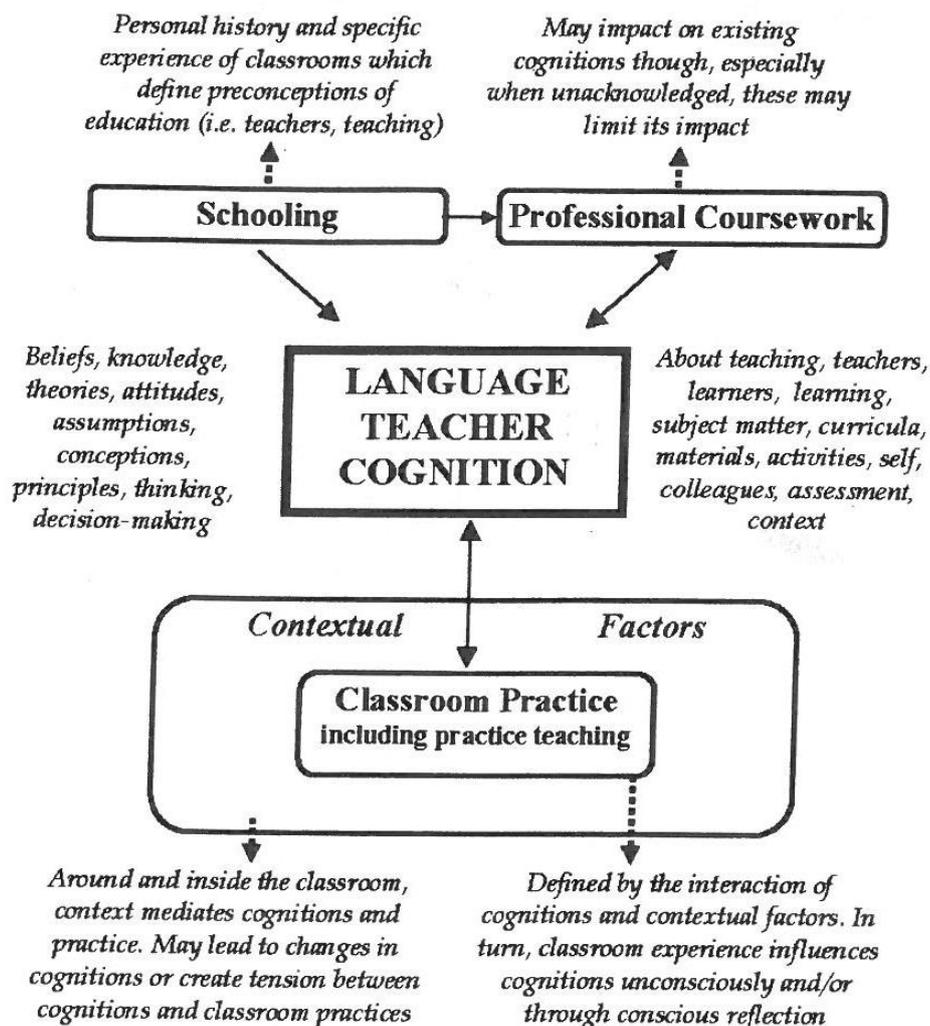


Figure 8 Borg's Cultural Historical Factors which influenced Language Teacher Cognition (Borg, 2006, p. 283)

Their past learning experiences as students or as undergraduates were one of the factors that might have influenced the lecturers' beliefs and practices in relation to providing written feedback. For example, three English lecturers' beliefs about highlighting grammatical errors so that students would not make the same errors in subsequent assignments, were based on the lecturers' experience of receiving the same feedback in schools and as undergraduates. It was observed that these English lecturers' beliefs seemed to be applied during the think-aloud sessions when the grammatical errors were highlighted. In another example, although one of the science lecturers had had a negative personal experience of a lack of guidance and feedback in the area of referencing, this moulded his current belief in the need to provide feedback on referencing. The same science lecturer was also influenced by his exposure,

during his postgraduate studies, to the idea of critical thinking and the ability to discuss ideas. This belief was evident during the think-aloud session, where this lecturer kept on directing questions to students, to indicate their lack of critical thinking in the discussion section of the assignment. Other science lecturers claimed that they were not influenced at all by their schooling experience because the assessment style had changed, and in the past only summative assessments had been conducted.

My data implied that professional training did not influence the lecturers in this study. The reason for this claim was that only two English lecturers and one science lecturer had been trained to be teachers. Despite their training, these lecturers claimed that they were unable to apply their knowledge to practice due to contextual constraints, such as the students' language proficiency and the different subjects taught. Even though the local institution may have provided in-service training, the English and science lecturers claimed that training was not offered in the area of assessment and feedback. Thus, teaching training as one of the influencing factors suggested by Borg (2006) perhaps could not be applied to all the lecturers as few received professional training to become teachers.

All of the influencing factors mentioned above, including the lecturers' educational backgrounds, their professional training, and their past teaching experiences, might have contributed to the formation of their beliefs about good feedback practices. However, the socio-cultural factors were more influential in determining the lecturers' decisions and practices of written feedback as suggested by Lee (2014). In my study, the influences of the institutional and partner universities' policies were more powerful in determining the lecturers' feedback practices. The institutional policy, which regulated the practice of standardising the assessment criteria within the English department, strongly influenced the way in which the English lecturers provided grades and feedback. It was observed that although the English lecturers taught different EAP and ESP courses, similar criteria were used across all of the EAP and ESP programmes. My findings especially in relation to the institutional policies, both from the partner universities and the local institution hindered the English and science lecturers from putting their beliefs into practice. These findings

were also similar with Lee's (2014) study, where the Hong Kong English teachers were prevented from applying their beliefs into practice due to the school and educational policies where teachers were expected to provide answers to the students' errors.

The influence of the institutional and partner universities' policies was evident in the lecturers' decisions to provide written feedback itself. In the interview sessions, the English and science lecturers indicated that feedback was provided to justify the grades for peer reviewers and for the overseas moderators from partner universities to ensure fair grading for the students. Lecturers also believed that a lack of written feedback would reflect badly on them, especially in a private institution where they were expected to provide good services and quality education.

The partner universities' policy and practice of requiring peer reviewing, whereby the lecturers teaching the same course had to moderate their colleagues' papers, influenced one of the English lecturers to change her beliefs after reviewing a colleague's marked assignment, and focus her feedback on content rather than language. During the think-aloud session, this lecturer provided feedback on content and, to some extent, on lower-order concerns. In another example, E1 claimed that she was influenced by one of the criteria co-constructed by herself and her colleagues for one of the partner university's courses although she did not refer to any criteria when awarding marks during the think-aloud session.

The overseas moderators appointed by the partner university played a role in influencing the feedback provided by the English and science lecturers. For example, E3's ideas about good writing and feedback practices were influenced by constant exposure to the assessment and moderation based on an Australian bridging programme. Her beliefs were expressed during the think-aloud sessions when she commented on aspects of student writing such as the thesis statement, the topic sentences, and linking words. Moreover, E3 chose British spelling over American spelling during the think-aloud session because the English assessment would be moderated by one of the British universities. In

another example, one of the science lecturers had to change her assessment and feedback practices due to negative comments from the overseas moderator.

The students' poor English proficiency was one of the major causes of the lecturers' divergence from their own beliefs. During the think-aloud sessions, English and science lecturers had a difficult time trying to comprehend students' intended meanings, which may have led them to provide feedback on lower order concerns rather than more holistic feedback. However, due to their poor language proficiency, students were unable to grasp linguistic concepts and still repeated the same errors, even though the English lecturers had previously provided written corrective feedback. This lack of improvement caused frustration for the English lecturers, who believed that the students were not serious about learning. Consequently, the attitudes of the English lecturers towards providing feedback tended to be negative and sceptical, despite their claims about the importance of providing motivating feedback. The science lecturers' beliefs about positive feedback were also hindered by the students' lack of English proficiency. One science lecturer realised that her students work was plagiarised, perhaps because of poor English language proficiency and an inability to comprehend the science subject in English. As a result, the lecturer had become discouraged.

Contextual factors, such as the partner universities' requirements and students' poor English language proficiency, also appeared to be influential in terms of encouraging or hindering the lecturers from putting their pre-existing beliefs into practice. For example, based on the experience of being trained to think critically as a student in the UK, S3 had a practice of awarding a high percentage of marks for the ability to discuss scientific knowledge critically. S3's experiences of going through the module of teaching and learning in the UK, as well as his teaching experiences in the UK, assisted him in his current practices of assessment and feedback. Although S1, S2, E1 and E4 were also trained in the UK as undergraduates, they did not apply their pre-existing beliefs about feedback gained when studying overseas in the current research site due to the obstacle of the students' lack of proficiency in English language.

Another contextual factor was the implementation of English as the medium of instruction, a policy enforced by both the institution and the partner universities. The actual reality of students' poor English proficiency prevented some of the lecturers from encouraging students to be more responsible in their own error correction, providing encouraging feedback, and changing the focus of feedback. For example, even though E3 believed that students ought to be responsible for their own error corrections, during the think-aloud session she commented that she was going to provide the answer to a particular student's errors as she believed he was unable to do this himself. In another example, S4 mentioned that he provided the answers so that students could understand their errors and comprehend his feedback. Even though the science lecturers perceived that feedback on content was essential, some of them provided feedback on language, especially if the language changed the meaning of the scientific terms. Due to the students' poor proficiency in English, S5 mentioned that she was concerned about the students' understanding of the subject matter. She suspected that they may have simply memorized the terms and the concepts, with little or no understanding of their actual meaning.

Participation in a community of practice is another factor which either encouraged or hindered the lecturers from putting their beliefs into practice. Although, during the think-aloud observations, the English lecturers believed that they were influenced by their colleagues' practices of providing written feedback within the English department, none of them referred to any of the marking criteria supplied. When asked about the sources of their beliefs during the stimulated recall sessions, they claimed that they were influenced by the marking schemes and criteria of other, senior lecturers. These practices were shared either through the senior lecturer's role as a chief examiner or through informal discussions. Both the senior lecturers and lecturers claimed that the criteria were already set in their own minds.

The science lecturers were even less influenced by their immediate colleagues, as they were considered as experts in their own fields. Even though it was believed that providing feedback on content was essential, the approaches of the science lecturers in highlighting errors in content differed due to the different perceptions of what constitutes a good assignment. The science

lecturers' feedback practices, however, appeared to be influenced by the external community. To illustrate this point, the feedback provided on the format of laboratory report writing was based on the conventions of report writing practised among scientists. Another external community which appeared to influence the science lecturers was the moderators from the partner universities. According to the science lecturers during the stimulated recall, they had to change their beliefs about providing written feedback and assessment to abide by the requirements of the moderators from the partner universities, particularly if the moderators were not satisfied with the marking schemes, course structures or grading systems designed by the science lecturers.

Socio-cultural factors were also other influential factors which determined the lecturers' written feedback practices in Lee's (2014) study. Two examples of socio-cultural factors in my study include students' expectations of feedback from lecturers, and students' learning cultures. Students in both my study and Lee's (2014) were depended on their teachers and the majority of the students expected error corrections to be provided on their behalf. Students' learning culture refers to a lack of exposure to academic writing, and Malaysian students' overdependence on lecturers due to the Malaysian education system, which does not encourage students to think critically or to be autonomous in their own learning (Fauziah et al., 2005; Koo, 2008; Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003). As observed in Section 4.2.5, perhaps the lecturers perceived that the students were over-dependent on them, and unable to self-correct their errors and as a result, had to change their beliefs and provide correct answers for the students.

Based on the discussion presented above, the following is a diagram that revisits Borg's (2006) language teacher cognition model, to incorporate the factors influencing science and English lecturers' beliefs and written feedback practices, based on my context.

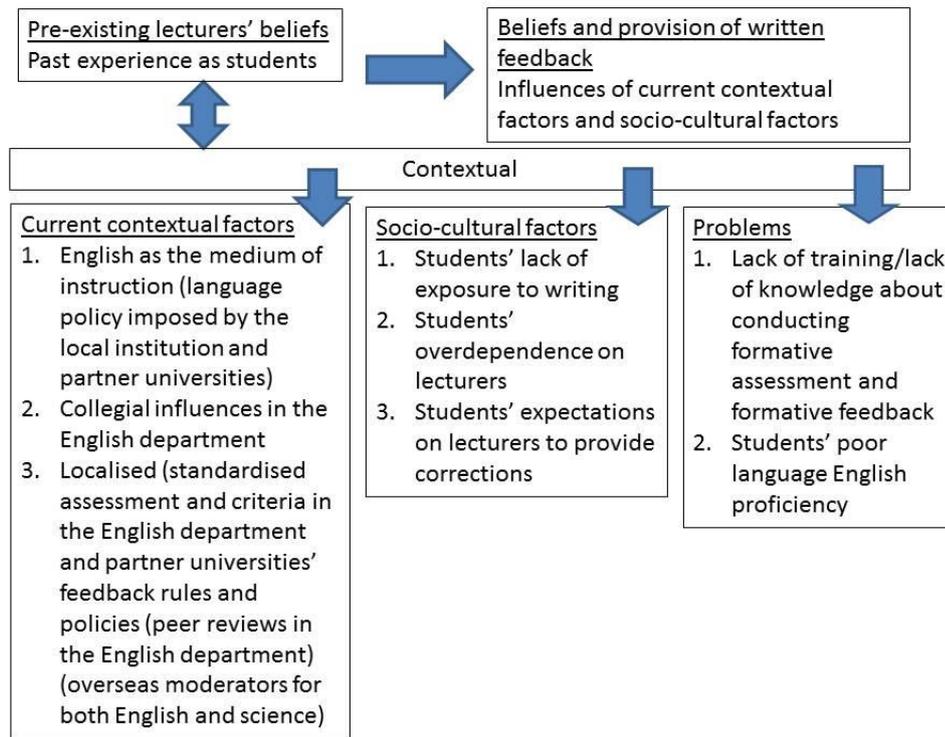


Figure 9. English and science lecturers' cognition (revisited)

To summarise, the lecturers' pre-existing beliefs – shaped by cultural-historical factors, such as prior experiences as undergraduates, past working experiences and/or professional training – might have influenced their beliefs and the ways in which they provided feedback. However, contemporary socio-cultural and contextual factors were seen to be more influential in this case. If the students' English language proficiency was perceived to be not up to standard, or if there were constraints due to policies enforced within the community or the institution, the lecturers were unable to implement their personal beliefs about what constituted good written feedback.

4.4 Comparing students' and lecturers' beliefs about written feedback

The following findings present the lecturers' and students' views about written feedback. The data in this section is derived from a number of sources, including the lecturers' interview sessions; stimulated recall sessions; and student meetings to determine their general perceptions about feedback and their reactions to specific feedback from lecturers. Based on the data gathered from the students' group meetings, there were some mismatches between the lecturers' and the students' perceptions in terms of the rationale of providing feedback, providing positive or negative feedback, the foci of the feedback provided, and the students' misunderstandings of the feedback provided.

The key findings on students' perceptions of lecturers' feedback are presented – according to the lecturers who taught them – in the following order: (1) the students' perceptions of the purposes of the feedback; (2) the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of their lecturers' feedback; (3) the students' preferences for receiving either positive or negative feedback; (4) the students' perceived needs for feedback and whether these were met by the lecturers; and (5) the type of written corrective feedback needed by students to encourage their autonomy. This is followed by comments made in the reflection session with the lecturer concerned. E2 and S2 did not perform the think-aloud sessions. The former was not comfortable with the idea of participating in this procedure, while S2 was teaching courses that focused on summative assessments. As a result of their non-participation, I sought only E2's and S2's students' general perceptions of feedback, and I did not have reflection sessions with these lecturers. Also, E4 did not respond to the request to participate in the reflection session via email, despite the reminders sent to her. The data presented in the findings is transcribed verbatim.

4.4.1 Comparing beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback : E1 and her students

In her individual interview, E1 perceived feedback as a tool for students to learn from their errors and avoid making the same mistakes. E1's view

converged with that of her students in terms of improving their written English, which is perceived as essential within the science programmes.

In terms of the effectiveness of written feedback, E1 seemed negative about the value of providing feedback, as she pointed out that the majority of students did not take the feedback seriously and consistently made the same errors.

However, E1's views did not concur with those of her students, who claimed that they did show improvement in writing topic sentences, providing supporting details, and in spelling and grammar. When I asked them for examples of areas of improvement, some said:

L1: ... topic sentence and all that. So some kind of improvement. Yeah.

L2: ...in my case, my grammar improved mostly. Actually I don't know how to write. ...How are we supposed to make the correction and useful sentences as well? (E1, SS Mtg 1, p. 9)

Some students thought that E1 provided too much feedback on grammar, while they preferred to receive feedback on methods of writing good syntax and sentence structure. The students added that if they did not understand the feedback, they would discuss the matter with E1, as she was considered to be an approachable lecturer. If the students did not agree with her suggestions, they would voice their opinions, as they felt that E1 would try her best to verbally explain her views. However, the majority of students suggested that E1 should incorporate more positive comments in her written feedback.

E1 had always considered it was important to encourage students to be responsible for their own error corrections. This view somewhat diverged from most students' preference for receiving the correct answers from lecturers. A handful of students, however, preferred having the main, glaring errors pointed out, and receiving suggestions on how to correct the errors, because they considered long comments to be unhelpful.

L1: I think that our lecturer should just point out what is the mistake we done and just gives us the correct answer but just don't give us comments

that is too long or too much because I don't think that this is helpful. Just point out the important thing (E1, Ss Mtg 1, p. 11)

The students were shown a sample of feedback #1 provided by E1 below:

Sample Feedback #1 (E1)

- [Asking for advices from the teachers and responsibilities in any subjects]
– **fragment**

vague

- Everyone should manage his or her time in the college for **its** importance.

Vocab

- Taking care of the time can teach the students how to carry their responsibility and it can make from G them a great nation.

Informal

- By the way, they also have free time to relax and do exercise or sport that to help them relax.

It seemed that E1's specific feedback is ineffective in several ways. The students specifically responded that they did not comprehend the linguistic term "fragment", or the purpose of circling the word "its" with the word "vague" written above it. In addition, they did not know meaning of the abbreviation "G". When I explained that it meant "grammar", the student made the following comment:

L2: Yeah what is this?

I: Grammar

L1: But she already uses gr in the last question. She cannot use G in here. It is confusing here

I: Must be consistent

L1: Yeah. If you are going to use GR, you got to use it everywhere.

(E1, Ss Mtg 2, p. 30)

4.4.2 Comparing beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback : E2 and her students

E2 indicated that the purpose of feedback was to help students realise their errors so that they did not repeat them, and could therefore perform more effectively in the future. E2's views were similar to those of the students: to help students be aware of, and learn from, their errors, but she was aware that some of her business diploma students did not read her comments.

But some, like they are, you know, they don't care type (AH) yah it's a waste of time. It's a waste of time on writing. A lot of things but they don't even read (E2, Interview, p. 10)

Nevertheless, she felt that it was her ethical responsibility to provide feedback, and that the students expected her to do this.

When the students' opinions were sought regarding the effectiveness of E2's feedback, they felt that they were responsible for their own error correction if the errors were simple, but they needed the lecturers' guidance if the error was more complex. E2's students appreciated her approach of using individual student-teacher conferencing, during which students were required to make their own corrections, on the spot, of the errors she identified. E2 was considered to be very precise, and students were impressed that she had the ability to remember their specific errors. She constantly reminded them about their errors and would provide examples for the corrections. However, students felt that they would prefer more motivating feedback; they were unhappy that E2's tone was loud, suggesting that she might be angry when correcting students' errors orally. As a result, the errors were made public and the students felt embarrassed.

L2: She shouts and shouts

L3: She will point out, "Oh you make this silly mistakes here".

I: Okay. Anything else?

L3: I think this is her worse problems. Because everybody is like poor already you see, they don't like (all LAUGH)

S2: Because they all will know. I feel shy

(E2, Ss Mtg 1, pp. 11 -12)

In terms of written feedback, the students suggested that E2 could provide some suggestions on how to improve and also request some sample answers on how to make the corrections, so that the students were able to make comparisons. Students felt that they would not learn if E2 only provided suggestions.

4.4.3 Comparing beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback : E3 and her students

The purpose of feedback, according to E3, is to help students to understand their errors in grammar and vocabulary, and to be more aware of the academic writing style when constructing thesis statements and topic sentences. The views of E3's students appeared to be the same as hers in relation to eliminating errors.

In her interview, E3 claimed that her students were not serious about learning English. As a result, the provided feedback was ineffective, because the students were more concerned about their grades. However, the students did pay attention if they were reminded about the importance of the topic in relation to grades. E3's views converged with her students' perceptions that obtaining grades was more important than learning English was evident in the following extract from one of her students:

But some students, they all like okay, (LAH), like technical English nothing to learn also because this is English only. LAUGHTER. (E3, Ss Mtg 1, p. 15).

The students also confessed that during group work, one student would be busy writing the essay while the others were passive.

L1: ... like the lecturers divide us into group right so, (ERR), usually we done it in group works, (LAH), that's why, like our group got like four person maybe this group have to pass up one essay only. So maybe in each

group, got one person do only, (LAH), LAUGHTER. The rest didn't do. (p. 2).

However, a form of divergence could be seen in the students' views about the effectiveness of E3's feedback in the area of grammar. Students disagreed with E3, claiming that they had improved in their grammar.

L1: Improvement (HAH)? (AH) yeah. I think grammar, grammar, got improvement because last time in primary and secondary schools, (HAH), the teachers didn't teach us about it. But this lecturer yeah.

L2: A bit only.

L1: I understand, (LAH), like the grammar grammar a lot (p. 16)

E3 believed that her students were very dependent on her, and they needed to learn to be independent and to take responsibility for searching for the answers to their errors. Based on her teaching experience, if she provided the answers for them, students would not learn from their errors. Despite this, she took time to provide detailed comments as well as a grade. E3's beliefs were confirmed, as the students preferred to be guided by the lecturer. They expected error corrections from the lecturer, because she was considered to be more experienced. Moreover, the lecturer was the main person providing the grades, and they wanted to score higher marks in their final examinations.

I: Why (AH)? Is it because the lecturers are better than your friends, right?

L2: Yeah because of experience, (LAH)

L1: Yeah, lecturer is more formal right and then the final exam are being marked by the lecturer, right

L2: Our essay.

L1: Because we want to know the lecturer's style. I mean some lecturers want like this style so maybe can do it, (LAH)

L2: Like she prefers the topic sentence, (LAH). Must be put the first paragraph, the first line, you have to know the marking style right?

Then in final exam then only we can score right? (p. 12)

Nevertheless, at the same time, the students thought that E3 should deal with each student differently; for example, the students who were proficient in English did not need as much feedback as those whose English proficiency was poor.

L1: Cause have to depend on how's the student English standard (LAH). Like the lecturer know this student like quite good in English (LAH). Maybe don't give so much (LAH). Like this students' English very poor right? Then she should give much more, so that can help students,(LAH). Because each student's basic is very different right? Yeah if the student's English good, then he can think for himself (LAH). (p. 4)

When the students were asked if there were further suggestions for improvement, they mentioned that too many grammatical errors were highlighted, but that there were no comments on how to deal with them. They suggested the need for positive comments and examples to correct errors. Also, the use of abbreviations should be avoided, as students might not comprehend them.

When they were shown an example of E3's feedback below (Sample Feedback #2), the students responded that they did not always understand the points she was trying to make.

Sample Feedback #2

(E3, Marked assignment)

The first example was that the student misunderstood the lecturer's feedback on "the wrong rhetorical marker". This feedback was interpreted by one of the students as replacing the phrase "on the other hand" with the word "but". The next example was the student's misinterpretation of the term "topic sentence" as the first sentence of the paragraph. In addition, the student also did not understand the meaning of the word "cliché" and the phrase "did not source". The only feedback point that was interpreted correctly by the student was: "Supporting details not related to thesis statement" (E3, Ss Mtg 2, pp. 20 - 21)

4.4.4 Comparing beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback : E4 and her students

According to E4, students were provided feedback to help them improve their language and to motivate them and this view accorded with the students' expectation that feedback should highlight their weaknesses and strengths. The only divergence was in the students' desire to learn from the course structure, which was not highlighted in E4's views.

In the interview, E4 was somewhat positive about the effectiveness of her feedback, giving an example of one student in whom she could see improvement, although she did not want to assume that the improvement was due to her feedback.

E4 believed that the focus of feedback ought to be the requirements of the course structure and the type of assessment, neither of which focus on grammatical elements. However, according to E4's students, E4's feedback was centered more on spelling and language, rather than content. However, students still felt that their needs had been met, because they were capable of seeking information on content on their own, despite their lack of confidence in the area of language.

In terms of encouraging students to be independent in their error corrections, E4 believed that the majority of students still expected some form of "spoon-feeding". Nevertheless, she felt that they needed to be independent in certain

aspects of the assignment; for example, if the error was related to content, she would expect the students to be more independent. However, if the error involved incorrect language structures, she would make the corrections for them.

There were some mismatches between E4's beliefs and those of the students, in terms of encouraging students to be more independent. When the students were interviewed, their views diverged. For example, one student, who lacked confidence, mentioned that she preferred the lecturer to provide the answers because she felt that this would enhance the learning process. However, other students gave the impression that they were independent learners; they said that they preferred suggestions rather than direct corrections, and that any vagueness in the suggestions should be clarified with the lecturer. Obtaining answers from the lecturer was perceived as a form of copying.

I: You mentioned correcting the errors. So, I just want to clarify, what do you mean by that? Is it correcting all the errors in giving the, the answers to it or would you like to see suggestions on how to improve?

LL: Suggestions

L1: Suggestions is very important

L2: But answers are like you are copying it and now I know this is the answer but that is wrong. You should give suggestions. Even though I don't understand, I will go up to the lecturer. I don't understand your suggestions. Then she should explain it.(HAH), then you will actually understand it.

(E4, ss Mtg 1, p. 18)

When suggestions for further improvement were sought, some students said that they could not comprehend E4's handwriting, and preferred written feedback to be followed up with individual, oral feedback. Other suggestions for improvement in written feedback included awarding marks to boost the students' confidence, and to have balanced feedback that contained both positive elements and suggestions for improvement. Another interesting

comment made by a student was more specific: the lecturer should provide more details and not just state that the work is “good” or “very poor”:

L3: I think right certain lecturers they write good or very poor. I think they shouldn't do that. What is good or what is poor? What is good? They should tell what is good in our writing so that we can maintain it. Because we wouldn't know which one is good without them telling us? I think they should state what is good and what is poor (E4, ss Mtg 2, p. 16)

When E4's samples of feedback below (Sample Feedback #3) were given to the students, the students made the following overall responses:

Sample Feedback #3

✓ 3 copies

1. What are the differences between autocratic leadership and democratic leadership?

^{An}
Autocratic leader is a leader who does not involve others in decision making process.^{es}
They will make a unilateral decision on how to proceed and thus achieve goals by directing people. This style normally is very stressful on employees and thus creates an uninteresting work environment. The one way communication in this leadership style will tell people exactly what ought to be done, what mistake ~~they~~ have been made, and they will never be expected of what kind of feedback they may get. This style of leadership will be the best style to adopt when there is an urgent call or action ^{take} being taken place. It is very effective during those stressful times when the pressure is off the coworkers indeed. Moreover, organizations with lots of autocratic leaders generally will have higher turnover and absenteeism. Employees who are just entering the workforce will be highly resistant to this management style. Autocratic leaders are also ineffective in situations where employees might become resentful or fearful. On the contrary, ^{style} democratic style will enable everyone including leader^s and followers to get an equal vote. There is a balancing in decision making process as everyone is allowed to participate in giving their own opinions. Employees are more committed to the desired outcome as they feel their opinions are ^{taken into account} counted as well as the creation of the collaborative environment. This style is not effective once the workforce is inexperienced. Since many opinions are being sought and shared, therefore it takes time for them to explain what they think and for others to understand what they are trying to express. It is most effective in a workplace where there are experienced employees and the affordability of the time spends in developing a thorough solution. ? under

- Well paraphrased. (288 words)

- good.

Group members:

1. Lina
2. Lang Jie Qi
3. Cheok Sin Ling

S&P → 3.5%

Sample Feedback#4

3. What are the differences between autocratic leadership and democratic leadership?

Autocratic leadership is synonymous to dictatorship where just a person has the authority over the followers. Since ^{that person's} their decision has to be taken as ^{the} golden rule and should never be questioned, so their subordinates will just work according to their rules. Autocratic leader has full control of those around him and believes to have complete authority to treat his workers as he wants. Autocratic leadership works efficiently during emergency and stressful situations as the manager will take ^{to} the reins in hand and direct workers to move forward. It will also be effective in doing group projects where the leader will determine the ways ought to be done, divide job among members and set the deadline for completion of the project. Nevertheless, ^{Consequently?} the employees will become restrictive as it just promotes one sided conversation. This may lead to disagreements and conflicts as leaders would exploit their employees whenever they wish to. On the other hand, democratic leadership is probably the best corporate leadership style which enable^s employees to give suggestions and ^{maybe} take crucial decision^s along with their manager. Within this, the employee performance will be much better if compare^d to those under autocratic leadership style. The manager will then ^{let} rest the final decision ^{rest on} himself indeed. Through this leadership style, it not only can promote the determination and development of potential leaders but also can excavate employees with hidden talents of being a leader. Since employees are given autonomy to suggest their opinions, hence this can help to motivate employees and there will be a positive impact on teamwork as well as ^{the} work environment. There will be high possibility that the decision is inappropriate as decision is well-thought ^{out} upon from all angles. Furthermore, the chances of getting ^{succeeding} succeeded are also very limited.

not well-
paraphrase!

not making
sense
- is this
yr. opinion?
- if it is, then
you should
include yr. opinions
here.

(290 words)

L1: It is good to give some positive comments to motivate students to paraphrase instead of copying.

L2: Write what is the problem with this and advise to improve writing

L3: The student lacks some words in this summary and the lecturer corrects it and the student understands it. (p. 16)

Overall, students felt that Sample Feedback #4 was better than Sample Feedback #3 because there were more suggestions on how to improve, rather than merely praising students with positive comments. Students liked E4's technique of providing another word to substitute for unsuitable vocabulary.

4.4.5 Comparing beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback : E5 and her students

Due to time constraints, only one student participated in the meetings.

E5's ideas about the purposes of feedback were that students would be able to learn from errors and subsequently improve in their learning, which converged with her student's views. Nevertheless, E5 was another lecturer who was negative about the effect of feedback, believing that students were more interested in grades. She believed that students were not motivated to do their own error corrections, so she felt that it was her duty to highlight them. The student's responses concurred with E5's views to a certain extent. Although he agreed that both students and lecturers should be responsible for rectifying errors, he indicated that he liked the lecturer's efforts in correcting his spelling mistakes.

Overall, this student could comprehend the feedback provided by E5 in Sample Feedback #5, except for the use of abbreviations. He admitted that the meaning of the abbreviations had been posted in the online learning support system, but he did not bother to refer to the meanings.

I: What else you don't understand?

L: WO.

I: (AHA).

L: WP, I think that is all.

I: In the beginning of the class, did your teacher explain?

L: Yeah, she did explain it but I can't remember it... We have a slide, she upload the slide for us and we already download it

I: In (the name of research site) online?

L: Yeah in (the name of the research site), but I never go through it. (E5, Ss Mtg 2, p. 2)

Sample Feedback #5

First of all, advertising method is the most ^{was prep WF} ~~best~~ way ^{in this generation} to promote the product of company to public, ^{being} why ~~can't~~ I say so? According to a survey ~~that~~ made by anonymous company, ^{car} because most of the ~~houses~~ ^{people} could not live out their life ~~without~~ watching television programs, ~~Therefore~~, taking public transportation, ~~reading~~ newspaper and so on. There are all daily activities that we keep on repeating in our ~~day~~ life. In addition, ~~company~~ ^{we} companies ~~have~~ ^{use} all of these, so ~~that~~ they ~~started~~ to promote their products in advertising ~~way~~ and ~~this~~ ^{it} brings up ~~the~~ a huge opportunity to its company on sales. Advertising method consists of ~~advertis~~ on television, ~~publish~~ their product on public transport ~~and~~ ^{or} publish in newspaper. Among all the ways that company use to advertise ~~and~~ ^{or} promote its product, advertisement on television is the best way to promote ~~the~~ product due to the technology today which is very high-tech compared to ~~lot~~ few decades and the ~~generation~~ youngsters in these day do not like to read newspaper. Therefore, advertising has become a ~~MUST~~ ^{must} to company ~~or~~ ^{or} promoting their new ~~an~~ ^{it} ~~expensive~~ product to public because ~~of~~ advertising can ~~make~~ ^{make} its product more attractive and ~~stands~~ in ~~the~~ ^{an} ~~appropriate~~ ^{concluding} sentence ^{creative way}.

(E5, Marked assignment, p. 1)

The student was not sure what the lecturer meant by “an appropriate concluding sentence,” and interpreted this to mean that the paragraph contained a good conclusion and that it supported his essay. However, he was not sure if he had interpreted the feedback correctly.

At the end of the session, when the student was asked if he was happy with the overall feedback provided, he responded that he would personally try to clarify the meaning of the abbreviations with the lecturer, because feedback was essential in assisting him to improve his writing. The students also commented that parts of the lecturer’s handwriting were illegible.

4.4.6 Comparing beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback : S1 and his students

Feedback was perceived by S1 as a form of teaching and learning, whereby the students would learn from their errors; it was a form of checking or testing to

determine whether or not the programs were successful in assisting students' learning. S1's views concurred with the students' view that the function of feedback was to assist students in eliminating errors.

S1 felt that the effectiveness of the feedback depended on the students, but he did not know if all the students read his feedback: he said that some would still commit the same error if they did not consult the lecturer, even though the students who did consult him usually improved in their subsequent assignments. He believed that both the lecturer and the students were responsible for error correction, but said that students were unsure about how to correct their own errors, and so he expected students to review the feedback given as a guide to future improvement. When he was asked about the students' perceptions of grades, he said that grades were essential for students in the Malaysian education system. However, he personally felt that the grades were not the final measurement of students' learning.

S1's views, outlined above, matched the students' beliefs about grades. When students were asked if they would read the grades or the feedback first, one student said:

I: Which ones will you see first? Marks or the comments?

LL1: Marks.

I: Why?

L2: If high marks, I don't have to read the comments

(S1, Ss Mtg 1, pp. 3-4)

The perceptions of S1 and his students regarding the issue of encouraging students to be more independent in error correction revealed more of a mismatch. Students indicated that they preferred the lecturer to correct errors:

I: Okay, now in your opinion, what is a good feedback like?

L1: Correct from wrong. Good comments.

I: What kind of comments would you like?

L2: Correct the errors (p. 2).

Sample Feedback #6

Planned economy

Planned economy or directed economy is an economic system in which the state or workers councils manage the economy. It is an economic system in which the central government makes all decisions on the production and consumption of goods and services. In such economies, economic planning by the state or government controls all major sectors of the economy and formulates all decisions about the use of resources and the distribution of output. Planners decide what should be produced and direct lower-level enterprises to produce those goods in accordance with national and social objectives. Planned economies are in contrast to unplanned economies such as a market economy. Planned economy production, distribution, pricing and investment decisions are made by the private owners of the factors of production based upon their own interests rather than upon furthering some overarching macroeconomic plan.

(S1, Marked assignment, p. 2)

Students commented that the sample feedback provided by S1 above (Sample Feedback #6) was unclear, especially when the errors were just underlined, but no further comments were provided.

I: Underlined “Planned economy production”. What’s wrong with this? Do you understand? Why is it underlined?

L1: Something missing. Don’t know why underline

I: Don’t know (HUH)? Don’t know why. Anyone knows?

L2: Something missing.

L3: Word missing

L4: Grammar

L3: Write clearly

(S1, Ss Mtg 2, p. 2)

4.4.7 Comparing beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback : S2 and his students

The majority of the students that S2 encountered were not interested in reading feedback; they were more interested in the justifications for the low grades, or in demanding further suggestions on how to improve their grades; they sometimes argued that they deserved higher marks than the ones they had been awarded.

S2 considered his students to be very dependent on him, expecting him to

provide the solutions to their problems. Nevertheless, S2 perceived himself as a facilitator, rather than a teacher, and wanted students to become independent learners. Thus, the effectiveness of the feedback, according to S2's perception, was also highly dependent on the students' attitudes towards learning.

As S2 did not do a think-aloud session, it was not possible to elicit his students' comments on specific feedback (and a reflection session was not conducted). However, a meeting was held with some of his students to obtain their overall impressions of his feedback techniques. Generally, they felt that they were responsible for correcting their own errors, as no one would guide them in their future work. Moreover, they said that lecturers were human and would not be able to identify all errors. However, some students admitted that they did not like S1's technique of encouraging students to be independent in their learning.

L2: The feedback is like 50% only. There is still room for improvement for the lecturer. (AH), different errors he did not point out nor did he give any further advice. (ERR), at times when we were really lost, he will just roll the ball back towards us so yeah, we weren't able to solve the, (ERR), problems and then we find our own alternative way, solution for it. (S2, Ss Mtg 1, p. 12)

Some students indicated that they needed more guidance from S2; for example, they indicated that S2 would just highlight errors but did not indicate the type of errors in their written work.

L4: Yeah sometimes, it is just circle but we don't know what happened?
We don't know what we have done wrong here?
I: Okay so your teacher style is circling the mistakes?
L4: Yeah underlining but never write anything what is wrong? (p. 4)

In terms of the effectiveness of the feedback, some students claimed that S2's feedback was not helpful; for instance, when the student asked S2 a question, he either did not answer, or he threw back another question to the student. The students said that they did not expect to be spoon-fed, but rather needed more guidance.

I: (HMM), do you find the feedback given, is it useful so far?

L2: (ERR), not really helpful actually.

SS: LAUGHTER

I: Can you give examples why you said that?

S2: (ERR) let's say we asked something then he will ask back the same question. So it is like he didn't really answer the question at all.

L3: I think the idea of not actually giving the feedback and not any solution at all

I: Oh, so everything is on your own basically?

L3: (AH), yeah, so that is why we didn't ask and then we didn't get any feedback.

I: Any other comment besides this? So you prefer more guidance?

L2: But not spoon-feeding. That is not going to help us (p. 9)

S2 did not participate in the reflection session.

4.4.8 Comparing beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback : S3 and his students

S3 held the view that feedback is essential for assisting students in their learning; therefore, he stressed that the feedback must be constructive, not demoralising, so that students would identify their errors. In the meeting with his students, they shared his view that effective feedback needs to be constructive:

L1: I think it is important to start off with constructive criticism, good points and from there show the weakness, and then the solutions (S3, Ss Mtg 1, p. 13)

In terms of the focus of feedback, it appeared that S3 provided feedback on both content and language. The feedback on language was provided only when students made errors in the first person reference or when the lab report was not written in the passive voice. When the researcher asked S3's students if they felt that feedback on language was necessary, they indicated that it was

important, but not as essential as content feedback. S3 strongly believed in encouraging learners to be independent in their own error corrections. S3's views concurred with the majority of the students' views on being independent learners, for example:

I: Are you able to make the correction after reading it?

L1: Most probably. Try to.

L2: I want the teachers to show us the mistakes but not the answer

L3: The teacher and the students, (LAH). Let's say the lecturer will give the grade and we go back and find out the mistake

I: Okay (S3, Ss Mtg 1, pp. 13 -14)

However, some of the students were less independent.

L4: It's very hard when, it is very hard to get solutions from him. You do the assignments and he expects us to think for ourselves. Sometimes we need to crack our heads, sometimes he wants us to crack our heads.

Sometimes it is very frustrating but it is very good, (LAH). It makes us go through our books, (LAH). (S3, Ss Mtg 1, pp. 8- 9)

Students overall were very happy with S3's written feedback, as he highlighted their strengths before explaining their limitations in the lab report, and his feedback was clear, concise and motivating:

L1: Well, for example the lab report, he has good feedback. First, he starts by giving all the good points before pointing out all the things that students need to improve. I think it is good because he starts from the good points to the bad (p. 6).

L2: It's very clear and we will not forget what he wrote there.

S3: Yes it is not long-winded and very motivating (pp. 7 - 8)

Sample Feedback #7

- To determine the performance efficiency of a centrifugal pump in a specific speed and how it works when connected in series and parallel in the case of two pumps.

Theory

Centrifugal pump is a machine that converts motor energy to kinetic energy. ~~And~~ ~~and~~ ~~from~~ converts kinetic energy to pressure energy. To do this two important parts are needed, namely the impeller and the volute. The impeller is a revolving device that changes power to kinetic energy, while the volute is a stationary device that changes kinetic energy to pressure energy in the fluid system. The fluid enters the pump through the eye of impeller, at which the revolving device will accelerate the velocity of fluid, creating a vacuum at the eye of impeller to draw more fluid into the pump.

Comment [k3]: Heading has been changed.

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Pump in series can be identified by adding the head of each pump. The flow rate of the pumps that are arranged in series-series pump is the same from the inlet of the first pump to the outlet of the second pump. The can be seen clearly from the head against flow rate graph.

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Conversely, the parallel pump increases the flow rate of fluid but constant in head in each of the pump. This ~~too~~ can be visualized in the head against flow rate graph.

Comment [k4]: The sentence is not giving clear ideas to the reader. It would be best if you can insert a graph that you mentioned here.

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Procedure

The TecQuipment H32 was switched on by pressing the green button. Pump 1 had been set up to test its performance. The speed of the pump was set to 1(750 rev/min). Get-Gate valve was opened to the fullest. Stopwatch started when the water diffuser gate was closed. Time was recorded when the reservoir reached 5L. At the same time, delivery pump pressure was recorded. Results were recorded in the table. The experiment

Comment [k5]: You may need a graph here to support your claim.

Comment [k6]: Heading has been changed

When students were given S3's sample of written feedback, above (Sample Feedback #7), they were able to interpret it well. However, some students felt that S3's emphasis on format was trivial.

L3: Sometimes it is not necessary for the format.

L4: Sometimes he is too strict about the format.

(S3, Ss Mtg 2, p. 2)

Overall, the students mentioned that they appreciated S3's effort in providing feedback and they perceived S3 to be a very hardworking lecturer. They acknowledged his effort in preparing them for study in the UK.

L2: S3 is a good lecturer. (LAUGHTER) His marking is very nice. Actually his marking is to prepare us for UK. His test is okay. He is better than the other lecturers in the other classes. If you come into the other lecturers' classes, we have a lot of things to say about the way they give the feedback. (S3, Ss Mtg 2, p. 7)

4.4.9 Comparing beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback : S4 and his students

S4 stated that the feedback enabled students to identify their errors and to correct them. S4 also believed that the amount of feedback should be balanced; for example, too much feedback would be overwhelming, while too little might indicate to the students that the teacher was belittling them. S4's views of the purpose of feedback concurred with those of the students that it should help in learning science, and in specific scientific discourse. However, the students' view that feedback was essential for improving their grades was not shared by S4. S4 would focus on the students' writing style (scientific writing), content and referencing, emphasising that students would be repeatedly required to correct the referencing errors. The students' learning needs were met, and they appreciated S4's effort in providing some written feedback on language issues and positive oral feedback.

L: He corrects my grammar mistake.

I: (AHH).

L: He said once you write the sentence right, I used to put a lot of "the" you know in front of every most of the sentence. He corrects, he says "not necessary" and he corrects most of the referencing and everything. (S4, Ss Mtg 1, p. 5)

S4 believed that feedback was not a waste of time but essential to, and effective in, assisting student learning. He believed that both the lecturers and the students were responsible for rectifying errors, and that the students' reliance on the lecturer depended on the student's personality.

In the general interview, most students felt that it was the lecturer's responsibility to point out errors, while some students felt that this was also their responsibility. Students appreciated S4's concise feedback and his efforts in guiding students by providing suggestions to improve the discussion section, and in being meticulous with the referencing and citation system.

When the students were given some samples of S4's feedback below (Sample Feedback #8), students were not able to comprehend the feedback fully:

Sample Feedback # 8

- Production of lactate from lactose which lowers the pH of milk, addition of rennet and calcium chloride (e.g. chymosin) will coagulate milk to become curd.
- Using nanoreactor → by using nanoreactor, enzyme are station in the small nano tube like structure to immobilize the enzyme. This allows the enzyme to be more stable because is bonded to a solid phase in membrane bound or covalent bonding.

less easy to unfold BOD

Question: State and explain 2 methods on how to increase enzyme activity, even higher than those found in living cells

The synergetic method which is the combination of the Recombinant DNA technology and nanomaterials is able to increase the activity of the enzyme. For example after the modification of the primary structure of the

that

when there is

amino acids that will stabilize the tertiary structure ~~will~~
~~cause~~ an increase

is increased.

? in temperature, reaction rate[^]. Nanomaterials are used to trap ~~the enzyme~~ in a solvent, thus increasing the activity of the enzymes.

?

One student indicated that he did not understand the reason behind the double underline for the word "rennet". When students were asked the meaning of

“less easy to unfold,” none of the students were able to explain the meaning of the feedback. However, they interpreted the meaning of BOD as follows:

L1: Related with the oxygen and the mirco. Some environment

L2: Something like the concentration of the oxygen in the whole environment. Because this one is describing the bioreactor. (S4, Ss Mtg 2, pp. 8 - 9)

The use of question marks was also quite confusing for students. One student felt that the lecturer wanted them to explain the meaning of the word “solvent” in detail for the first question mark, while another student thought that the second question mark meant that the lecturer wanted the exact temperature in the form of the measurement. In addition, another student suggested the following regarding the action of circling the word enzyme:

L6: Don’t just circle, but explain why the error is circled. (p. 11)

Overall, S4 was perceived as an approachable lecturer, and students would personally consult S4 for clarification if the feedback was not clear.

4.4.10 Comparing beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback : S5 and her students

S5 perceived that the purpose of feedback was to assist students in their learning process. S5 also believed that error correction alone, without explanation, defeated the main purpose of providing feedback. S5 believed that providing feedback was essential, and that the effectiveness of the feedback depended on the students’ attitudes towards learning. She was aware of her students as a mixture of independent and dependent learners, and gave appropriate feedback accordingly, based on each student’s performance. In terms of the focus of feedback, S5 was mainly concerned with content. S5 believed that language plays a small role in the area of feedback, and should only be provided if the language used by students was unclear or changed the meaning of the content. Spelling and grammar were not taken into consideration, especially if the errors did not impact on the meaning. Other

aspects of feedback included referencing and formatting. S5 believed that the students needed guidance, in case they were not aware of their errors.

S5's views matched with those of the students in considering feedback as a tool to assist them to improve their writing, but the students also believed that feedback was an indicator of the lecturers' teaching ability, which was then reflected in the students' performances. The students' views of good feedback generally matched their lecturer's views about constructive feedback, positive remarks, and oral feedback. While S5 was not sure of the effectiveness of her feedback, the students perceived it to be very clear, concise and to the point. S5's views and practices converged with her students' needs and expectations. A majority of the students felt that the focus ought to be on the content. Students did not expect S5 to provide language feedback. However, the students appreciated language feedback only when it was needed because students had to write the report in English. Another aspect of convergence was the issue of the students' responsibility in correcting errors, because their learning would be impeded if the lecturer corrected the mistakes. Most students indicated that they preferred to be independent and that it was their own responsibility to find the answers; if they were still unable to do so, they would consult the teacher. One student mentioned that both students and lecturers were responsible for helping one another, while some students wish to receive more guidance.

When the students were asked about the aspects of feedback from S5 that they liked, they mentioned that she was a dedicated lecturer and made efforts to provide feedback. Her technique of using the question form made them think of their errors. For example, if students made a careless mistake, she would ask them how the idea was formed, instead of belittling them for being careless. However, students felt that her feedback could be discouragingly harsh:

L1: I think the harshness is like giving the low marks to us because when we see the low marks, its like more than half, I think it is a pain to us because we build our sweat, we spend our time doing this assignment or lab report. Even though we do not know how to do, 100 percent of our

concentration on it so I think we deserve better, but if we get lower than half, I think that is a sad thing. (S5, Ss Mtg 1, p. 15)

Students suggested providing even more positive and encouraging feedback; for instance, “I can see that you have done a good work” or “I think you can improve.” (p. 6)

4.4.11 Key findings on students’ beliefs and responses towards the value of lecturers’ feedback on their written academic assignments, in relation to previous research

This section addresses the first of the following research questions, while the second question will be discussed in Section 4.4.12:

What are the students’ beliefs about the value of their lecturers’ written feedback, and what are the students’ responses to the actual provision of their lecturers’ feedback? To what extent do students’ beliefs match the lecturers’ beliefs?

The first question seeks to investigate the students’ beliefs and their responses towards their lecturers’ provision of feedback on their written assignments. The discussion of my findings (in comparison with existing studies) will be organised in terms of the English and science students’ perceptions and their expectations of effective feedback from their English or subject lecturers in the following areas: (1) the purposes of their lecturers’ feedback; (2) the different areas of learning in which the students seek to improve; (3) the students’ preference for receiving positive reinforcement or/and the different types of error correction; (4) students’ perceptions of the effectiveness of their lecturers’ feedback, and (5) students’ preference for feedback which encourages them to be independent learners or feedback that provides the answers.

English and science students’ beliefs about the purposes of providing written feedback

The English and science students’ beliefs about the functions of feedback in my study seemed to converge and diverge with other existing studies.

The convergences could be seen in the English and science students' perceptions that grades were more essential than feedback. For example, two English students from E3's class and one science student from S1's class indicated that grades were more important than feedback, while only some of the science students from S4's class indicated that feedback from their lecturer was essential for enhancing their grades. Although the number of students who had perceptions of improving grades through feedback was small in my study, the perceptions of these students seemed to concur with the findings by Nurtjahja and Lahur (2002), conducted in another Malaysian private university, which indicated that 66.7% of the ESL students perceived feedback as a tool to enhance grades in the subsequent assessment.

My findings suggested that the English and science students' perceptions about the rationale of the provision of feedback concurred to a certain extent. My findings, which suggested that feedback would only be read by ESL students when the grades provided by their lecturers did not satisfy their expectations, were similar to the studies by Orsmond et al. (2005) and Taras (2003), even though the number of students with this perception in my study was proportionally smaller. Another major finding in my study also suggested that the science students perceived both grades and feedback as essential tools to improve their overall learning processes. My findings matched those of Maggs (2014) in the UK context, where the science students perceived the function of feedback as a tool for learning. My findings seemed to match Nordin et al.'s (2010) findings in another private Malaysian university, where the English students perceived feedback as a tool to assist students in improving their writing. Another form of convergence between my findings and those of Higgins et al. (2002) was that the lecturers in Higgins et al.'s (2002) study did not provide any feed-forward or suggestions on how to improve in subsequent assignments.

A divergence, however, could be seen in the main findings of my study, which suggested that the majority of the English and science students considered feedback as a form of feed-forward to assist them in their future learning; this was not indicated in Maggs' (2014) study. Another form of divergence, in comparison with Nordin's (2010) study, was that the science students in my

study perceived feedback as a tool to improve their content knowledge rather than their ability to write well. When I compared my findings with those of Lee et al. (2010) in a Malaysian public university, a number of divergences could be found; for instance, the students' perceptions of grades and the need for justifying grades. The students in the public university perceived grades as a tool for measuring the quantity of knowledge rather than a tool for learning, which was also reflected in Nordin et al.'s (2010) study in a Malaysian private university, where 11.5% of the students claimed that feedback was used as a measure of their understanding in lessons. The undergraduates in the public university were also more passive in accepting the grades awarded by the lecturers. The need for justifying grades was perceived by students as unimportant. This was because the lecturers in the public university were expected to have the power of making assessments, and students were not sufficiently vocal to request justifications for their marks. Although the lecturers in my findings were perceived as authority figures, the students were less fearful in requesting justifications for their grades.

Students' preferences for the focus of feedback

My findings in relation to the English student participants in my study suggested that their preferences relating to the focus of feedback seemed to differ from the majority of the studies reviewed. For example, the majority of the students (E1's and E3's students) did not appear to place the importance on learning grammar, but indicated a preference for learning to write proper syntax (E1) instead. These findings seemed to diverge from other studies; for example, findings from the studies by Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), Ashwell, (2000), Lee (2005), Leki (1991), and Radecki and Swales (1988) revealed that students appreciated their teachers' efforts in providing feedback on grammatical aspects. My findings relating to the English students' preferences in terms of the focus of the feedback also diverged somewhat from the studies of Ferris (1995), and Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994). The students in these studies valued their teachers' comments on content and organisation, whereas the students in my study wanted to improve in writing syntax. The findings also differ from those of Tom et al. (2013), where the ESL undergraduates in a public university valued feedback on grammar rather than content.

In terms of the students' preferences in types of WCF, my findings seemed to suggest divergence, suggesting that the English students' WCF preference depended on their confidence in learning ESP or EAP. For example, E1 and E3's students considered long comments unhelpful. In another example, some of E4's students preferred focused WCF, in which only selected errors were identified, while one of E5's students and some of E4's students preferred unfocused WCF (all errors highlighted) and direct WCF (all errors corrected). The students from E1's, E2's, E3's and E4's classes in my study also indicated a need for their lecturers to not only highlight errors, but also to provide suggestions on how to correct errors. These findings, however, diverged from Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) study in a public university, where the majority of the students (93.9%) expected their lecturers to mark all errors.

In terms of the convergences of the preferred type of error correction between the findings in my study in comparison with other studies, E2's students indicated a need to include examples on how to correct errors to enhance learning. This finding seemed to converge with Leki's (1991) study, where some of the ESL students indicated that 'overcorrection' could be unhelpful while others preferred to have all errors corrected. My findings, where errors were highlighted but no suggestions for improvement were provided, seemed to concur with the tutors in Li's (2012) study.

My finding of E3's students who had negative attitude towards learning English perhaps reflected Lee's (2008a) findings, in which students who had lower English proficiency viewed WCF as unnecessary even though they might not be able to correct their own errors. My findings also seemed to confirm Lee's (2005) study, to a certain extent, suggesting that the students' preferences for the type of WCF stemmed from the students' cultural expectations. The Chinese students in Lee's (2005) study preferred unfocused WCF over focused WCF, and a mixture of direct and indirect WCF, due to the Chinese cultural and societal expectations that the teacher ought to provide corrections of student errors (Zhu, 2010). The students' self-confidence was another factor which determined their preference of WCF.

In relation to the focus of feedback, my findings from the science students seemed to diverge from the majority of the existing studies reviewed. The first divergence was that the students in my study appreciated feedback on referencing; however, in Walker's (2009) study, the technology students preferred feedback on skills development. Another form of divergence was evident in the students' reactions to language feedback. My study seemed to imply that the science students were not very concerned about receiving language feedback from their science lecturers, which contrasts with Hyland's (2013b) study where the Hong Kong science undergraduates considered language feedback from their science lecturers as essential. Another example of divergence was that the science students in Higgins et al.'s (2001) study indicated a need for their science lecturers to provide them with guidance and suggestions for correcting grammatical errors rather than highlighting errors, while the students in my study appreciated their lecturers' efforts in correcting errors, even though language feedback was not the major focus.

My findings, suggesting that the science students thought their science lecturers were not very concerned about language errors, were also reflected in Leki's (1991) study. My findings also confirmed Walker's (2009) study that implied that the majority of technology students preferred content feedback.

Students' preference for either positive or corrective feedback

My findings seemed to reveal divergent views in the area of students' preferences for either positive or corrective feedback. The English students from all the English classes considered WCF a necessity for assisting students' learning. This is similar to the studies done in the Malaysian contexts by Tom et al. (2013) in a public university, and Leng's (2014) in a private university. However, too much WCF has the potential to demotivate students who have low self-confidence. The English students in my study indicated indirectly that their lecturers seemed to focus on the deficiencies of their writing in their written feedback. The students wished to receive more encouraging feedback, or balanced feedback consisting of both WCF and motivating feedback. My findings seemed to correspond with studies suggesting that English students felt overwhelmed when too many errors were highlighted. For example, these

findings concurred with the Zhu's (2010) report that 30% of academic students disliked what they saw as overcorrection, as it made them feel demotivated and under confident. My findings also concurred with the study conducted by Nurtjahja and Lahur (2002), in which ESL students stated that half of the students in their study "always feel nervous to find out what sort of feedback they may get from the lecturers, while another 40.6% of respondents said that sometimes they feel nervous about it" (p. 5). This statement could imply that students feel discouraged by their lecturers' comments. In my study, the students' preferences for more positive comments were confirmed in the studies of Lipnevich and Smith (2009), Mahfoodh and Pandian (2011) and Zhu (2010). Another form of convergence was identified in my study and in Duncan's (2007) study, whereby students stressed the importance of explaining the positive feedback and not just providing vague praise. A divergence, however, could be identified in my findings in comparison with Tom et al.'s (2013) and Leng's (2014) findings where students perceived negative feedback as constructive and the feedback provided by lecturers was seen as a form of encouragement (Tom et al., 2013). However, students in my study did not appreciate any negative feedback. Another form of divergence is evident in the ESL students in Button's (2002) study, who were still motivated, despite the negative comments that dominated the students' assignments.

The science students from S2's, S3's, S4's and S5's classes in my findings, however, appreciated their science lecturers' corrections of large numbers of errors as a form of learning, because students preferred to have this feedback rather than none at all. Students from S3's class perceived this type of negative criticism as a form of motivation and a challenge to improve. This finding from these science classes was also reflected in Lee's (2008a) study, which suggested that the students with advanced level of English proficiency preferred more feedback on error correction, and appreciated detailed feedback compared with English students who had lower levels of English proficiency. Perhaps the science students had higher English language proficiency because the partner university had placed a 6.5 IELTS English language proficiency requirement on students enrolled.

These findings from the science students, however, seemed to contradict Ferguson's (2011) and Weaver's (2006) studies, where the students majoring in education perceived their lecturers' overcorrection of errors as very demotivating. Another form of divergence was also found in my study when compared with Duncan's (2007) study. Students in my study did not indicate whether positive feedback was unhelpful, whereas the students in Duncan's (2007) study perceived vague positive feedback as unhelpful. In my study, a group of science students also provided some examples of when students had become demotivated after receiving excessive error corrections. Other examples of demotivation included students still receiving marked assignments filled with error corrections, despite their efforts in trying to reduce errors. S5's students indicated that it was essential that the lecturers explained errors committed by the students and did not just highlight the mistakes. This finding seemed to converge with Bevan et al.'s (2008), and Higgins et al.'s (2002) studies, where students had similar preferences for the lecturers explaining rather than merely indicating errors. The science students from S5's class mentioned that a balance of positive and corrective feedback was a better strategy for motivating students to learn, rather than focusing solely on the correction of errors. This finding seemed to converge with Poulos and Mahony's (2008) study, where the students indicated that dominant negative comments rather than encouraging ones in students' work might demotivate students, rather than challenge them to improve. One of the students from S5's class indicated a need for the lecturer to acknowledge the students' efforts. My findings reflected the perceptions of undergraduates in Lizzio and Wilson's (2008) study, where the students' efforts were recognised, along with the need for lecturers to be tactful in highlighting student weakness.

Students' views on the effectiveness of their lecturers' feedback

In the data gathered from the students' first meeting, to obtain their general perceptions of the effectiveness of their lecturers' feedback, it seemed that the English students in my study perceived that they had improved in certain areas; for instance, E3's students felt that their improvement could be seen in grammar but not in the acquisition of vocabulary. E1's students believed that they improved in writing topic sentences, providing supporting details,

grammar and spelling, but lacked improvement in writing syntax and structure. My findings, illustrating the English students' mixed perceptions regarding the effectiveness of their lecturers' feedback, diverged from other studies conducted in Malaysia. For example, the findings of Tom et al. (2013), and Leng (2014), suggested that ESL students perceived their lecturers' feedback as effective in assisting and improving their writing skills. In addition, Leng's (2014) study seemed to imply that students in a private university perceived their lecturers' direct and authoritative feedback as clear and effective in guiding them to correct errors. All of the English students in the present study indicated that feedback from the lecturers as essential in assisting them in their learning. Students also considered their English lecturers to be approachable, and they clarified vague feedback with their lecturers. My findings seemed to be parallel with studies indicating that lecturers were perceived as mainly responsible for providing feedback (Chandler, 2004; Ferris, 1999, 2004, 2009; Sengupta, 1998).

In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the English lecturers' written feedback and the English students' responses toward their lecturers' actual feedback, it seemed that some of the feedback was ineffective. For example, the English students were unable to decipher the meaning of the words "fragment", "vague", and "cliché", and some of the abbreviations used by their English lecturers. My findings seemed to be parallel with Shamshad and Faizah's (2009) study, which indicated that their students' poor English proficiency hindered their understandings of their lecturers' feedback. Another convergence between my findings and those of other studies revealed that the use of linguistic terminology was an obstacle to the English students' understanding of the feedback (Duncan, 2007; Higgins et al., 2002; Lizzo & Wilson, 2008). Other examples of ineffective feedback included lecturers' illegible handwriting and in the use of abbreviations. This issue of illegible handwriting was also a feature in a study by Carless (2006), in which students' understanding of feedback was hindered by the lecturers' handwriting. Another important finding in my study seemed to suggest that some of the students from E2's, E3's and E4's classes indicated a need for their lecturers to provide suggestions and sample models, rather than merely highlighting errors. The English students' preference of model answers in my study seemed to be

paralleled in the findings of Huxham (2007), where biology students voiced a need for model answers. The only divergence between my study and that of Huxham (2007) was that the biology students in Huxham's (2007) study preferred the model answers to the lecturers' feedback, whereas the English students indicated they would like to have both the model answers and the lecturers' feedback. The English students' preference for suggestions for improvement in my study also supported the studies conducted by Duncan (2007) and Weaver (2006), where the subject students were concerned about improving in the subsequent assignments.

The data gathered from the first students' meeting suggested that the majority of science students from the classes of S1, S3, S4 and S5 classes perceived their lecturers' feedback as effective. Students, especially from S3's and S4's classes, had a very good impression of their lecturers' feedback. The students appreciated S3's constructive and detailed feedback, which began by highlighting the students' strengths before identifying the limitations of their work. S4's students appreciated his strategy of providing concise and positive feedback, and his effort in correcting errors in content, scientific genre writing, and referencing systems. My findings from the science students seemed to match the studies conducted by Lizzio and Wilson (2008), and Osmond et al. (2005), where students also considered positive and motivating feedback as an essential part of their learning processes. All the students felt that their lecturers were approachable, with the exception of S2. Students of S2 also indicated that they did not like the approach used by S2, whereby the errors were highlighted but no cues were given to guide students in their learning, and there was only vague feedback. This finding seemed to be similar to Hounsell et al.'s (2008) study, where vague feedback and no feed-forward were perceived by students to be unhelpful. S2's students' dislike for indirect error correction, with no clear explanation of their errors, was also reflected in Bevan et al.'s (2008), Scott et al.'s (2009), and Weaver's (2006) studies.

When the science students' responses to their lecturers' actual feedback was observed in the second meeting, it seemed that the findings from the science students were similar to those of the English students. For example, the students were unable to understand some of the abbreviations, the inconsistency in the

use of symbols to highlight errors, and some of the usage of question forms. My findings from the science students seemed parallel with studies conducted by Duncan (2007), Higgins et al. (2002), and Lizzo and Wilson (2008) that indicated science students were hindered by unfamiliar terminology. In addition, the science students in my study indicated that questions were unhelpful; this was supported by Tom et al.'s (2013) study, in which ESL students had the same negative perceptions of questions.

Autonomous learning or dependent learning

My findings on the issue of encouraging students to be more independent and take responsibility for correcting their own errors reflected mixed responses from both the English and the science students. The mixed responses might have been caused by the students' level of English language proficiency, as well as their degree of self-confidence. For example, the majority of the English students (E1, E2, E3 and E5) preferred the lecturers to provide answers, which is also similar with Tom et al.'s (2013) study in a Malaysian public university, where the majority of the ESL undergraduates preferred the lecturers to correct their errors. However, a minority of the students in Tom et al.'s (2013) study preferred some form of guidance from their lecturers. Perhaps the English students in my findings had weaker English proficiency, and were dependent on their lecturers to provide answers. This finding was also reflected in Zacharias' (2007) study. Another example of convergence in my study in comparison with Zacharias' (2007) study in the Indonesian context was that the lecturers were perceived as the experts in their fields, thus indicating students' inclination for feedback from the lecturers, and this preference was attributable to socio-cultural factors. A minority of the English students from E1's, E2's, and E4's classes wanted indirect, coded WCF or guidance from the lecturers; for example, providing cues, giving examples, and making suggestions on techniques for correcting errors. My findings seemed to concur with studies conducted by Zhu (2010), where students realised the importance of correcting their own errors through the lecturers' guidance.

However, the findings relating to the English students in my study diverged slightly from the study of Nordin et al. (2010), where the engineering

undergraduates from another private university preferred the indirect, un-coded WCF without any cues on content and form.

The science students in my study reflected findings contrasting to those of the English students. The majority of the students from S3's and S5's classes perceived themselves as independent learners, while the minority of students from the classes of S2, S3, S4 and S5 claimed to be independent learners. However, students from the classes of S1, S4, and S2 perceived themselves as dependent learners, where answers from the lecturers were preferred.

The overall findings from my study indicated that the majority of students were still dependent on the lecturers, although few students perceived themselves as independent learners, with a certain degree of dependence on the lecturers' guidance. This finding seemed to converge with Thang's (2009) study, which implied that the Malaysian students in the private universities had a certain degree autonomy, although the majority of private students still preferred to be dependent on their lecturers. My findings seemed to contradict the study conducted by Higgins et al. (2002) on 19 first-year business L1 students in two UK institutions, who preferred peer feedback and being independent learners.

4.4.12 . Key findings on the mismatches between the lecturers' beliefs and their students' beliefs, and responses towards the lecturers' written feedback in relation to previous research

This section analyses the lecturers' and students' beliefs about the effectiveness of written feedback and seeks to answer the following research question:

To what extent do students' beliefs match the lecturers' beliefs?

My findings seemed to suggest more mismatches rather than convergences between students' and lecturers' perceptions of the value of written feedback. The first mismatch was evident in the perceived purpose of feedback. My findings seemed to suggest that both the English and science lecturers' perceptions of providing feedback were to assist students in their learning through the highlighting of errors, but with no suggestions given on how to improve in the subsequent assignments. The students' views of feedback,

however, indicated a need for feed-forward to assist them in their subsequent assignments. The other function of feedback, as a means to justify grades for the moderators, was not evident in my study. During the initial meeting to obtain their general perceptions about feedback, only one group of English students admitted that their limited English proficiency hindered them in comprehending their lecturers' feedback. However, the majority of the English students' limited English proficiency was apparent during the second students' meetings, when their responses to their lecturers' actual feedback were obtained. Some of the students did not know the meaning of the word "vague" and "cliché". Most of the English students also indicated that they could not comprehend their lecturers' English, which was perceived as too advanced and complex.

The second mismatch was evident in the different perceptions of learning needs, where the English lecturers tended to over-emphasise grammatical errors and lower order concerns. However, the English students felt that their learning needs were not met by the lecturers, as the other aspects of learning English had been overlooked by the English lecturers; for instance, writing improved syntax. My findings seemed to contrast with Norouzian and Farahani's (2012) findings, in which Iranian English preferred comprehensive feedback, and where detailed feedback was considered essential to learning. My findings also suggested another form of divergence, when compared with Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) findings, where ESL students in Canada preferred feedback on lower order concerns as compared to content feedback. The students in my study did not appreciate too much language feedback.

The third mismatch could be seen through the perceived effectiveness of the written feedback. The English lecturers felt that the written feedback they had provided was ineffective; that students were only interested in grades, and continued to make errors despite previous errors having been highlighted. The English students, on the other hand, considered the feedback provided by the lecturers to be effective in certain areas; for instance, grammar and written topic sentences. However, the English students felt that the detailed feedback hindered their learning. These findings, however, seemed to contrast with Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) study in the Canadian context, and with Leng, et

al.'s (2013) study in the private Malaysian university context. The students in Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) study appreciated having all their errors corrected and highlighted, while the ESL Malaysian Chinese students appreciated their writing lecturers' effort in providing detailed feedback, which included suggestions for improvement. The only divergence was that the lecturers in Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) study preferred to correct selected errors, while the lecturers in my study preferred to highlight almost all the students' errors. The English students in my study were more concerned about receiving feedback that would assist them in learning, rather than a report to explain their overall performance, which was a reflection of Long's (2014) study.

Another area of divergence between the lecturers and the students was in the issue of providing more encouraging comments for both the English and the science students. For example, some of the English and the science lecturers perceived that they provided encouraging comments, but students thought otherwise and suggested that more encouraging comments from their lecturers would be appreciated. These findings again contradicted Leng et al.'s (2013) study, where the students in their study indicated that they found negative feedback constructive, and it challenged them to further improve their writing. The perceived effectiveness in the actual provision of written feedback was another area which reflected a mismatch, whereby the lecturers thought that the students could comprehend the feedback, but students misinterpreted it. For example, the English students were unable to comprehend the linguistic terms used by their lecturers, while the science students were unable to decipher some of the abbreviations and symbols used by their lecturers. My findings seemed to agree with Shamsad and Faizah's (2009) study, which indicated that students were unable to emend their errors due to poor English language proficiency, and this also prevented them from comprehending their lecturers' feedback. Another form of convergence between the lecturers' and the students' beliefs could be identified through the pedagogical issue whereby the English lecturers faced a conflict: they wanted to assist students to be more independent in their error corrections, while the students indicated a preference for lecturers to correct their errors. This is true both in my study, and in that of Amrhein and Nassaji (2010).

To the best of my knowledge, not many studies have been conducted on science assessment and feedback in Malaysia, with the exception of Perera et al.'s (2008) study, where the mismatches between the students' beliefs about effective feedback were compared with the lecturers' beliefs. When my findings are compared with the study conducted by Perera et al. (2008), it seems that there was only one convergence, and further divergences. The major convergence between my study and Perera et al.'s (2008) was illustrated in the students' request for teacher-student conferences to clarify vague written feedback. The divergences however, could be seen, in Perera et al.'s (2008) study, in the students' indication that grades and model answers were also essential in the process of feedback, whereas the science students in my study did not indicate the importance of model answers, and some students in my study indicated that both grades and feedback were essential in the feedback and learning process.

In terms of the convergences of beliefs in lecturers' and students' perspectives on effective feedback, these can be seen through the issue of English and science students' preference for feedback that provides answers for the students, and the issue of providing language feedback for science students. It seemed to me that in the many studies reviewed, there were none that indicated that both content lecturers and students agreed that language feedback was less important than content feedback. Moreover, there were not many studies that indicated that the approachability of lecturers was essential for students, so they could feel comfortable in requesting clarification of vague feedback.

4.4.13 Summary of the findings: Comparing the beliefs of the two groups of students and comparing the students' beliefs with those of their lecturers

To conclude, in comparing findings from the student data from both groups: both the English and the science students, revealed more convergences than divergences. The first convergence was that their view on the purpose of feedback was a form of feed-forward to assist them in identifying and correcting errors, so that they would not repeat the errors. Another convergence could be seen in the fact that for the majority of students from both fields, it

was important to receive positive and motivating feedback, which they felt was lacking in their lecturers' written feedback. The next convergence was reflected in view about the effectiveness of feedback, where both groups of students were, at times, unable to comprehend the lecturers' feedback due to inconsistencies in the abbreviations and the vagueness of the symbols used in the feedback. The majority of students preferred to have the lecturers provide them with the answers to their errors and it seemed that only a minority of the students from both groups preferred to be independent learners.

The only divergences between both groups of students were evident in their perceptions about the focus of the feedback. Some of the English students felt that their needs were not met because the English lecturers focused on areas which students considered unnecessary. For example, the English students preferred to receive guidance on sentence structure, while grammar and academic writing were believed by the English lecturers to be essential. However, the majority of the science students felt that their needs were met, and their perception that content feedback was more essential than language feedback converged with the views of the science lecturers. The science students, however, appreciated language feedback from their science lecturers. One group of science students, however, did not agree with the science lecturer's overemphasis on formatting in laboratory reports. Another group of science students were unhappy with their lecturer's approach of giving feedback which encouraged them to be more self-reliant in correcting errors, as they expected more guidance from their lecturer.

When the English and science students' perceptions of the value of their lecturers' written feedback was compared with their lecturers' actual provision of written feedback, the number of divergences was greater than the convergences. The first divergences could be seen in the English and science students' perceptions that feedback functioned as form of feed-forward. However, the lecturers seemed to be more concerned about highlighting student errors, with limited suggestions for improvement, and no feed-forward was provided for the students. Another form of divergence could be seen through the area of providing either positive or negative feedback. Some of the lecturers felt that they provided encouraging comments, but students thought otherwise

and suggested that more encouraging comments from their lecturers would be appreciated. Another divergence could be found in the area of the focus of feedback for both the English and science students. In addition, the English students considered the overemphasis on grammatical elements of writing to be an impediment to their learning process. A group of science students felt that their lecturer's excessive concern about format was trivial. Another group of science students were also unhappy with their lecturer's choice of using feedback which encouraged their self-reliance.

Two convergences between the English and science students' and their lecturers' perceptions of effective feedback could be identified. The first convergence was the issue of being independent in seeking the answers to errors. The majority of the students preferred the lecturers to provide the answers, which concurred with the lecturers' perceptions that students were too dependent on them. The second convergence was that the science students' perceived their learning needs were met. The science students' perceptions were that content feedback was more important than language feedback and this converged with their lecturers' observed practices.

4.5 Lecturers' reflection on students' responses to their feedback

Reflection is one of the important aspects in assisting lecturers to develop their skills further, especially in terms of providing effective feedback. Reflective lecturers gain knowledge through the process of reflecting upon their teaching experiences and applying successful teaching techniques in their subsequent teaching (McAlpine & Weston, 2002). These reflections and behaviours are based on the motivations to achieve certain goals. According to Argyris, Putnam, and McLain Smith (1985), in the higher education context, the lecturers reflect on their behaviour in class to ensure that student learning takes, which is one of the goals of education. This section thus seeks to answer the following research question, where the lecturers' reflections about feedback were sought as follows:

What are the lecturers' reflections about their students' responses of the value of feedback?

The following data was derived from the lecturers' reflection sessions, where the students' general and specific responses to their feedback were made known to the lecturers. The presentation of the findings begins with the individual lecturers from the English department, followed by the science department. This is followed by an assessment of the extent of convergence and divergence between the two departments, in Section 4.5.11.

4.5.1 Reflection on student responses to her feedback (E1)

When E1 received the comments made by the students in a file attached in the email, she did not agree with the students' comments that she focused more on grammar and responded with the following comment in the email: "equal emphasis was given to both grammar and sentence structure" (E1, Reflection via email, p. 3). However, she accepted the students' views regarding long comments and wrote, "I did not realize that my comments were long" (p. 2). In response to the students' comments on the specific feedback given, she wrote the following: "Explained this term [fragment] when we had the feedback discussion on their first writing practice." However, she agreed with the students that she "should be consistent in using abbreviations" (p. 8) and the need for her to be more positive in her feedback.

4.5.2 Reflection of students' responses to her feedback (E2)

Since E2 did not conduct a think-aloud session, the students' responses to E2's specific written feedback were not sought and a reflection session was not conducted.

4.5.3 Reflection on students' responses to her feedback (E3)

When E3 was given all the students' responses in an attached file in the email (E3, Reflection via email, p. 6), she wrote the following comment on the effectiveness of feedback: "Grammar is stressed in the first few weeks of the syllabus." She seemed rather annoyed with the students' other responses (for example, the perceptions of error correction) and wrote the following comments: "The students are relying too much on the lecturer ... actually, they

should have paid more close attention to the feedback in their written English work (though there are not many tasks assigned) because their content subject lecturers are always complaining about the poor English used in writing reports.” (pp. 5-7). Based on the students’ responses to her written feedback, although she was adamant that she would maintain her practice of using abbreviations, she realised the importance of positive comments, as depicted in her written responses: “I didn’t realize how positive comments are so important to my students until I read this feedback.” As for the use of abbreviations, I will still stick to it but I must repeat more often to the students until they get used to my system of giving feedback.” (p. 2).

In response to her students’ claim that they did not understand the meaning of “cliché”, E3 wrote the following response, “They should have come to me after class and asked or better still use an English-Chinese dictionary and find out for themselves”. (p. 7). She realised that the students had misunderstood her feedback and mentioned that in the future, she would clarify errors orally in class. She made the following final comment, “Now I realise through their feedback that I should brief my students on my style of giving feedback and the abbreviations that I use at least three times in a semester to make sure the students truly understand my style.” (p. 10).

4.5.4 Reflection on students’ responses to her feedback (E4)

I was not able to obtain E4’s responses to the students’ specific comments on her feedback, even though reminders were sent via email.

4.5.5 Reflection of students’ responses to her feedback (E5)

In the lecturers’ reflection session, through email, when the lecturer was able to respond to the students’ comments, E5’s response to the student’s expectation of having their spelling errors corrected in the general interview was as follows: “Students at tertiary level should take the initiative to find out the correct spelling.” (E5, Reflection via email, p. 2) In response to the student’s comment on the sample feedback, E5 felt that the student ought to take the initiative to clarify points if he was not sure of the feedback. She, however, accepted the

student's comment that her handwriting was illegible by writing "points taken." (p. 6).

4.5.6 Reflection of students' responses to his feedback (S1)

When the students' responses were shown to S1 during the lecturers' reflection session, he admitted that he accidentally underlined some words for his own reference, or underlined good points as he was reading the students' work. He admitted that he should have written some comments so as not to confuse students.

(HAH HAH HAH) when I read, sometimes I underline this word. I mean it's just like, (ERR), sometimes if it is a good point, I also underline. Then I should have written a good point under there, (LAH). You know what I mean but I didn't. I missed out something. (S1, Reflection session, p. 4)

At the end of the reflection session, S1 was asked if he had any overall comment on the students' responses, and he admitted that he was more aware of his practices of providing feedback; not to assume that students comprehended the feedback, to be more positive in encouraging students, and be more sensitive to students' feelings.

Yeah very good at least I know something about what my feedback is not clear to them, like certain instances like underline without comment so the students are not very sure. Yeah so now at least I am more aware that sometimes we do things we are not aware. (S1, Reflection session, p. 8)

He was also asked his opinion of the research project:

In the end we are also aware of our mistakes ... students don't like [lecturers] to cancel their words ... put a bracket and put some comment, "This is not necessary". I think I used to cancel a lot also So this feedback is also good for me (LAH). So I also learn from it. (pp. 8-9)

4.5.7 Reflection of students' responses to his feedback (S2)

S2 did not participate in the reflection session.

4.5.8 Reflection of students' responses to his feedback (S3)

In the reflection session, even though S3 agreed with students that he was too strict in terms of format, he would still continue to insist.

S3: I am still strict about the format

I: (LAUGHTER). Despite what they said?

K: Yeah yeah yeah. I mean yes I am strict with the format and yeah I am still strict about the format. Yeah I try to have (ERR) everything been standardised and in terms of all the reports so that it looks nicer to me. Yeah so I am still strict on the format. (LAUGHTER). (S3, Reflection session, p. 6)

Overall, S3 felt pleased that students were able to interpret his feedback quite precisely, and according to him, that was how students learn and improve.

It seems that to me, (ERR), the hard work that I have been putting on in the feedback, err does pay back. Yeah, in terms of seeing students improve in their work. Although it has been a hard time for me, (LAUGHTER), to give every single feedback to a large class of students as well, yeah at the end of the day, it is still asking it is worth to do these types of things, (LAH). (S3, Reflection session, p. 8)

4.5.9 Reflection on students' responses to his feedback (S4)

In the lecturers' reflection session, S4 acknowledged his inconsistent acts of highlighting a key word once and sometimes twice. He also explained the meaning of the feedback "less easy to unfold" as follows:

It is the enzyme. Because they say that enzyme to be more stable, because it is bonded to a solid phase so I gave them the benefit of doubt that the student actually mean that it lack of easy to unfold because by being

bonded to the solid surface, it is less easy to unfold anyway. (S4, Reflection session, p. 19)

In response to the usage of abbreviation BOD, S4 did not explain the meaning even though some of the students approached him to clarify the meaning. BOD to the lecturer meant “Benefit of Doubt”, which meant that the students did not actually explain the key terms accurately. Nevertheless, students managed to explain in a way that led the lecturer to believe that they actually understood the terms. BOD is also another term for biological oxygen demand. Regarding the usage of question marks, he explained that all the students’ interpretations of both question marks were wrong. He admitted that at times, when he did not understand what the students were trying to communicate, a question mark was inserted, but after the feedback was given at the correct location, the question mark was not removed. The purpose of the second question mark was to question the student regarding the validity of the information provided. He admitted that the feedback was not clearly written:

I am questioning them is this correct? Is it really solvent or something like that? So my feedback is not clear here. (p. 19)

After reflecting on students’ comments about the issue of inconsistency in highlighting errors, S4 realised that he needed to standardise his feedback.

I think I have to standardise the feedback that I give to students. Otherwise they will start questioning why double underline, why here single underline? (LAUGHTER). So now I know. Other than that I think it is very helpful to me. Now I think I can actually improve my feedback. (p. 22)

4.5.10 Reflection of students’ responses to his feedback (S5)

In the reflection session, S5 realised the importance of oral feedback as a follow-up to the written feedback. She took for granted that students would understand her feedback, since they did not return to her for clarification (which is why she circled the errors).

I think I need to be more explicit in how I give them feedback. I think they don't understand some of the circles and they didn't actually come and ask me or why I circle it or why it's wrong, you know. So I assume that they got the point. Sometimes I think we make assumptions. (HMM), yeah. Okay. I think that's all. Yeah. I think sometimes I need to call them and tell them orally so that they can ask the questions. (S4, Reflection session, pp. 12-13)

At the end of the reflection session, S5 realised that both students and lecturers need feedback; otherwise both parties will not improve.

Well, (ERR), I think students need feedback, otherwise they don't know. Likewise, we also need feedback. If not we don't know what we are doing and both parties will not improve. It is a gradual process where you kind of go (OH OH), the students are not understanding my feedback and I have to do something about it". (p. 13)

4.5.11 Summary of the lecturers' reflections on student responses to their feedback

To summarise, two of the English and one of the science lecturers did not participate in the reflection sessions. The lecturers who participated in the reflection sessions were made aware of their feedback practices after their students' responses, in terms of their general and specific feedback, were presented to them. Some of the lecturers were surprised with the students' interpretation of their feedback. This was because the lecturers perceived that the students could comprehend their feedback but in reality, the students misunderstood the intended meaning of the written feedback. Some of the lecturers were willing to make changes to their feedback practices. Although some of the lecturers realised the limitations of their feedback practices, they were unwilling to make changes.

The English lecturers were somewhat reluctant to accept the students' points of views and were willing to change only certain aspects of their feedback. For

example, two English lecturers were willing to provide more encouraging feedback and one lecturer would be more aware of her illegible handwriting when providing written feedback in the future. One English lecturer (E1) agreed to shorten the length of her comments and also to be more consistent in her choice of using abbreviations to highlight errors. The English lecturers, however, chose to retain their feedback on lower order concerns while one chose to retain her feedback practices of using abbreviations to highlight errors.

The science lecturers, on the other hand, seemed to be more receptive to the students' responses to their feedback, with the exception of one science lecturer who still insisted on providing feedback on the formatting of lab reports. Three science lecturers acknowledged the importance of obtaining responses from their students regarding their feedback practices, in order to improve in their pedagogical knowledge. The same science lecturers were also willing to make changes to their feedback practices; for example, to standardise their use of symbols when highlighting errors, to use more positive feedback, and to be more explicit in their feedback in order to minimise the chance of student confusion over the intended meaning of their feedback.

4.6 Summary of the findings chapter

The data presented in the findings were gathered from a survey questionnaire, individual interviews, two student group interviews (before and after the lecturers' think-aloud sessions), think-aloud, stimulated recall sessions and lecturers' reflection sessions. The findings were presented under five headings: the lecturers' beliefs about providing written feedback; convergences and divergences between their beliefs and practices; the sources of their beliefs and practices; and comparing the perceptions of students and lecturers, and the lecturers' reflections on the students' responses towards their feedback.

The survey questionnaire and individual interviews were used to elicit the lecturers' beliefs about providing the written feedback. The data presented appeared under the five major subheadings as follows: beliefs about the purpose of the written feedback; the effectiveness of the written feedback and the motivation in providing positive/negative feedback; the areas of focus in the

written feedback; and encouraging student responsibility in correcting their own errors.

In terms of teachers' beliefs, there were two major convergences. The first convergence was that the lecturers from both the English and the science departments believed that the purpose of written feedback was to justify the grades given to students and to the moderators from the partner universities (the English and science departments), and the peer reviewers appointed by the dean (especially in the English department). In addition, the feedback was given to assist students in their learning progress in order to minimise errors in subsequent assignments. The second convergence related to the issue of encouraging students to be more responsible for their own learning, correcting their own errors. Some of the English and science lecturers felt that the responsibility rested solely on the students, while others felt that it should be a shared responsibility.

The divergences of teacher beliefs were evident in the perceived effectiveness of the feedback. The English lecturers felt that most students had negative attitudes towards learning English, and did not pay sufficient attention to the feedback provided, and this was evident in their continued errors. As a result, the English lecturers viewed feedback as a waste of time. On the other hand, the science lecturers felt that feedback was essential in assisting students' progress in learning and that feedback was not a waste of time. The science lecturers felt that some of the students who had good attitudes towards learning had shown improvement after receiving feedback. Another point of divergence in beliefs was seen in the focus of feedback. Three of the English lecturers claimed to focus on holistic marking, while the other claimed to focus more on content. However, the science lecturers pointed out that language was not the main priority.

The think-aloud and stimulated recall sessions were used to elicit the lecturers' practices of providing written feedback. The lecturers' beliefs and practices revealed a balance of convergences as well as divergences within each category. The different findings were the result of the different views of individual lecturers and their specific practices. The perceived effectiveness of

the written feedback, the provision of encouraging/negative feedback, the focus of feedback, and the issue of encouraging students to be responsible in error correction, revealed convergences. The lecturers' perceptions that feedback was either effective or ineffective converged during the think-aloud sessions (especially for E3, E4, S4 and S5), as the students' work either did or did not meet the lecturers' expectations (based on the different disciplines/context). The practices of E3, E4, S1, S3 and S4 for providing either positive or negative comments were consistent and converged with their respective personal beliefs. In terms of encouraging students to be responsible for their own correction, the beliefs and actual feedback practices converged for E4, E5, S1, S4 and S5.

The divergences could be seen through the lecturers' views of the different functions of feedback, the effectiveness of feedback, the focus of feedback, and encouraging the students' to be responsible in the area of error correction. The lecturers' (from both the English and the science departments) perceptions that functioned to assist students in their learning were only apparent in relation to highlighting errors. Concurrent with the process of indicating errors, the lecturers from both departments were actively trying to comprehend students' work, analysing their errors and thinking of the appropriate feedback to provide to the students. E3 and S3 were the only lecturers who provided suggestions for further improvement. The claim of justifying the feedback to various audiences was not apparent during the think-aloud sessions, as the justifications were addressed to the researcher and were also intended for the lecturer's own reference. In terms of the focus of feedback, the English lecturers were more interested in lower order concerns, such as language and spelling, while the science lecturers focused more on references and formatting. The divergences in belief and practice in terms of encouraging students to be responsible for their own error corrections were seen in different contexts. The decision either to provide or withhold error correction took place when the lecturers from both departments felt that students were incompetent in certain areas of error correction, or when students were insufficiently competent in making corrections because of problems in language proficiency or content.

The think-aloud sessions also demonstrated the lecturers' emotions and reactions towards the students' errors. These emerged during the provision of

feedback. The majority of the English lecturers seemed to be more expressive during the think-aloud, as compared to their science counterparts. When responding to students' written work, the English lecturers expressed their feelings verbally, but did not provide such comments in written form. The emotions expressed by the English lecturers tended to be negative rather than positive—for instance, they indicated frustration, amusement, or sarcasm, particularly when responding to students' language errors. In contrast to the English lecturers, the science lecturers tended to be less expressive, with the exception of S3 and S5 (especially when they responded to students' errors in content).

Interviews and stimulated recall were used to elicit the lecturers' sources of beliefs. Overall, the findings suggested that the English lecturers were influenced especially by the cultural historical context and the English lecturers' interaction within the community in the English department. The English lecturers were influenced by the assessment practices of their colleagues and by when they were students at university. Even though the lecturers claimed that the teaching and learning theories which they had learned during teacher training were not applicable in the current teaching context, some of the beliefs were reflected through their perceptions of good writing and reasonable assignments.

In terms of being influenced by the practices within the community of the English department itself, through the interviews and stimulated recalls, the English lecturers indicated that in some courses they were required to co-construct and/or adhere to the practices of the community. The co-construction practices among of the English lecturers were evident, especially in their use of the course structure as a tool to guide them in assessment, in co-constructing and standardising the types of assessment, and in designing the marking schemes and criteria for each assessment. The English lecturers also indicated that for some courses, the assessment and criteria had already been pre-determined by the chief paper examiners, appointed by the dean. In this case, the lecturers adhered to the general criteria. It was noted that most of the English assessments involved a similar division of criteria, which were content, language and organisation. A number of lecturers claimed to be influenced by

either their colleagues' or the partner universities' system of assessment, feedback and grading systems.

Compared with the English lecturers, the science lecturers had more empowerment to decide their own assessments, and the practice of co-constructing assessment as a group did not apply to them, due to the small number of teaching staff. Each science lecturer was considered to be a local expert in his or her own field, thus the practices of peer review did not exist in the department. The English lecturers adhered to the practice of providing feedback for the scrutiny of the moderators in the final examination, and some of the English assignments for the scrutiny of the second reviewer.

Nevertheless, the English lecturers had some form of empowerment. If they were able to provide justification for the grades, and if the moderators/peer reviewers/second examiners agreed with their justification, the grades were accepted. Likewise, the science lecturers were also under the scrutiny of the partner university moderators. As long as the partner universities' moderators were satisfied with the lecturers' assessments (assignments and/ or final examination) and justification, the grades were accepted. Lecturers from both departments also provided feedback to justify marks to students in the event that they were not satisfied with the grades. The personal teaching experiences gained by the English lecturers and some science lecturers influenced the current techniques of providing feedback. The English lecturers' experiences of going through assessments when they were students influenced the way they provided feedback to students. One science lecturer's various beliefs and practices of providing feedback were influenced by the process of undergoing assessment as a student.

The in-service training provided by the management was not perceived as being particularly useful in training lecturers from both departments in the area of assessment. All but one of the science lecturers, and some of the English lecturers, were not trained to be teachers.

A comparison between the English students' and the science students' beliefs about written feedback revealed only one divergence. The only divergence that was evident was in the area of the focus of feedback. The majority of the

English students felt that their learning needs were not met, as they considered sentence structure and spoken English to be more essential than grammar. However, the science students believed that their lecturers' content feedback assisted them in their learning. The science students' beliefs that content feedback was more important than language feedback converged with their lecturers to a certain extent, as the students also appreciated language feedback. The majority of the English and science students' beliefs revealed more convergences in the area of the purpose of feedback, the effectiveness of the feedback, the need for motivating feedback, and the issue of encouraging students to be more independent in their learning. Students from both groups indicated that the aim of feedback was to assist them as a form of feed-forward, to avoid making the same errors in future assessment. The students perceived that their lecturers' feedback was effective to a certain extent, especially in their responses to their lecturers' specific feedback. Some of the lecturers' feedback was vague and students were unable to comprehend its meaning. Another form of convergence was in the area of providing motivating and encouraging feedback. It seemed that the majority of students indicated that they felt that they had received a lack of motivating and encouraging feedback from their lecturers. The final convergence could be seen through the issue of encouraging students to be responsible for their error correction. The majority of students preferred the lecturers to provide the correct answer, or some form of guidance in their feedback, while a minority preferred more suggestions, indicating a desire to be responsible for their own learning.

After reflecting upon the students' responses to their written feedback, some of the lecturers acknowledged their limitations in the way they had provided feedback. Some lecturers verbally stated that they would change some of their approaches to providing feedback, while others still strongly held to their beliefs and were unwilling to change their practices.

In Chapter 5, the main findings will be further analysed using the lens of socio-cultural theory to identify gaps between the lecturers' and the students' beliefs about the value of written formative feedback. In addition, the divergences of beliefs and practices of the lecturers' provision of feedback will also be analysed. Some possible solutions are also suggested using the socio-cultural

framework. Chapter 6, the final chapter of this thesis, includes further discussions of the convergences and divergences of the literature reviews in comparison with my findings discussed here in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the final research question as follows:

How can a theoretical framework of distributed cognition be expanded or refined to account for convergences or divergences of beliefs among lecturers and between lecturers and students?

This research question is addressed in five sections. Section 5.1 attempts to examine the causes of divergent beliefs between individual lecturers and their students through Van Lier's (1996) six principles of successful scaffolding. It also examines the socio-cultural factors which might have led to forms of ineffective feedback, which ultimately hindered students' learning. The second part of the discussion (Section 5.2) seeks to examine the contextual factors which may have prompted lecturers, each within a specific department of the institution, to depart from their beliefs when giving feedback. This section draws on Engeström's (1987) Second Generation Activity Theory. My discussion also suggests effective ways of disseminating information about the best practices of conducting assessment and feedback within a department. Section 5.3 incorporates Engeström's (2001) Third Generation Activity Theory to examine contradictions between beliefs and practices in providing feedback, when two different departments within the same institution collaborate to provide assessment and feedback to students. Engeström's (2001) model is also applied in this study to examine the ways in which effective collaboration might be achieved between the two different departments in order to assist students' learning. Section 5.4 applies Barnard's (2010) refinement of Engeström's model (2001) to identify the gaps, contradictions, and conflicts that may emerge when two institutions of different cultures collaborate. Barnard's (2010) model is also used to examine ways in which these gaps and conflicts could be minimised. The last section summarises the chapter.

5.1 Explanation of divergence – in terms of ZPD

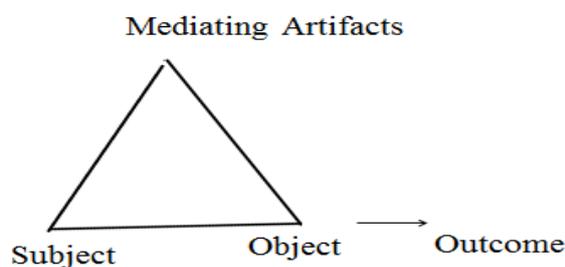


Figure 10: A basic model of the ZPD, adapted from Vygotsky (1978)

In my study, the act of providing written feedback may be seen in terms of a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). As experts, the English and science lecturers in my study represent the Subject component part of the diagram (Figure 10), while the Object represents the students' written competence as indicated in their marked assignments. The mediating artefacts, in the form of the English language and the marked assignments, were perceived as tools to assist the intended outcome, which is to improve students' understanding of the content subjects in their respective fields as well as to improve the quality of their writings. As discussed in Section 6.1, learning within the ZPD is created when the participants mutually engage in an activity or process which enables them to move from lower to higher competency. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback can be a way to regulate and scaffold students' learning. My study demonstrated that the students did not engage with the feedback, and here I suggested that they would have been much more likely to have done so if the lecturers had applied Van Lier's (1996) six principles of successful scaffolding (See Section 2.6.1) within the ZPD framework.

Firstly, it seemed that the lecturers were unable to provide the right amount of contextual support to encourage student learning. For example, negative comments in the feedback made by English lecturers tended to lead students to feel demotivated. Moreover, the English lecturers were also observed to provide too much support by providing answers, rather than handing over the task of correcting errors to students. Such excessive support further defeated the

purpose of encouraging student learning (Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2010; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). In short, the learning environment became too challenging for the students and as a result, students were hindered from learning. Moreover, the students were not made to feel comfortable, and errors were perceived as deficiencies rather than evidence of learning.

In order to assist individual student learning through the scaffolding process, there was a need to provide consistent forms of feedback, but in various formats. The present study indicated that the English and science lecturers employed a very limited range of feedback strategies with little variation in format. For example, the English lecturers focused on the lower order concerns of grammar, vocabulary and punctuation, while the science lecturers corrected students' errors in referencing, formatting and sentence construction. Little constructive feedback was provided by way of giving examples and suggestions on how to correct errors. Although some lecturers did provide limited content feedback, this feedback was often composed of indirect questions or vague statements. For example, one science lecturer posed a number of indirect and ambiguous questions when his student's discussion did not match his expectations. In another example, one English lecturer was observed providing written comments that the thesis statement was not present in the student's written work. Another problem was a lack of consistency in the use of ambiguous symbols and abbreviations; as a result, students misunderstood the meaning of the feedback.

The concept of intersubjectivity and mutual support – in terms of lecturers and students having the same aims and goals – did not appear to be present in my study. The goals and motivation of the lecturers in providing feedback diverged from the students' expectations about receiving feedback. The lecturers perceived feedback as a tool primarily to justify grades for three audiences; namely, the institution, the partner universities, and the students. The students, on the other hand, believed that feedback should function as feed-forward to assist them in writing subsequent assignments. However, the students' needs were not met as the lecturers, despite their professed beliefs, were observed providing feedback simply in the form of error correction as opposed to the formative development of English and subject content. As a result, some of the

students felt that their learning needs were not met. If the lecturers had regularly received the students' comments on their feedback (as happened only in the present investigation), they might have benefitted from such responses by learning how to provide better feedback.

The principle of contingent assistance, where the experts assist the students through the acts of modifying the scaffolding process, was not put into practice by the lecturers. The English lecturers were largely unaware that the students' learning needs were not being met; neither did they realise that some of their feedback was inappropriate and may have hindered students' learning. Although some of the lecturers might have realised that their feedback was ineffective – because the students continued to make the same errors – it appears that they did not put in much effort to deal with these problems.

In terms of the principle of flow in the present study, the communication of information in the form of feedback was one-way: from the lecturers to the students. This has been reported in many other studies investigating feedback; for example, Bailey and Garner (2010), Connors and Lunsford (1993), Ivanic et al. (2000), Orrell, (2006), Read et al. (2005) and Stern and Solomon (2006). Moreover, there was little evidence that the communication between the lecturers and the students flowed easily, as the lecturers sometimes had difficulty; first of all, in understanding what was being communicated in the assignments, and secondly, in communicating their feedback to the students in ways that were both natural and comprehensible.

The principle of handover, where the lecturers were willing to encourage students to be more autonomous for their own learning, was practised only to a limited extent. Marked assignments were returned to the students so that they could work on the identified errors, but the lecturers had very little idea of the extent to which the students were actually able to perform this task unassisted.

To summarise, while the purpose of formative feedback in general is to scaffold the developmental learning of students, the above discussion suggests that there appears to have been little evidence of such scaffolding among the lecturers in the present study. The feedback process can be an effective form of scaffolding

(Hyland, 1990; Hyland, 2003a; Plonsky & Mills 2006; Rassaei, 2014; Walker & Rui, 2008; Zacharias, 2007), but it is very likely that the socio-cultural factors in these scenarios such as the lack of training of the lecturers, the rules and regulations imposed by the local institution and the partner universities, the lack of information on the methods of conducting assessment and feedback, students' poor English language proficiency and power relationships hindered successful co-construction of knowledge, so attention will be turned to some of these factors.

One of the socio-cultural factors which caused mismatches between the students' expectations of feedback and the lecturers' practices of feedback was that the lecturers were not trained to conduct formative assessment and feedback. My findings in this respect are similar to those of other studies (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; Hou et al., 2013; Li, 2012; Volante & Fazio, 2007). Likewise in the Malaysian context, it was found that university lecturers were not trained to provide formative assessment and feedback, and there was no evidence of feed-forward strategies to encourage students' learning (Mohamad, 1999; Tunku Ahmad et al., 2014; Zubairi et al., 2008).

The rules and regulations imposed by the local institution and the partner universities were another major factor which prevented effective scaffolding. One of the regulations imposed on lecturers was the language policy of using English as the medium of instruction (EMI), which meant that both assignments and feedback were done in English. However, much of the scaffolding process was hindered by the students' poor English proficiency and their inability to understand the intended meaning of the feedback. Another possible reason which contributed to the ineffectiveness of feedback may have been the Malaysian students' lack of exposure to academic writing in the secondary school system and a lack of appropriate training or guidance for them.

The English lecturers had previously claimed that they used pre-set, standardised criteria for providing assessment and feedback. During the think-aloud sessions, however, they did not refer to these criteria, but seemed instead to be awarding grades on the basis of their pre-conceived beliefs. It seemed that the information about assessment and feedback practices within the English

department was not properly disseminated among the lecturers. As a result, there were divergent practices amongst the English lecturers, in their provision of feedback and grades.

One of the major reasons contributing to ineffective feedback was the lecturers' assumptions that all of the students in the class had the same level of English language competence. However, while the English of the majority of the students was poor, there were varying levels of proficiency. Some of the students claimed that their lecturers used complex vocabulary in their feedback, with the result that they could not fully comprehend the intended meaning. For example, during the students' meeting to obtain their responses towards their lecturers' specific feedback, some of the English students indicated that they did not know the meaning of the words 'vague' and 'fragment'. Other groups of students indicated that although they sometimes did not comprehend some of the written feedback in English, they were reluctant to seek clarification because they would also be unable to comprehend their lecturers' oral feedback.

My findings indicated that power relationships had significant impact on intended outcomes and on the co-construction of knowledge (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). One of the major causes of the mismatches between lecturers' and the students' perceptions of the value of feedback was that although it could be argued that the students were novice members of the community of practice of the university, their views were not taken into consideration by their lecturers. This was because the lecturers were of higher status than the students, and, therefore, had a stronger voice in the provision of feedback. The power relationships within the ZPD were also manifested when some of the lecturers refused to change their written feedback practices, even after the students' views had been revealed to them.

One of the possibilities for minimising the gap between students' and lecturers' perceptions of effective feedback was the initiative taken, in the present study, to introduce a two-way flow of communication. Here, the students' reactions towards their lecturers' actual feedback were analysed and presented to the lecturers, so that the lecturers could reflect on the students' view and decide

whether or not to change their feedback practices. The two-way flow enabled the lecturers to acquire more information about the pedagogical aspects of providing feedback to the students, which is presented in the following figure:

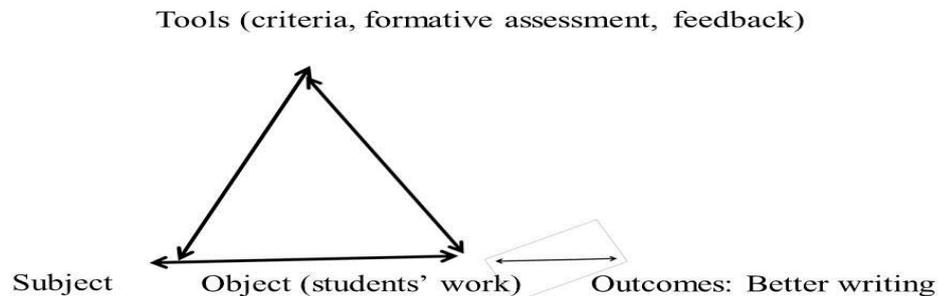


Figure 11 : Two-way flow of the students' and lecturers' perceptions of effective feedback

Effective formative assessment and formative feedback should involve an ongoing process of obtaining both the lecturers' and the students' perceptions of effective feedback, and a continuing process of making improvements. Ideally, before any formative written feedback was provided to the students, it would be very useful if both the students and the lecturers were able to negotiate the aims and purpose of the formative assessment, the criteria to be used, and the types of feedback preferred (Plonsky & Mills, 2006). Once such agreement was reached between the lecturers and the students, the lecturers could provide more effective assessment and feedback. It would also be essential to obtain the students' responses towards their lecturers' written feedback, and for these responses to be made known to the lecturers for further consideration. If there were any weaknesses in the lecturers' assessments and feedback, the lecturers could make the necessary changes in their feedback practices in order to assist their students' learning. In other words, the principle of contingent assistance could be applied.

The issues raised by Lee (2014) were similar with my findings especially in the area of a zone of proximal development. The teachers in Lee's (2014) study did not provide the right support for students; for example, the teachers provided

unfocused feedback on error corrections, which was also depicted through the actions of the lecturers in my study. Another similarity is that the feedback provided was a one-way approach, which is solely from the teachers to students. As a result, both the students my study and in Lee's (2014) study were not actively engaging in their teachers' feedback. Another convergence in both studies could be seen through the suggestions of implementing two-way feedback where both the teachers and their students communicate and agree upon a certain type of feedback. These conversations also needed to be made known to the administrators of the school or higher authority to ensure effective feedback.

The next section includes further discussion of divergence within a single department, drawing upon the work of Engeström (1987).

5.2 Explanation of divergence within a single department (Engeström, 1987)

The process of “distributed cognition” (Cole & Engeström, 1993, p. 1; Pea, 1993, p. 47), whereby knowledge and ideas about formative assessment and feedback are shared, are illustrated in the context of a single department, using a diagram of Second Generation Cultural-Historical Activity Theory:

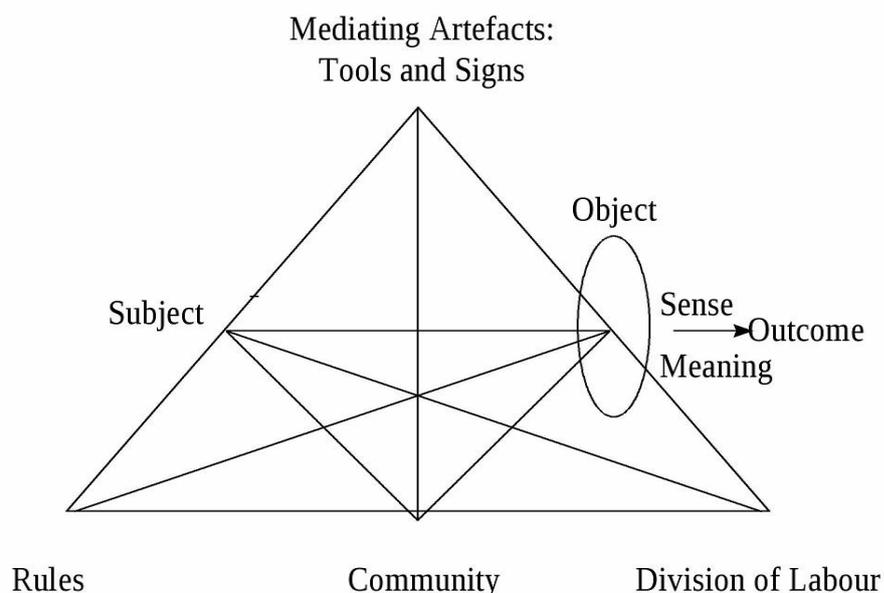


Figure 12: Second Generation of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

The structure of a human activity system (Engeström, 1987, p.78)

In the following discussion, this complex figure will be broken down into separate triangles, in order to illustrate and explain the tensions between the various components, as well as the contradictions that arise.

One of the possible causes of the contradictions between the lecturers' beliefs and practices may be the imbalance of power within the community of practice. For example, it was observed that the lecturers did not refer to the actual criteria while marking. Perhaps the information about best practice for assessment was not clearly communicated from the core group (the Dean) and the active group (the chief examiner and the senior lecturers) to the other lecturers involved. In another example, the standardisation and co-construction of assessment knowledge among members of the science community was not evident. Ideally, information about the best practices of formative assessment and feedback should have been co-constructed, and could have been distributed within the department according to the principle of the horizontal division of labour, as illustrated in the following figure.

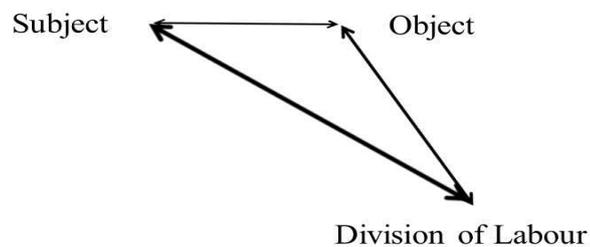


Figure 13: Co-construction of knowledge among colleagues within the same department (that is, English or science)

The problems of conducting assessment and feedback faced by the lecturers could be further co-constructed with the other colleagues during formal staff meetings or informal conversations within the department. There are four reasons why such co-construction would be highly desirable, if not essential. Firstly, the problems of inadequate dissemination of relevant information about

assessment and feedback practices, which was evident within the English department, could be reduced. Another reason to support the co-construction of knowledge is the lack of training amongst the majority of the lecturers in the areas of assessment and feedback. The lecturers could increase their pedagogical knowledge through listening to the experiences of other lecturers in information-sharing sessions. The third reason was that there was no evidence of the practice of co-constructing information within the science department so that this process should be encouraged in order to increase the lecturers' pedagogical knowledge. The last reason was that the students' learning needs were not met, and these perhaps should have been more fully discussed within the departments.

In relation to the lack of training amongst the lecturers, the local institution and the lecturers could provide the necessary physical resources such as training, materials, and textbooks, on the subject of giving advice on assessment and feedback. Although some suggestions for training and materials are presented in Chapter 6, the relationship between these elements is illustrated in Figure 14.

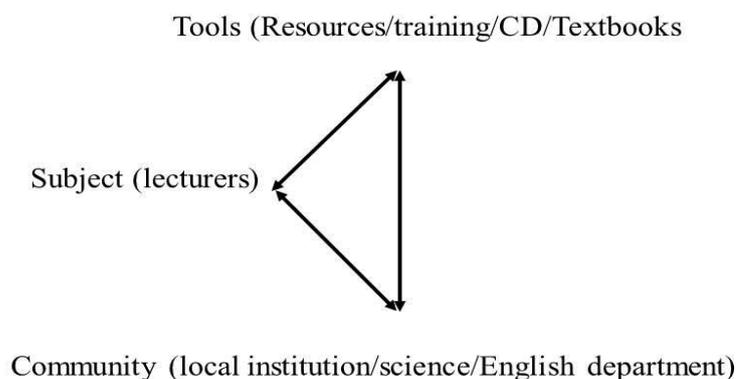


Figure 14: Training of lecturers

Although instruction in English was imposed upon students by the institution, it seemed that the students were unable to comprehend and apply their lecturers' feedback. This suggests that perhaps students need to be screened for their English language proficiency before being permitted to study at the university;

in this way, they could avoid the problems of having to cope with the difficulties of learning in English (Saarinen & Nikula, 2013). Such screening might be done using IELTS (tools), as depicted below in Figure 15.

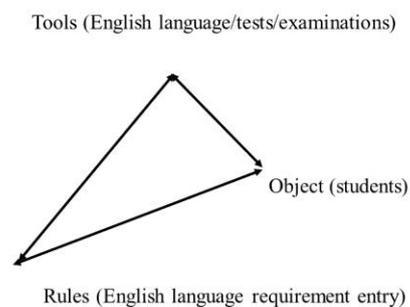


Figure 15: English language requirement entry for students

However, the value of screening students' language accuracy is debatable. For example, the IELTS examination is unable to accurately predict students' subsequent academic performance because it was not designed to assess students' academic writing in relation to the specific genres required by the different academic disciplines (Doiz, et al., 2013). Perhaps the institution could provide tools, or ongoing scaffolding, for the students in terms of language support for those students who are weak in English. For example, ongoing English language development programmes or specific writing courses could be introduced to assist students in their academic writing. Physical tools could be provided for students in the form of language learning materials, either in print or online. Another form of scaffolding is in assisting students to applying their lecturers' feedback through materials, as illustrated in Figure 16.

Tools (resources and training to assist students to apply their lecturers' feedback)

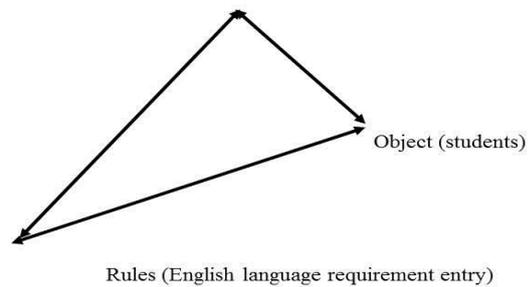


Figure 16: Language and feedback scaffolding for students

The factors that created conflicts and problems from the provision of written feedback were identified through the lens of Socio-cultural Activity Theory and a number of convergences were apparent when my findings were compared with the results from Lee's (2014) study. The most important convergence seemed to suggest that although the Hong Kong teachers and Malaysian lecturers might have their own principles about the best practices of providing feedback, the imposed school or university policies on providing feedback prevented the teachers and lecturers from acting on their beliefs. For example, the Hong Kong teachers had to abide by the expectations of improving students' grades in examinations rather than assisting students in their learning while the Malaysian lecturers had to provide feedback in English to their students even though the students had poor English language proficiency. Another essential similarity of both studies suggested that another important socio-cultural factor that hindered the teachers or lecturers' from applying their principles of encouraging students to be more responsible for their own error corrections was the students' expectations of their lecturers to provide error corrections. The imbalanced distribution of power is another factor which caused conflicts within the teachers and lecturers in both studies. The students, the Hong Kong English teachers and some of the English lecturers' were obliged to accept the imposed rules and regulations set by the government or the universities. The views of effective feedback from the lecturers and teachers were not taken into consideration, and the students received the feedback without any engagement or reflection on it.

The next section further identifies the gaps, conflicts, and divergent beliefs between two departments within a single institution.

5.3 Explanation of divergence between two departments within a single institution (Engeström, 1999)

The discussions above presented the distribution of cognition within a department in the institution. Since two different departments (English and science) were involved in the activities of assessment and feedback, the Third Generation of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) by Engeström (1999), illustrated in Figure 17, can be used as a lens to analyse the present findings.

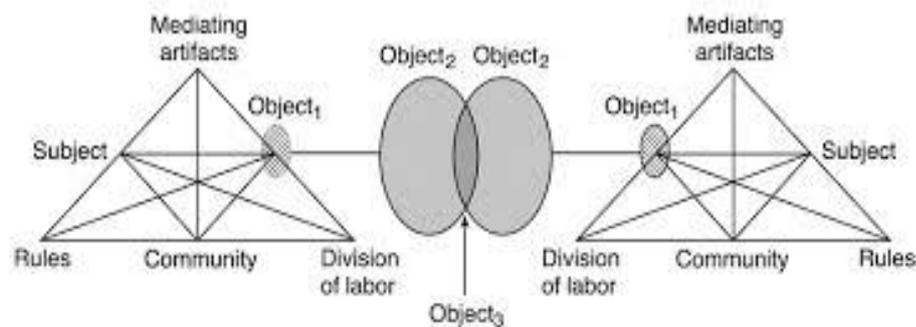


Figure 17: Third Generation of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) by Engeström (1999) (Engeström, 2001, p. 136.)

In Figure 17, the triangle on the right represents the English department, which was collaborating with the science department (represented in the triangle on the left).

Engeström (2001) outlined the five principles of the Third Generation of CHAT theory, which would ensure the effectiveness of the collaboration between the English and science departments. These principles are as follows: (1) the *prime unit of analysis* of the activity; (2) *multi-voicedness*; (3) *historicity*; (4) *contradictions*; and (5) the *possibility of expansive transformation*.

The first principle is *the prime unit of analysis of the activity*, which means that the act of providing feedback should be uniformly clarified within the

community (Engeström, 2001, p. 136). In the current study, the English and science departments were working in isolation from each other, despite the collaboration between the two departments. For example, the role assigned to the English lecturers was to assist the science students' English language proficiency, while the role of the science lecturers was to assist students in their learning of science disciplines. The syllabus and the assessment system used by the English department were designed by the English lecturers, based on the requirements established by the Dean and the heads of programme in the science department. In addition, the Dean and the heads the science programmes did not interfere with the assessment and feedback practices within the English department, as long as the syllabus met the requirements of the science programme. Thus, there was a lack of mutual clarity about the prime unit of analysis- the provision of feedback.

Multi-voicedness means that opinions from the other groups of people (i.e. students, lecturers) were not heard, and it may have been that the information from the authorities was vague and not properly disseminated amongst the other groups of people in the institution. My findings suggested that collaboration between the science and English lecturers could be further improved by encouraging an equal power relationship, and ongoing discussions, between the students, the lecturers and the deans. Discussions needed to be ongoing, and those involved needed to take time to reflect. These processes are essential in order to achieve the sort of effective feedback practices that would minimise conflict and benefit both the students and the lecturers.

The third effective principle of successful teamwork in providing feedback involves *historicity*, whereby the elements within the activity system (such as subject, tools, community, objects, rules and division of labour) change over the course of time in response to new internal and external pressures. An example of internal pressure might be that lecturers are unaware of the students' poor English proficiency which is reflected in students' errors in their written assignments (please refer to the feedback samples in Section 4.2). The imposition of new procedures and standards to meet the requirements of the partner universities would be an example of external pressure.

The importance of identifying and resolving *contradictions* or conflicts that are part of the collaboration activity is the fourth principle of effective alliance. Due to the major conflict caused by students' poor English language proficiency, some of the lecturers should have changed their practices, and even their belief systems in order to ensure that their feedback was effective. Even when lecturers were made aware of the students' responses to their feedback, they did not always accept the contradictions and work towards their resolution.

Pressures such as those outlined above cause contradictions to arise within and across departmental policies and practices, and to create cognitive and emotional dissonance within individual lecturers. For example, although some of the English and science lecturers wished to abide by the policy that students should be responsible for correcting their own errors, they believed that their students were not proficient enough to make their own corrections; at the same time, they wanted to meet their students' expectation that they would provide corrections. This inner conflict had prompted lecturers to alter their feedback practices so that they provided the corrections. Unless these contradictions are recognised within the community, and attempts made to resolve them, activities such as providing feedback will be incoherent and ineffective.

The last principle involves the *possibility of expansive transformation*, which means that in the light of such contradictions, the normal practices of providing feedback should be changed. In the first place, the lecturers in both departments needed to be made aware of the ineffectiveness of their current practice, and then to respond by developing a more extensive knowledge of effective feedback practices. As suggested above, intra- and inter-departmental workshops and conversations could be facilitated by an expert in the area. The issue of English as a medium of instruction needs to be reviewed, and if it is decided that the policy should be maintained, then appropriate provision should be made to improve the students' English competence before, or after, enrolment. Ways of bridging the gap between actual ability and desired standards of English language proficiency would be a useful point of discussion within the community of practice. Perhaps collaboration between English and science lecturers could be achieved through a horizontal division of labour. Perhaps the English and science lecturers in the community could collaborate

through team teaching: the English lecturers could provide language feedback, while the science lecturers provided content feedback on students' assignments. The next section discusses possible divergences and conflicts arising when two institutes of different cultures collaborate.

5.4 Explanation of divergences between two different institutes of different cultures (Barnard, 2010)

Engeström's (2001) model did not seek to analyse the process of collaboration involving two or more institutions from different cultural backgrounds. To address this limitation I draw upon Barnard's (2010) refinement of Engeström's model to analyse the collaboration between partner universities and the local institution in the area of assessment and feedback, as illustrated in the following figure.

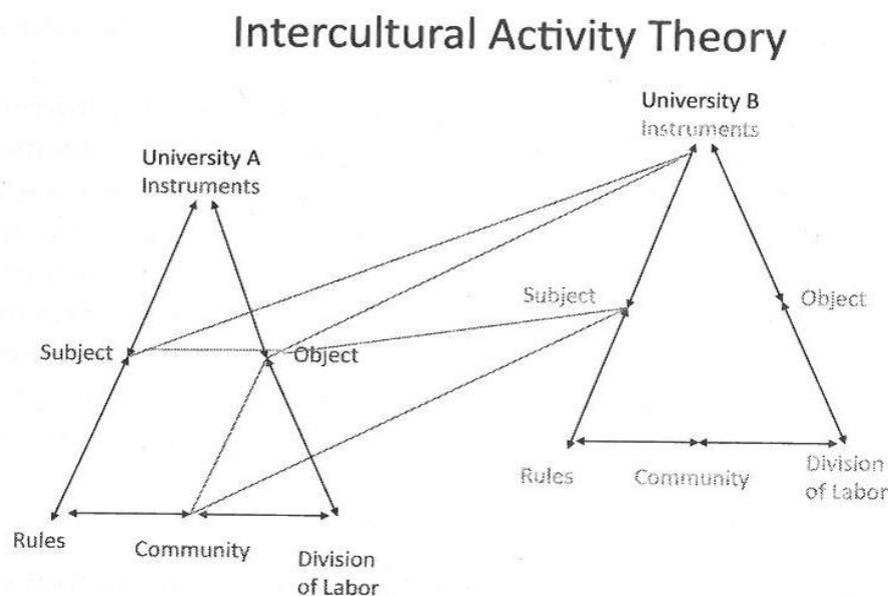


Figure 18: Intercultural Activity Theory (Barnard, 2010, p. 34)

When two institutions agree to collaborate on a joint activity, agreement on certain key points is reached in prior negotiation. In the present case, such agreements included the policy of conducting all assessment and feedback in English; the type of written work that students were to submit; and standardised assessment criteria. However, as the project developed over time,

contradictions inevitably occurred, and these contradictions were compounded by the fact that the two institutions had somewhat different academic conventions arising from their specific cultural traditions.

Despite such agreement in principle, a number of issues were found to have hindered more effective collaboration in terms of conducting assessment and feedback.

Overall, the power relationship between the local institution and the partner university was the main factor that impeded the two-way flow of information. To begin with, the community in the local institution seemed to be subject to the dominance of the partner university in a number of ways, as illustrated in Figure 19.

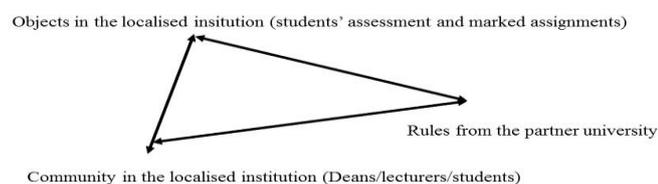


Figure 19: Rules imposed by the partner university on the community of the local institution

Based on Figure 19 above, the community of the local institution was required to design the assessment to meet the requirements of the partner university. Some of the rules imposed by the partner university were instigated through the peer review system, whereby the lecturers within the same department were required to moderate some of the samples of their colleagues' formative assessments and the final examinations. This peer review system seemed to operate among the lecturers in the English department, but not among the science lecturers. Another example of imposed rules from the partner university may be the requirement that students be critical in their approach to learning,

self-reliant in their learning, and that they use English as the medium of communication in their assessments. Based on Figure 19 above, the students in the local institution were also subjected to the assessments (represented as object) designed by their lecturers.

Another form of power dominance is illustrated in Figure 20 below.

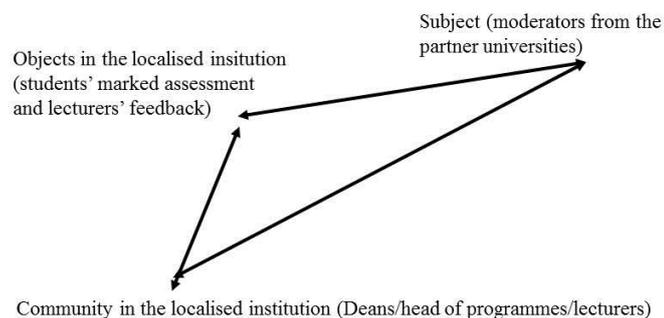


Figure 20: Power-relationships in relation to the partner university and the local institution

Once the students' assessments had received the English and science lecturers' feedback, they were subjected to the scrutiny of the moderators from the partner university. If the lecturers' assessments and feedback did not meet the requirements established by the partner university (based on the rules acknowledged in the previous paragraph), the lecturers in the local institution had to reassess their students' assignments. In some cases, the deans and senior lecturers may also have been obliged to adjust their assessments based on the moderators' feedback in order to meet the overall requirements of the partner university.

Ideally, to ensure a more effective collaboration between the two institutions, the two-way information flow, between the local and partner universities, ought to be an ongoing process. The ideal practices of conducting assessment and feedback amongst the community members within the local institution could be

shared with the community within the partner university, a process which is illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 21).

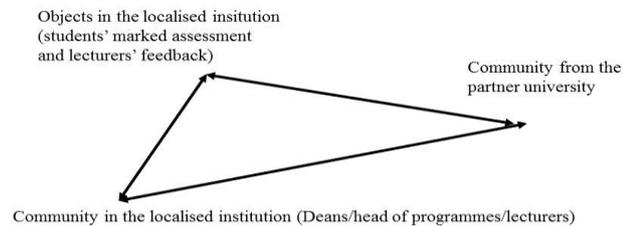


Figure 21: Shared information about the best assessment practices

The ideal assessment and feedback practices which are agreed upon by all the members of the English and science departments — including the students — could be shared with the deans and lecturers from the partner university. The knowledge thus distributed would be of mutual benefit. As global educational trends are increasing, greater numbers of international students choose to study in Western universities. These international students may have the same problems as those students in the present study, in trying to adjust to the different assessment practices associated with Western universities. Thus, partner universities may benefit from the information on formative assessments and feedback provided by the local institution.

Since one of the major issues is that lecturers in the local institution are not trained to provide assessment and feedback, it is essential— when the local institution does not have the necessary resources — that the partner university provides these materials in the form of books, online training, courses, and seminars, as illustrated in Figure 22 below.

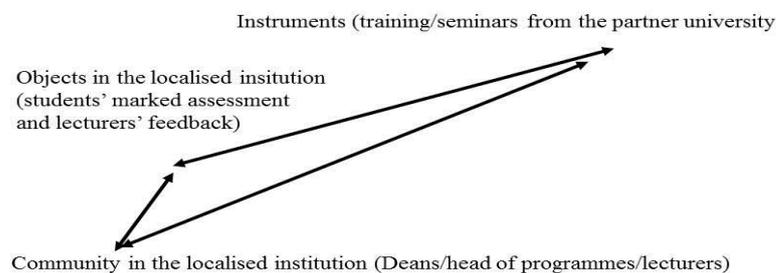


Figure 22 : Resources and training from the partner university to train the local community

The partner university could also take some responsibility for providing professional development in training lecturers to provide effective feedback through online courses and information sharing sessions. The students from the local institution could be assisted in terms of increasing their English language proficiency by offering appropriate academic writing courses and providing scaffolding to apply their lecturers' feedback.

5.5 Summary of the chapter

To conclude, the findings of my study, viewed through the socio-cultural lenses of the Zone of Proximal Development and Cultural Historical Activity Theory, indicated that effective collaboration between two or more institutions of different cultures, as well as collaboration between two different departments within an institution, is possible so long as specific issues are addressed. In my study, the issue of power relationships was the main obstacle to ensuring the effectiveness of assessment and feedback within the local institution. The information about good practices of assessment and feedback was distributed in one direction by authority figures in the hierarchy; that is, the moderators in the partner university delivered directives to the deans in the local institution, and these were passed on to the lecturers and to the students. However, the one-way flow of information hindered the students' learning, and the assessment and

feedback practices within the departments appeared to be ineffective. Another issue was that the low proficiency of the majority of the students meant that the feedback did not fulfil the intended purpose of improving students' learning. Students had difficulty comprehending their lecturers' written feedback in English, while the lecturers had trouble understanding their students' written English. The English students continued to repeat the same errors even though these mistakes had been highlighted, and they therefore felt that their learning needs had not been met. Another problematic area was that the lecturers were not trained to provide assessment and feedback. Effective collaboration could have been achieved if these issues had been identified and addressed via an ongoing, two-way communication channel between the partner university and the local institution. The views of the students and lecturers regarding effective feedback needed to be incorporated in the local institution, and this information needed, in turn, to be made known to the partner universities to ensure that effective feedback and assessment were provided to the students. The partner university also needed to take some responsibility for providing training, assistance and support to students and lecturers in the local institution, in order to improve the overall learning process through formative assessment and feedback. After all, students are the main clients of both institutions, and catering to their needs should be the first priority.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

The thesis is concluded in this chapter. The chapter begins by presenting the overview of the study and the limitations of the study. This is followed by stating three major implications of the study. The chapter concludes by providing some suggestions for further research.

6.1. Overview of the study

This case study investigated a range of issues relating to the provision of feedback by English and science lecturers, and its reception by their students in a context of a Malaysian private university. The purposes of the study were to examine a number of issues. The first was to examine the lecturers' beliefs and their practices of providing formative assessment and specifically written feedback on students' written assignments. The second aim of the study was to examine the factors which might have influenced the lecturers' decisions in their written feedback practices. The third purpose was to examine the extent of the mismatches of students' and their lecturers' beliefs about the value of feedback.

A multi-method data collection approach was employed to collect data for this study. A survey was distributed to recruit participations for the study. Five English and five science lecturers from the local institute took part in the survey and subsequently agreed to participate in the in-depth study. The next step was to gather the ten lecturers' and their students' general beliefs about the value of feedback. The lecturers were interviewed individually while the students were interviewed in groups of varying size. Out of ten lecturers, only eight were involved in the think-aloud session, where the lecturers assessed and provided feedback on their students' assignments. The numbers of assignments marked varied among the lecturers based on availability of time. Out of eight think-aloud sessions, two lecturers completed the think-aloud without my presence and did not perform the think-aloud training. The purpose of conducting the think-aloud session was to observe if the lecturers' self-reported

beliefs in the interviews matched with their practices of providing the written feedback. The sample marked assignments gathered from the lecturers were then presented to their students to obtain their reactions towards their lecturers' feedback and to examine if there were any mismatches in the students' beliefs about feedback in comparison with their lecturers'. These responses were then presented to the lecturers concerned for their reflection.

The data gathered was subjected to a process of grounded analysis. All the data was coded manually through open coding and the development of emerging themes. Based on the data gathered, three important findings were revealed. The first finding suggested that some of the lecturers' pre-existing beliefs diverged from their observed practices of providing the written feedback. The second finding was that the lecturers' and the students' beliefs about the value of written formative feedback revealed a number of mismatches in terms of the purpose of providing the written feedback, the preferred type of written feedback and the preference for positive feedback. The most important finding, however, suggested that the feedback provided may have been ineffective as the majority of students misunderstood the intended meaning of the lecturers. The key findings of this study were compared with findings of previously published studies in Malaysia and elsewhere.

These findings were also analysed and discussed using two socio-cultural theories, namely Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). Using the lens of the ZPD, it was proposed that the major reason for the mismatches of beliefs between the lecturers and the students about the value of feedback was that the students' views were not incorporated in their provision of feedback. Thus, the process of scaffolding within the ZPD framework through the provision of written feedback was ineffective. Four major socio-cultural factors: the lack of training among the lecturers, the students' poor English language proficiency, the students' lack of training in academic writing, and the imposed policy of using English as a medium of instruction seemed to be major causes which may have impeded students' learning. These four socio-cultural factors also were the major influences that caused the lecturers to diverge from their actual beliefs during the think-aloud sessions.

Engeström's (1987) Second Generation of Cultural Historical Activity Theory provided a framework to explain the possible causes of divergences of beliefs and practices which occurred within the individual department (i.e. English and science). The salient factors that caused the divergences were the imbalanced power of the division of labour and the lack of information flow from the management to the lecturers regarding the best practices of providing assessment and feedback. Through Engeström's (1987) model, the problems faced by the lecturers when providing feedback could be solved through informal discussions among the lecturers. Another solution was that the individual department and/or the local institute could provide training on feedback and assessment for the lecturers. The issues of the students' English language proficiency and their inability to apply feedback could be overcome through trainings provided by the local institution.

Engeström's (2001) Third Generation of Cultural Historical Activity Theory explained the possible factors of the divergences of the lecturers' beliefs and practices in the two departments within an institution. The lecturers in the English and the science department seemed to work in isolation despite efforts to work collaboratively. The English and the science lecturers, and their students' beliefs about good assessment and feedback were not made known to the management of the local institution. In addition, the problems faced by the lecturers, especially the students' poor language proficiency and the students' inability to correct their errors, seemed to encourage the lecturers to diverge from their beliefs by providing more ineffective feedback. It is suggested that the lecturers are made aware of the limitations of their feedback provision and more collaboration is developed between the English and the science lecturers through team-teaching. Students' English language competence could be improved through a series of training sessions to assist them prior or after their enrolment.

Barnard's (2010) refinement of Engeström's (2001) model seemed to indicate that the partner universities' over dominance in terms of the rules and regulations over the local institution encouraged the lecturers to diverge from their beliefs and feedback practices when the two different institutions of

different cultures collaborated in the process of providing assessment and written feedback. As a result of the over-dominating rules and regulations imposed by the partner university, the students' understanding of feedback is hindered and this hampered their learning process. The students were also subjected to the partner university's language requirement policy to use English as a medium of instruction, which included writing all assignments in English. In addition, it was also suggested that both the local institution and the partner university could collaborate to overcome issues in providing assessment and feedback.

A number of limitations could be identified in this study. The first limitation was that the interpretations of the findings were based on my views and I am a novice researcher. However, all the data were systematically triangulated and the majority of the summaries of the interviews, stimulated recall sessions and the think-aloud transcripts were validated by the individual lecturers. Moreover, I was guided by my supervisors. The second limitation was with regards my inability to get students to validate their summaries of the interviews due to constraint of time and the fact that some did not respond to my emails although reminders were sent. The third limitation was that during the think-aloud session, due to my presence as the researcher, the lecturers could have addressed their think-aloud comments to me rather than to their students. At times, some of the lecturers were explaining the background of the assignments. The final limitation was that there was a lack of standardisation in the manner of collecting the data; for example, one lecturer had sixteen students while another lecturer had one student participating in the interview. Another example was the refusal of two lecturers to participate in the think-aloud sessions. The reason for the lack of standardisation was that I had to be very flexible and to be obliged to the lecturers' availability and their degree of willingness to participate in the data collection due to ethical concerns. The fourth limitation concerns time constraint; I was unable to follow-up with the lecturers to examine if their reflections were put in practice in the subsequent feedback and to examine if the students were able to apply their lecturers' feedback in practice.

6.2 Implications of the study

This study suggests three significant implications: practical, methodological, and theoretical. The practical implications are the need for professional development for lecturers, providing extra scaffolding to students in terms of increasing their English language proficiency and applying their lecturers' feedback in their subsequent assignments. The methodological implications relate to the multi-method data collection methods and think-aloud sessions. The theoretical implications are a contribution to teacher cognition theories especially in relation to the Zone of Proximal Development and Cultural Historical Activity Theory.

6.2.1 Practical implications to train lecturers

As indicated in the findings of this study, the majority of the English and science lecturers were not trained to be teachers and they did not have specific training in the area of feedback and assessment. These lecturers' pedagogical knowledge on assessment and feedback were gained through their working experience and the number of years working in the local institution.

As discussed in Section 5.2, more open communications needs to be made between the students and their lecturers regarding the preferred type of feedback in order to meet students' learning needs. These communications also need to be made known to the partner university in order to provide the training required for both the students and the lecturers if the localised institution does not have enough resources to do so. A number of methods of providing feedback in which the lecturers could be trained were presented in chapter five. Lee (2014) suggested implementing formative, on-going feedback on multiple drafts to provide students opportunities in improving their writing skills as currently the practices of many teachers are providing one-off writing assignments. Students could then apply their teachers' feedback in their drafts. Teachers were also encouraged to refrain from providing grades; instead, the focus ought to be on feedback to assist students in their learning.

One method which was not discussed is using peer feedback among students. Perhaps the lecturers could facilitate peer feedback among students (Nicol, Thomson, & Breslin, 2013; Poulos & Mahony 2008) and consequently equip and encourage them to self-edit their work (Brown, 2007; Chandler, 2004; Ferris, 1995a, b, c; Ferris, 1999; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hyland, 2000). The feedback provided by the lecturer alone does not guarantee students' learning as students also need to be responsible for their own learning (Brookhart, 2012). Recent research has suggested changing the method of providing feedback to become more student-centred, and feedback should be provided based on the constructivist perspective (Lea, et. al, 2003; Murphy 2000; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, 2007; Scott 2005; Yorke, 2003). In addition, one of the social constructivist approaches to feedback included using "assessment dialogues" suggested by Carless (2006), where students are given opportunities to interact and incorporate their lecturers' feedback through the resubmission of assignments. A recent study suggests that perhaps the lecturers could utilise 'iterative feedback' (Barker & Pinard, 2014), where students are trained to apply their lecturers' feedback in subsequent assignments, an approach which is discussed in detail in Section 6.2.2.

Another important point is that lecturers need to be aware that each type of feedback functions differently in different settings of learning. For example, feedback which assists lower-level skills and content knowledge cannot be applied in the context of teaching higher-order skills (Dempster, 1991, 1992). Another example is that immediate feedback works effectively in procedural learning while delayed feedback works effectively in achieving higher – order outcomes (Shute, 2008). It is strongly recommended that written feedback is followed up with oral feedback (Ivanic et al., 2000).

In terms of providing effective written feedback, Stern and Solomon (2006) suggest three methods. The first involves emphasizing positive feedback rather than focussing only on the students' errors (Daiker, 1989; Daiker, Fuller, Morenberg & Ziegler, 1986; Konold, Miller & Konold, 2004). The second technique suggested by Stern and Solomon (2006) involves avoiding marking all errors but selecting certain essential issues to be addressed when providing feedback (also noted by Haswell, 1983; Huot, 2002; Lee, 2003). The last

technique is reducing the number of written assignment to focus on multiple drafts to explain some strategies to help students identify and amend errors (Hyland, 2003a; Knold et al., 2004; Straub, 2002). Another suggestion relates to the clarity of the feedback (Brookhart, 2012) and standardising the codes used for highlighting errors so that the students are not confused by their meanings.

6.2.2 Practical implications to provide effective scaffolding for students

At the research site, although the partner universities imposed a small number of compulsory English courses where students were trained to do Academic Writing and English for Specific Purposes courses through the English department, the students were still unable to reach the writing standards required within a short period of time. A number of suggestions were provided in chapter five on the ways the students could be assisted through extra scaffolding to assist them in improving their English proficiency.

Perhaps a separate student learning centre could be established to assist students in their learning. Many lecturers assumed that students were able to perform the assignments and students were left on their own to struggle with their assignments. Catt and Gregory (2006) suggested that students could be assisted to write according to the requirement of the assignments to develop some writing strategies based on the genre, criteria, their lecturers' feedback and expectations. (This was also suggested by Clark, 2012 and Lee, 2014). In order to overcome the problem of not having proper feedback from the expertise in the content area, peer feedback among students could be cultivated, which is currently more favoured compared to teacher feedback (Poulos & Mahony 2008; Nicol et al., 2013). The benefits of implementing peer feedback included empowering students to have ownership of their own work and being accepted in the community of practice in the particular discipline (Ivanic et al., 2000). Another suggestion was that these writing workshops should encourage students to write without being assessed, for example, engage in the practice of journal writing (Catt & Gregory, 2006).

The students could be trained to apply their lecturers' feedback into their subsequent assignments through "iterative feedback" (Barker & Pinard, 2014). This feedback is a process where students need to react first and subsequently reflect on their responses to their lecturers' feedback. Barker and Pinard (2014) suggested two approaches in which the students could co-construct "ideal" feedback with their lecturers. The first stage of this approach would be eliciting students' perceptions about best feedback practices through students' written or verbal responses to their lecturers' feedback. The second stage of this approach is the application of the students' perceptions of "good feedback practice" and eliciting again their responses towards their lecturers' feedback. The students are also encouraged to apply their lecturers' feedback in other similar assessments or ungraded assignments. Lee (2014) suggested that the teachers could conduct a workshop to train students to reflect on their lecturers' feedback and to provide them with strategies to improve their writing

6.2.3 Changing institutional policies

One of the major reasons for the ineffective feedback that emerged from my findings was the lack of communication between the partner university and the local institutions. Perhaps more open dialogues could occur between the institution, the partner university, the teachers and the students as suggested by Lee (2014) where focus groups could be conducted – for example, via satellite, skype, viber, twitter, facebook page or other network sites - to share ideas on overcoming limitations in the areas of assessment and feedback.) She also suggested that the institutional policies would need to be changed to allow such improvements to take place.

Another important issue which needs to be resolved is regarding students' poor English language proficiency. Perhaps both the partner university and the localised institution need to design a diagnostic language test, which takes into account the requirements of both universities regarding students' English language proficiency. Another essential aspect to consider when designing such a diagnostic test is the different writing requirements of the different disciplines. A new policy needs to be enforced where all newly enrolled students take this language test to determine if the students will go through

additional English courses to assist them in building their language proficiency before entering into the mainstream. Perhaps new language courses could be designed which focus on developing relevant writing and literacy skills for these students.

6.2.4 Methodological Implications

This case study itself seeks to contribute in terms of several methodological implications. This case study sought to “illuminate” (Stake, 2005) the activity within the university, and show the convergences and divergences of beliefs and practice of various science and English lecturers providing feedback across boundaries within the university. Secondly, providing feedback to lecturers and students may suggest opportunities within the specific context “to improve conditions or practice” (Hood, 2009, p. 73), especially in the areas of training lecturers to provide feedback and training students to understand the feedback provided. Thirdly, “the results may be extended to other cases where the particulars are similar” (Hood, 2009, p. 73), so that readers of the findings of this study can “relate” these (Bassey, 1981) to their own situations. By “relatable” it meant that the clarity and explicitness of the description should enable a reader to relate a case study to his or her own situation, and thereby trust the judgement of the researcher. If it is agreed that this case study has been carried out systematically and critically, if it has aimed at the improvement of education, if its findings are relatable, and if by subsequent publication of the findings the study can extend the boundaries of existing knowledge, then it may be claimed that it has been a valid form of educational research (Bassey, 1981, p. 86).

Another possible contribution is the use of think-aloud method which has enabled me to analyse the relationship between the cognitive processes and the behaviours of a person. The majority of the empirical studies reviewed in the areas of assessment and feedback in teacher cognition (both in the global and in the Malaysian contexts) employed data collection methods which were based on self-report studies (Ferris, 2014; Mukundan & Ahour, 2009; Nordin et al., 2010; Tang & Harrion, 2011). The lecturers’ beliefs were elicited mainly through surveys and interviews. The majority of the studies conducted to elicit

students' responses towards their lecturers' feedback also used questionnaires and interviews (Higgins et al., 2002; Hounsell et al., 2008; Maggs, 2014; Nurtjahja & Lahur, 2002; Orsmond & Merry, 2011, Orsmond, Merry, & Reiling, 2002; Orsmond et al., 2005; Poulos & Mahony, 2008; Price et al., 2010; Shamshad & Faizah, 2009; Tom et al., 2013; Weaver, 2006; Zacharias, 2007). However, the think-aloud method could overcome this problem as an observer is able to elicit a person's thought processes while engaging in a task and verbalising thoughts concurrently.

The think-aloud method also has a number of limitations which were identified and listed in Sections 3.5.4 and 6.1. Very few studies conducted in the area of teacher cognition, especially in assessment and feedback, have incorporated the think-aloud methods in their data collection. For example, in the Lebanese context, Diab's (2005b) study employed think-aloud procedures to elicit the lecturer's feedback practices, while her two students were also interviewed to elicit their beliefs about receiving feedback. In the Malaysian context, Kumar et al. (2009) studied a Chinese postgraduate student's think-aloud when responding to his lecturer's feedback. However, the scope of the study sought to examine if the student's cultural background, being from a "Confucian Cultural Heritage" (p. 26), influenced his cognitive process of evaluating the lecturers. In another example, Li (2012) in the New Zealand context, conducted her think-aloud method without being present during the data collection and the tutors did not go through training for the think-aloud procedures. The majority of the lecturers in my study undertook training to become familiar with the think-aloud procedures. In addition, the majority of the lecturers did the think-aloud in my presence, which enabled me to probe them to verbalise their thoughts if they were silently thinking.

Another advantage of multi data collection methods is that it enables a researcher to obtain more information (Burns & Barnard, 2012) compared to surveys. Survey limits the researcher from verifying the data but multi data collection methods enable data to be verified and triangulated (Burns & Barnard, 2012).

Another potential contribution to methodology was the approach to investigating the convergences and divergences between lecturers' and students' perceptions of the value of written feedback through revealing to the former what their students felt about their feedback. The lecturers were presented with a summary of the students' reactions to the individual feedback provided. The lecturers were then asked to reflect and comment if they would retain or change their feedback practices. Perhaps these data collection methods to elicit students' responses to their lecturers' feedback and the lecturers' reflections on their students' reaction could be duplicated in other contexts.

6.2.5 Theoretical implications

The findings of this present study raised a number of theoretical implications especially in the area of Zone of Proximal Development and Cultural Historical Activity Theory. These socio-cultural theories provide frameworks to assist the understanding of how pedagogical knowledge (in this context the provision of written feedback) could be further improved both theoretically and practical approaches. One of the implications that arose from the Zone of Proximal Development analysis was that the lecturers in this study did not fully apply Van Lier's (1996) six principles of successful scaffolding in the Zone of Proximal Development and as a result hampered students' learning. The findings from my study suggested the students did not receive scaffolding. However, the studies by Plonsky and Mills (2006) and Rassaei (2014) indicated that students who received scaffolding seemed to be successful in correcting their own errors. For example, the Spanish lecturer in Plonsky and Mills' (2006) study trained his students to apply his feedback in the subsequent assignments and the finding suggested that the students improved in terms of accuracy and students appeared to be more willing to learn. Rassaei's (2014) study implied that students who received scaffolding seemed to be able to correct their own errors as well as retaining the information better compared to those students who did not receive scaffolding. However, these studies did not attempt to elicit students' views of effective feedback and these studies were not done in the context of English as a second language and sciences. Another important theoretical aspect of the Zone of Proximal Development was that the students' views had never been considered in the process of assessment and feedback and my findings seemed to converge with

other studies; for instance, Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), Diab (2005b), Long (2014), Norouzian and Farahani (2012), Nurtjahja and Lahur (2002) and Perera et al. (2008). However, these studies did not initiate a two way communication between the students and lecturers, which was conducted in this present study.

From the Cultural Historical Activity Theory framework, it seemed to indicate that four contextual factors: the partner university's policies, the local institution policy, the students' poor English proficiency and the students' expectations of the lecturers to correct their errors seemed to hinder effective feedback. These factors mentioned above also regulated the lecturers to diverge from their pre-existing beliefs and practices of providing written feedback. My findings seemed to converge with the studies conducted by Bailey and Gardner (2010), Li (2012), and Orrell (2006), where the institutional policies and practices hindered the actual learning process of the students. The differences in these studies were that students' poor English proficiency and the students' expectations of correcting errors were not influencing factors. Another form of divergence of Bailey and Gardner's (2010), Li's (2012) and Orrell's (2006) findings were that these studies were conducted within one activity system or an institution. However, my study was conducted on the process of collaboration between two different institutions with different cultures in the area of assessment and feedback. My study also diverged from that of Cross (2010) in terms of the different angle of study and framework used. The major contribution of Cross (2010) was to develop a framework which analysed the impact of education policy as one of the contextual factors which formed the language teachers' cognition. However, my study considered the process of two-way communication to ensure the teamwork between two or more institutions works using the different models of the activity theory developed by Engeström's model (1987, 2001) and the adapted model of Barnard (2010). Comparing my findings with the recent study by Lee (2014) on the effects of written feedback, both studies acknowledged a number of limitations of the conventional one way feedback from the lecturers to the students from the socio-cultural perspective. In both cases, the written feedback seemed to be ineffective and the students misunderstood the intended meaning of the lecturers' feedback.

To summarise, this study contributes in the areas of practical, methodological and theoretical issues on the provision of written feedback. In terms of the theoretical issues, the socio-cultural frameworks such as ZPD and CHAT illuminate the complexity of interactions within the provision of feedback and the underlying contextual factors that facilitate or hinder the students' learning process. It is essential to encourage an on-going two-way communication between the two institutions (the partner university and the local institution) among the various community members (which includes the students in the localised institution) to ensure effective collaboration in the areas of assessment and feedback. Another form of contribution is through the methodology aspects of eliciting students' responses towards their lecturers' feedback and their lecturers' reflections on the best approach for their provision of feedback. Another methodological contribution is adapting the existing think-aloud approach to suit my context in order to elicit the lecturers' cognitive processes while providing feedback to students in their written assignments. A number of practical suggestions were also provided on the effective methods of providing written feedback, training the lecturers to provide feedback and guiding students to apply the feedback into their subsequent written assignments.

6.3 Suggestions for further study

This present study suggests the main cause that contributes to ineffective written feedback is due to power-relationship issues. When a more dominant institution imposed rules and regulations which do not fit the context of the imposed institution, the act of collaboration of providing written feedback in between the two institutions seemed ineffective. Another form of dominance is the power relationship that exists between the students and the lecturers. One of the effects of the dominance of the lecturers over the students is that the students' views of effective written feedback have never been taken into consideration in the actual practices of assessment and feedback. The present study however, tries to bridge the gap of ineffective feedback by introducing a two-way communication through the presentations of the students' reactions towards their lecturers' actual feedback for the lecturers to reflect on and decide how they would like to change their feedback practices.

Perhaps future research could be done to examine the outcome of the written feedback when lecturers put into practice the students' suggestions of effective feedback. Another research area could be analysing the students' ability to apply their lecturers' feedback in the subsequent assessments after the scaffolding is provided in the form of training students to understand the functions of feedback. Another area of research would be to examine the process of collaboration in providing effective feedback through the dissemination of pedagogy knowledge through team-teaching between the two departments (i.e. English and science) within the same institution. Another area of research could include the effects of the lecturers' trainings in providing feedback and improving students' English language proficiency and if these trainings assist students to apply the feedback in their subsequent assessments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Lecturers' biographical data

Lecturer	Age group	G	Ethnicity	Teaching experience	Years of service	Qualifications	Programmes taught
E1	30-39	F	Malay	More than 10 years	1-3 years	Masters in Computer Assisted Language Learning	EAP for Dip in IT students, Business students
E2	40-49	F	Chinese	More than 10 years	1-3 years	Masters in English Language Studies	ESP for Dip and undergraduate Business students, Medical Health science students
E3	30-39	F	Chinese	More than 10 years	More than 10 years	Masters in English Language Studies	EAP and ESP for UK Engineering Transfer Degree Programme Students
E4	30-39	F	Indian	6-10 years	6-10 years	Masters in Linguistics (English)	ESP for UK Business students
E5	40-49	F	Chinese	More than 10	More than 10 years	Masters in English	ESP for UK Business

				years		Language Studies	students
S1	50-59	M	Chinese	More than 10 years	More than 10 years	Masters in Construction Management	Civil Engineering and quantitative surveying (Diploma students)
S2	30-39	M	Chinese	6-10 years	6-10 years	Masters in Science in Personal Mobile and Satellite Communication	Electrical and Electronic (UK transfer degree programme)
S3	30-39	M	Chinese	4-5 years	1-3 years	PhD in Mechanical Engineering	Mechanical Engineering Programmes (UK Transfer Degree Programme)
S4	30-39	M	Chinese	1-3 years	1-3 years	PhD in Molecular Biology and Genetic Engineering	Biotechnology Degree with Adelaide University and the local programme
S5	40-49	F	Indian	More than 10 years	More than 10 years	PhD in Genetics	Biotechnology Degree with Adelaide University and the local programme

Appendix B: Participants involving lecturers

Participants	Interview	Think aloud sessions – Researcher present?	Stimulated recall session	Reflection sessions
E1	Yes	3 TA - Yes	Yes	Via email
E2	Yes	No (not comfortable with the idea)	No	No
E3	Yes	3 TA - Yes	Yes	Via email
E4	Yes	3 TA - Yes	Yes	No- Didn't respond to the email even though reminders were sent
E50	Yes	1 TA No	Yes	Via email
S1	Yes	2 TA No	Yes	Face to face
S20	Yes	No (taught courses with 100% summative assessment)	No	No
S3	Yes	2 TA (using track changes) - Yes Yes	Yes	Face to face
S4	Yes	6TA Yes	Yes	Face to face
S5	Yes	3 TA - Yes	Yes	Face to face

Appendix C: Participants involving students

Lecturers	Programme	Student meeting 1	Student meeting 2
English (E1)	Information technology diploma	8 (2 groups)	6
English (E2)	Business and administration diploma	3	Did not participate
English (E3)	Engineering undergraduates	2	2
English (E4)	Business undergraduates	20 (4groups)	20 (4 groups)
English (E5)	Business undergraduates	4	1
Engineering (S1)	Quantity Surveying diploma	26	17
Engineering (S2)	Electrical & Electronic Engineering undergraduates	26	Did not participate
Engineering (S3)	Mechanical Engineering undergraduates	11	16
Biotech (S4)	Biotechnology undergraduates	6	25
Biotech (S5)	Biotechnology undergraduates	15(4groups)	18 (3 groups)

Appendix D: Ethical Approval from the University of Waikato to conduct the research

FASS HUMAN RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEE
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Phone +64 7 856 2889
www.waikato.ac.nz



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Judy Ng Miang Koon ←
Roger Barnard
James McLellan

15 October 2009

Dear Judy

Application for Ethical Approval: **Teachers' and Students' Beliefs about the Value of Feedback on Academic Writing: A Case Study in a Malaysian University**

Thank you for submitting revisions to your Application for Ethical Approval in response to my letter of 13 October. Your revisions were received by email on 14 October and in hard copy this morning.

Your revisions and comments satisfy the points raised by the Committee.

This letter is to convey formal ethical approval for the first phase of your Project.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Paterson'.

John Paterson
Chair
FASS Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix E: Letter to the Gatekeepers to seek approval to conduct survey to recruit participants at the site for the in-depth study

Dr. Lee Fah Onn,
Professor President,
President's Office,
INTI University College (INTI – UC)
Persiaran Perdana BBN,
Putra Nilai, 71800 Nilai,
N. Sembilan, Malaysia

8 September 2009

Dear Dr. Lee,

Greetings to you and all the colleagues in INTI University College from Hamilton, New Zealand. It has been 2 months and 2 weeks since I have left INTI-UC to further my studies. Thank you for granting me the study leave so that I am able to further my studies, which I am now enrolled in the PhD programme in the Department of General and Applied Linguistics at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

The purposes of this letter are to outline the research project I have just started through the University of Waikato towards a PhD and I would like to ask for your consent to conduct my initial research at INTI-UC, mainly with the English teachers/lecturers from English Language Centre (ELC), Centre of Pre-University Studies (COPS) and Faculty of Liberal Arts (FOLA) through the distribution of a survey. Attached with this letter is the survey for your reference. I would also like to request help from Dr. Chan Chang Tik and Mr. Donny Yeo from CITS to help me to post the survey on INTI online for the convenience of the respondents to respond to the survey. If in the event the survey is not attempted online, I would like to request for consent to distribute the survey by paper instead. One of my colleagues from INTI-UC has agreed to assist me in collecting and posting the result of the survey to me in New Zealand if the consent to conduct the initial research in INTI-UC is approved.

The purpose of the survey is to elicit teachers' or lecturers' general attitudes towards giving feedback on their students' written work; and to identify potential volunteers who, after completing the questionnaire, would be willing to take part in later stages of the project, which will take place mainly next year. In addition, I would also like to request if the dean of FOLA, Dr. Ding Eng Na, the director of COPS, Mr. Christopher Chow and the director of ELC, Mr. Wee Kia Kee, would allow me to have access to the email addresses of their English teaching staff so that I will be able to contact the volunteers to make further arrangements, discussions and the consent letter could be distributed to the volunteers in the future for the in-depth study.

Basically, my study seeks to explore the teachers' and students' beliefs about the value of giving feedback in academic writing and the sources of the teachers' beliefs. Moreover, the teachers' practises in providing feedback and to what extent do students believe that teachers' feedback improves their writing are also examined. If there are any divergences between teachers and students beliefs and practices, this study would like to suggest some methods to reconcile the differences. I am hoping that my research will make a contribution to INTI-UC and the research community in INTI.

The in-depth research will involve a semi-structured interview, during which I would ask teachers/lecturers to respond (as fully as they feel able) to several focal points or questions relating to their present attitudes and practices about feedback given on

students' assignments. The interview will last between thirty to an hour, and will be audio-taped and later on complemented by written notes. In addition, the teachers/lecturers need to select their students to be involved in the research.

Firstly, the selected students will be given a questionnaire to obtain their general attitude towards receiving feedback from their teachers. Next, students will be placed in groups to be interviewed. Students' essay with teachers' feedback will be returned to students and at the same time students' views on their teachers' feedback will be elicited to examine if they think that the feedback given by teachers are able to assist them to be better writers and which type of feedback they think is useful for them.

Summaries of all interviews will be sent back to the teachers and students for respondent validation and to ensure that I have made a fair summary of what transpired. As a result of this process, this study seeks to explore and expand the theory of teacher cognition by looking teachers' and learners' views of feedback in writing. Moreover, it is hoped that the way cognition is distributed among the various research participants will facilitate collegial professional development within the institution.

This research is being self-funded and may take about two teaching terms to complete. This project has been approved by the Human Ethics Research Committee of the University of Waikato, and any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the Secretary of the Committee (fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz). Of course, if you have further enquires about the project, please contact either of my supervisors (see contact details below).

I would be grateful to hear your thoughts about this research proposal and to answer any further queries you may have. I hope you will be able to allow me to carry out my research at INTI-UC and to request the consent of teachers and students who I should like to participate in the study.

Yours sincerely,
Judy Ng Miang Koon
Department of General & Applied Linguistics
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
The University of Waikato,
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand
Emails: jmkn1@students.waikato.ac.nz or jodieng@yahoo.com

CC: Dr. Lim Ho Peng,
President of Academic Affairs,
Academic Affairs Office ,
INTI University College (INTI – UC)
Persiaran Perdana BBN,
Putra Nilai, 71800 Nilai,
N. Sembilan, Malaysia

Supervisors

Dr. Roger Barnard
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Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240,
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Dr. James McLellan
Associate Supervisor
Department of General & Applied
Linguistics
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
The University of Waikato,
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240,
New Zealand
Phone: +64 7 838 4466 ext. 7955
Email: mclellan@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix F: Email of Approval from research site and consent forms signed to conduct survey to recruit participants at the site for the in-depth study

From: "Lee Fah Onn, Prof. Dr." <leefo@intimal.edu.my>
To: Judy Ng <jodieng@yahoo.com>
Cc: "Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid, Prof. Dato' Dr." <iabajunid@intimal.edu.my>; "Lim Ho Peng, Prof. Dr." <lhpeng@intimal.edu.my>; "Saw Sor Heoh, Prof. Dr." <saw_sorheoh@intimal.edu.my>; "Lau Chee Kwong, Assoc. Prof. Dr." <lckwong@intimal.edu.my>; Ding Eng Na <ding_engna@intimal.edu.my>; Wee Kia Kee <wee_kiakee@intimal.edu.my>; Azhani Maskan <azhani@intimal.edu.my>; Patricia Ong Tiang Chwee <ongtc@intimal.edu.my>; Boh Boon Chiang <bcboh@intimal.edu.my>
Sent: Thu, October 22, 2009 10:44:32 AM
Subject: RE: Request permission to carry out PhD research in INTI-UC
Dear Judy,

Glad to know that you have reached this stage of your research. Yes, INTI UC is happy to welcome you to carry out your research amongst our staff. I will forward your request to them and I will urge them to give you their best cooperation. It will be nice if you can give a short talk on your research when you are back in Nilai to collect data.

Regards,

Dr. Lee

From: Judy Ng [mailto:jodieng@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2009 6:41 AM
To: Lee Fah Onn, Prof. Dr.
Cc: Sharon Wong Lee Shyan
Subject: Request permission to carry out PhD research in INTI-UC

Dear Dr. Lee,

Greetings to you from Hamilton, New Zealand. It has been just over four months since I left INTI-UC to further my studies. Thank you for granting me the study leave: I am now enrolled in the PhD programme in the Department of General and Applied Linguistics at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

I would like to ask for your consent to conduct my PhD research at INTI-UC, mainly with the English teachers/lecturers from English Language Centre (ELC), Centre of Pre-University Studies (COPS) and Faculty of Liberal Arts (FOLA).

Attached with this email are the letter explaining the research in detail, and a copy of the draft questionnaire for your reference. A hard copy of this letter will be sent by airmail.

I do hope to hear from you as soon as possible so that I would know if I am able to proceed with the research.

Thank you.

Regards
Judy Ng Miang Koon
Department of General & Applied Linguistics
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
The University of Waikato,
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand
Email: jodieng@yahoo.com

Appendix G: Consent forms signed to conduct survey to recruit participants

Informed consent form

I, Dr. Lee Fah Onn am willing to grant my permission to Ms. Judy Ng Miang Koon to carry out her research project in INTI-UC for research purposes, as described in the above letter. By signing this form, I certify that Ms. Judy Ng Miang Koon's study has been satisfactorily explained to me. I understand that the rights to privacy and confidentiality of participants are appropriately safeguarded, and that any participant may withdraw from participation at any time, and do not need to give any reason for so doing.

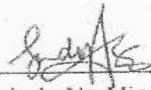
I understand that the research will adhere strictly to the principles and procedures of the University of Waikato human research ethics committee ethics regulations (2008)

I have been given and have read an explanation of this doctoral study.

Signed: 

Date: 30 October 2009

Dr. Lee Fah Onn,
Professor President,
President's Office,
INTI University College (INTI – UC)
Persiaran Perdana BBN,
Putra Nilai, 71800 Nilai,
N. Sembilan, Malaysia

Signed: 

Judy Ng Miang Koon
Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
The University of Waikato,
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240,
New Zealand

Prof Dr Lee Fah Onn
President
INTI University College

Appendix H: Letter to the Gatekeepers to seek approval to conduct in-depth research at the research site



Dr. Lee Fah Oon,
Professor President,
President's Office,
INTI University College (INTI – UC)
Persiaran Perdana BBN,
Putra Nilai, 71800 Nilai,
N. Sembilan, Malaysia

2 March 2010

Dear Dr. Lee,

Permission sought for conducting in-depth research in INTI-UC

Thank you for granting me the permission to conduct my preliminary study in INTI-UC.

The purpose of this letter is to seek your permission to conduct the in-depth study in INTI-UC from March 2010 to August 2010. My target respondents will be from all the faculty and schools in INTI-UC to examine teachers' and students' beliefs and practices about the value of giving feedback in academic writing.

Below is the tentative plan for collecting the data, nevertheless, the time frame will change according to the participants' availability and time:

March 2010:	I will seek the help of the teachers to get volunteered student to complete an anonymous survey to obtain students' general attitude towards teachers' feedback in their written assignments. I will interview teachers individually (approximately 30-45 minutes) to explore their beliefs in greater depth.
April 2010:	I will interview students individually (approximately 30-45 minutes) to explore their beliefs about what they expect from their teachers' feedback
May 2010:	to learn how these teachers actually give feedback on their students' assignments, I will discuss their practice in specific cases
June 2010:	to learn how students respond to feedback, I will meet with them
July 2010:	to share my understanding of the findings, I will facilitate focus groups of 3-4 teachers (approximately 45 minutes)

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have further enquires about the project, please feel free to contact me (jodieng@yahoo.com), either of my supervisors, or the Secretary of the Human Research Ethics Committee, whose contact details are given below.

I would be grateful to hear your thoughts about this in-depth research and to answer any further queries you may have. I hope you will be able to allow me to carry out my research at INTI-UC.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Judy Ng Miang Koon

Appendix I: consent forms signed to conduct survey to recruit participants at the site for the in-depth study

Informed Consent Form

I, Dr. LEE FAH ONN am willing to grant my permission to Judy Ng Miang Koon to carry out her in-depth research project in INTI-UC for research purposes, as described in the above letter. By signing this form, I certify that Judy Ng Miang Koon's study has been satisfactorily explained to me. I understand that the rights to privacy and confidentiality of participants are appropriately safeguarded, and that any participant may withdraw from participation at any time, and do not need to give any reasons for doing so.

I understand that the research will adhere strictly to the principles and procedures of the University of Waikato human research ethics committee ethics regulations (2008)

I have been given and have read an explanation of this doctoral study.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 3-3-10

Dr. Lee Fah Onn,
Professor President,
President's Office,
INTI University College (INTI – UC)
Persiaran Perdana BBN,
Putra Nilai, 71800 Nilai,
N. Sembilan, Malaysia

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 3-3-10

Judy Ng Miang Koon
Researcher
Department of General & Applied Linguistics
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
The University of Waikato,
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand

Appendix J: Letter of informed consent to lecturers and explaining the process of the in-depth study and consent form

Department of General & Applied Linguistics
Faculty of Arts & Social Science
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Telephone: 00-64-7-838 4466 ext. 6746 (Office)
Telephone: 00-64-7-8562396 (Home)
Telephone: 00-64-211797830 (Mobile)
Facsimile: 00 64-7-8384788
Office Room No: K3. 11
Email: jodieng@yahoo.com



The
University
of Waikato
Te Whare Wānanga
o Waikato

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the follow-up sessions. As you know, I am interested in identifying and exploring teachers' beliefs and practices about feedback given on students' written assignments and students' beliefs about receiving teachers' feedback.

Following the survey and our recent contact, I shall now like you to take part in a series of follow-up sessions.

First, I shall invite you to take part in a semi-structured interview for about 30-45 minutes, during which I would ask you to respond (as fully as you feel able) to questions relating to your attitudes and practices about feedback given to students' assignments. With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped, and afterwards I shall send you a summary of the interview.

Next, I would like to seek permission to enter your classes to recruit volunteer students to participate in the research by completing an anonymous questionnaire and following this up with individual interview or group individual (depending on the number of students) and a group meeting.

Second, I should like to be present when you are drafting written feedback on your students' assignments. I shall invite you to "think aloud", which means you will talk through your actual activity while giving feedback, with or without some limited verbal cues provided by me.

Third, I shall invite you to meet with me after you have given feedback on your students' assignments, during which time I shall ask you some questions contingent on the responses you have made during the previous sessions. Again, this audio-recorded meeting will last about 30-45 minutes and I shall send you a summary.

After all the above data has been collected, you will be invited to meet with other teachers to discuss general and specific issues arising from the research project. The purpose is to share your experiences and co-construct greater understanding and awareness of providing feedback in students' written assignments.

Finally, I would like to request to be able to access to the students' written work with your feedback to be photocopied for the research. The assignments seen by me for the research will be completely anonymous: all information relating to students' identity (name, ID number, etc.) will be removed from the assignment before I see it, so that I will not know whose assignment it is. Of course, the students will be informed of this and consent from the students will be obtained. However, if both students and you do not want any of your work to be photocopied and to be retained by me, I will respect the rights of all the participants.

I should like to assure you that the research will adhere strictly to the University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations (2008). Your right to anonymity and privacy will be respected during and after the research process. No real names will be used in the research report, and efforts will be made to keep participants, Departments and the University unidentifiable. All the data gathered will be kept confidential. The anonymized interview data will only be seen by myself and my supervisors, and care will be taken to ensure that no individual can be identified from any resulting report or publication. Any information gathered will only be used for the academic purposes of this research thesis or any resulting journal or conference presentations, unless your permission is obtained for other uses. All information will be coded and the information gathered will have no negative impact on your current work at INTI-UC. Please note that you may withdraw your participation

from the project up to two weeks after you have provided any information, with no need to give any reason for so doing.

Your participation will be greatly appreciated. If you are willing to take part in these interviews, please complete the consent form below. It will be useful for you to keep a copy of this letter and the form for your personal records.

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have further enquires about the project, please feel free to contact me (jodieng@yahoo.com), either of my supervisors, or the Secretary of the Human Research Ethics Committee, whose contact details are given below

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Judy Ng Miang Koon
Department of General & Applied Linguistics
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
The University of Waikato,
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand
Email: jodieng@yahoo.com

Supervisors

Dr. Roger Barnard and Dr. James McLellan
Department of General & Applied Linguistics
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105 Hamilton 3240
New Zealand
Email: rbarnard@waikato.ac.nz
Phone: +64 7 838 4466 ext. 6691
Email: mclellan@waikato.ac.nz
Phone: +64 7 838 4466 ext. 7955

Human Research Ethics Committee

The Secretary,
Human Research Ethics Committee,
University of Waikato,
Private Bag 3105,
Hamilton 3240, New Zealand.
Email: fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

[A completed copy of this form should be retained by both the researcher and the participant]

I..... consent to participate in Judy Ng Miang Koon's research project, as described in the above letter. By signing this form, I certify that Judy Ng Miang Koon's study has been satisfactorily explained to me. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered.

Please complete the following checklist. Tick [✓] the appropriate box for each point.

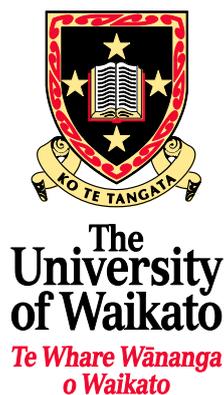
Statements	AGREE	DISAGREE
I agree to take part in a semi-structured interview with Judy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that this interview may be audio-recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to allow Judy to observe me while I write feedback on selected students' assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to have a follow up session with Judy to discuss the observed feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that this follow up session may be audio-recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to take part in a focus group meeting with three or four of my colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that this focus group session may be audio-recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am willing to allow Judy to enter my class (at my convenience) to recruit volunteer students to participate in her project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to provide Judy with anonymous examples of some students' assignments with my feedback for her to make copies. (This is only if the students have given their consent for Judy to do so)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that all the research sessions with Judy can be audio-recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my rights to privacy and confidentiality are appropriately safeguarded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that any data collected during this study will be reported only in summary format and in such a manner that no individual participant can be identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I wish to receive a report of the findings resulting from this study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I may withdraw myself, or any information obtained from me, at any time up to two weeks after I have provided any information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that only Judy and her academic supervisors will have access to the data collected for this research project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participant's Signature: _____ Researcher's Signature: _____
 Date: _____ Date: _____
 Centre/Department/Faculty: _____ Email address: _____
 Phone: _____ (O) _____ (Mobile)

Appendix K: Cover letter and questionnaire to recruit lecturers to participate in the in-depth study

Department of General & Applied Linguistics
Faculty of Arts & Social Science
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Telephone: 00-64-7-838 4466 ext. 6746 (Office)
Telephone: 00-64-7-8562396 (Home)
Telephone: 00-64-211797830 (Mobile)
Facsimile: 00 64-7-8384788
Office Room No: K3. 11
Email: jodieng@yahoo.com



Dear Colleagues,

I am currently pursuing my PhD at The University of Waikato and I am doing research on the issue of providing feedback on writing. In this questionnaire, I am interested in eliciting your general beliefs, attitude and practices of giving feedback on your students' written work.

Your answers are valuable as they would contribute to the professional development in INTI-UC and assist students to be better writers.

I should like to assure you that the research will adhere strictly to the University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations (2008). Your right to anonymity and privacy will be respected during and after the research process. No real names will be used in the research report, and efforts will be made to keep participants, departments/faculty and the University unidentifiable. All the data gathered will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your time and co-operation

Judy Ng Miang Koon
PhD Candidate
Department of General and Applied Linguistics
Faculty of Arts & Social Science
University of Waikato

PART ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1) Gender : Male Female
- 2) Age: 20 -29 30 -39 40 – 49 50– 59 60
or above
- 3) Nationality : _____
- 4) Ethnicity: Indian Chinese Malay Others:____
____(please specify)
- 5) Qualification: Certificate Diploma Degree Master
PhD
Major (Academic Field/s): _____
- 6) I have _____ teaching experience
 Less than 1 year 1 – 3 years 4 – 5 years 6 – 10 years More
than 10 years
- 7) I have been teaching in INTI University College for _____ year(s)
 Less than 1 year 1 – 3 years 6 – 10 years More than 10 years
- 8) I am teaching in : ELC COPS FOLA
- 9) I am a: Part – time staff (less than 12 hours a week)
 Part-full time staff (12-17 hours a week)
 Full-time staff (more than 18 hours a week)
- 10) I am teaching students who are enrolled in the following programmes or courses:
(please tick more than one if you are teaching students from various programmes)
- English Improvement Programme
- Foundation in Business Information Technology
- South Australian Matriculation Programme (SAM)
- American Degree Transfer Programme (AUP)
- Business (Foundation/Diploma/Degree/Post-graduate)
- Engineering (Foundation/Diploma/Degree/Master)
- Information Technology (Foundation/Diploma/Degree/Post-graduate)
- Sciences (Foundation/Degree)
- Degree in Mass communication
- Others: _____(please specify)

PART TWO: TYPES OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

- 11) The following table lists the different types of writing and whether:
- a) The writing is meant to be an assignment or task in class (additional practice)
 - b) you grade them or not (e.g. give marks)
 - c) how students are expected to do the work (e.g. group-work, pair work or individual)

Please tick/click **AS MANY** of the boxes as appropriate. If there is any type of writing that you do not require your students to do or the type of writing is not in your teaching syllabus, you would leave the line empty. However, if you require your students to write a paragraph in pairs as a task, which you do not intend to give marks at first, but later on you would be providing marks to students, you would complete the first line as follows:

Types of writing	Graded	Non-graded	Group-work	Pair-work	Individual	Task	Assignment
Paragraph Writing	X	X		X		X	X
a) Sentence	<input type="checkbox"/>						
b) Paraphrase of short text	<input type="checkbox"/>						
c) Paraphrase of long text	<input type="checkbox"/>						
d) Summary of text: < 100 words	<input type="checkbox"/>						
e) Summary of text: > 100 words	<input type="checkbox"/>						
f) Paragraph Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>						
g) Essay <500 words	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Types of writing	Graded	Non-graded	Group-work	Pair-work	Individual	Task	Assignment
h) Essay 500 – 1500 words	<input type="checkbox"/>						
i) Essay > 1500 words	<input type="checkbox"/>						
j) Review of articles – academic	<input type="checkbox"/>						
k) Movie Review	<input type="checkbox"/>						
l) Book Review	<input type="checkbox"/>						
m) Research Report	<input type="checkbox"/>						
n) Report Writing – Business	<input type="checkbox"/>						
o) Report Writing – Scientific/lab	<input type="checkbox"/>						
p) Forum Discussion (online)	<input type="checkbox"/>						
q) Journal/Diary Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>						
r) Memoranda	<input type="checkbox"/>						
s) Letter Writing – informal	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Types of writing	Graded	Non-graded	Group-work	Pair-work	Individual	Task	Assignment
t) Letter Writing - formal	<input type="checkbox"/>						
u) Case study (e.g. Solutions)	<input type="checkbox"/>						
v) Minutes of a meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>						
w) Creative Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>						
x) Others:_____	<input type="checkbox"/>						

PART THREE: TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Items 12 – 14 consist of a series of statements. Please tick/click **ONLY ONE** appropriate box either “always”, “most of the time”, “sometimes”, “rarely” or “never” for each statement that best describe your own practices in providing feedback to students’ written work, unless the statement is specified as oral feedback.

12) As a teacher, I :

Statements	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) Provide specific guidelines for completing assignments each time an assignment is given	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b) Review drafts of students’ assignments and	<input type="checkbox"/>				

provide 'feedforward' (i.e. to help students improve the work)					
c) Mark the assignments and provide written feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d) Spend more than half an hour on each student's assignment on marking and providing feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e) Mark assignments using impression marking, without providing written feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>				
f) Discuss my feedback orally with only students who have issues with their assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>				
g) Discuss my feedback (orally) with all students individually	<input type="checkbox"/>				
h) Provide general feedback of the overall students' performance in class	<input type="checkbox"/>				
i) Provide feedback orally with groups of students during class time.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
j) Provide feedback orally with groups of students out of the class time.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

13) In my feedback, I focus students' attention on:

Please tick/click **ONLY ONE** appropriate box either “always”, “most of the time”, “sometimes”, “rarely” or “never” for each statement that best describe your own practices in providing feedback to students' written work.

Statements	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) Grammatical; accuracy at sentence level	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b) Vocabulary - accuracy of spelling	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c) Vocabulary – range and choice of words	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d) Paragraph structure – sentences clearly linked together	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e) Paragraph structure – logical sequence of ideas (e.g. development from topic sentence)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
f) Overall structure – logical sequence of paragraphs	<input type="checkbox"/>				
g) Content (on-topic, according to the question requirement)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Statements	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
h) Content – number of ideas presented/discussed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) The ability to paraphrase the articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Avoidance of plagiarism , according to level of task	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) The ability to cite relevant sources of information correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) Accurate referencing of background sources and reference list	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) Register (tone of language appropriate to target audiences)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n) Evidence of critical thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o) Evidence of problem-solving ability (where appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p) Evidence of creativity (indicating original thinking)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

With regard to written feedback:

Please tick/click **ONLY ONE** appropriate box either “always”, “most of the time”, “sometimes”, “rarely” or “never” for each statement that best describe your own practices in providing feedback to students’ written work.

Statements	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) I grade all written work submitted by students	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b) I indicate only a few errors and hope students can identify the others.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c) I indicate most of the errors (e.g. underline or circle the errors)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d) I indicate all errors (e.g. underline or circle the errors)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e) I indicate errors and specify the type of errors to students (e.g. underline/circle the error & indicate e.g. T for a tense error)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
f) I indicate errors and write the correct version for the students	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Statements	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
g) I indicate errors, specify the type, and write the correct version	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) In addition to any of the above, I provide comments to students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) I only give brief comments and the grades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) I provide a longer written comment on students' work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) I mark by impression and do not identify errors or give comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) I highlight a few errors, and give comments and the grades.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) I distribute a check list to students to assist them to edit their assignments before I give out the assignment questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n) I motivate students by providing positive feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15) The table below shows a series of statements.

Tick/click **ONLY ONE** of the appropriate boxes that best indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement according to your own teaching context.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) Giving feedback (oral or written) to students is a waste of my time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Students want all their mistakes to be corrected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Giving oral feedback to students is the best way to help students to improve their writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Teachers should provide feedback only on grammatical errors in students' writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Teachers must provide feedback to students even if they believe that the feedback may not assist students to improve their writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) It is important for teachers to provide feedback on the overall structure of a piece of writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Feedback should be given only to students who are interested in improving their writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Teachers should provide feedback only on the content of the writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Giving written feedback helps students improve their writing only to a limited extent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Some students do not take teachers' feedback seriously	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Students should learn to identify their errors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
l) Giving written feedback on students' written work is more useful than oral feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) Overcorrection may de-motivate students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n) Students should be taught to analyse their own errors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o) Students should learn to correct their own errors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p) Teachers ought to be trained to provide constructive feedback to their students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q) Multiple drafts help students improve their writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r) Doing peer editing (students giving feedback to another student) is not effective in my class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PART FOUR: TEACHERS' PRACTICES OF PROVIDING FEEDBACK

16) What type of feedback do you normally use in your classes (you can tick/click more than one answer)

- Oral Feedback
 - Written Feedback
 - Encourage peer feedback (Student giving feedback to their friends)
- Train students to edit their errors
 - Others: _____(please specify)

17) How often do you provide the following feedback to your students? (For each type of feedback, please tick/click **ONLY ONE** box)

Type of feedback	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) Oral	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b) Written feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c) Peer feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d) Student editing their errors	<input type="checkbox"/>				

18) Do you allow students to hand in multiple drafts before they submit their assignment?

- Yes No Not applicable

If yes, how many drafts do you allow students to hand in their work? _____(please write the number)

19) Who decides the types of feedback to be used in your marking? (Please tick/click as many of the boxes as are applicable to you)

- My own decision
 - Course/Syllabus requirement
 - The requirement set by the partner universities
 - Textbooks or reference books on how to teach writing \
 - The influence from the teacher education programme
 - Parents' expectations
 - Students' expectations
 - The head of department/head of programme
 - The requirement set by the government
 - The nature of the task
 - INTI-UC management
 - My colleagues/a group of teachers' decision
 - Others: _____(please specify)

20) How would you evaluate the overall effectiveness of your existing feedback practice on students' progress in writing at the end of one semester? Please tick/click the most appropriate box.

- My students make excellent progress
- My students make good progress
- My students make average progress
- My students make no progress

Please give your reasons why you think so.

21) In your opinion, what is the main purpose of providing feedback on students' error in writing?

22) Please write any other comments, issues or additional information regarding providing feedback on students' writing which might be relevant?

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

**Appendix L: Focus points of the semi-structured interview for lecturers
(English and science)**

Interview 1- Background

Name:

Position:

Academic qualification:

School/Department/Faculty:

Date:

Time:

Respondent background

1. How many years have you been teaching?
2. How long have you been teaching in INTI-UC?

Checklist for the lecturers' interview

- 1) General beliefs
 - a) Purpose of feedback
 - b) Perceptions of good feedback
 - c) What is a good writing/good essay?

- 2) Sources of beliefs
 - a) Teacher education
 - b) Past experience as a student (school/university)
 - c) Parents/students
 - d) Books/seminar
 - e) Partner university/moderators
 - f) Syllabus
 - g) INTI-training/mentor
 - h) Head of programme/management
 - i) Focus group
 - j) Own decision
 - k) Teaching experience
 - l) Others

- 3) Students' perceptions
 - a) Students' expectations
 - b) What is the students' attitude towards feedback (serious or not?)

- 4) Actual practices of giving feedback
 - a) Feed-forward
 - b) Error correction-students' initiative vs teachers' responsibility
 - c) Types of feedback-views of written/oral/peer/self/drafts
 - d) Beliefs about types of feedback (i.e. usefulness, effectiveness, practices, focus-sp/gr)
 - e) Written feedback (style of highlighting error)
 - f) Written feedback (focus on the areas- content/language etc)
 - g) Oral feedback (one to one/general)

- 5) Effectiveness of feedback
 - a) Is there improvement so far? If yes, which areas?
 - b) If not, why? Is feedback a waste of time?

- 6) Grade issues and problems of feedback

Appendix M: Focus points of the semi-structured interview for students (English and science)

Name:

Programme:

Major/Year:

School/Department/Faculty:

English Course Title and Course Code/(s):

Date:

Time:

Respondent background

1. How many years have you been learning English?
2. How long have you been learning English in INTI-UC?
3. What type of English writing courses have you done in INTI-UC?

Students' beliefs and classroom management and interaction

Focal Points

1.	<u>Students' perceptions of feedback</u> What are your beliefs and what are your expectations of a good feedback? Do you think that overcorrection will make you de-motivated? Do you think positive comments from teacher would help you improve your writing? Should students be trained to correct their own errors? Do you think it is important to train students to understand teachers' feedback? Should
----	---

	teachers give feedback only to those students who are interested to improve their writing?
2.	<p><u>Students' expectations of lecturer's feedback</u></p> <p>What are your impressions of your lecturers' feedback? What are your expectations of your teacher's feedback? Do you want all your errors to be corrected by the teachers? What type of feedback(s) do you like from your lecturer? What type of feedback(s) do you dislike from your lecturer? Please give some examples. Does your teacher guide you in your assignments? Do you agree with the grades given by the teachers?</p>
3.	<p><u>Students' responses towards lecturer's feedback</u></p> <p>1. Do you read your lecturers' comments and feedback on how to improve your writing? What do you do after receiving the feedback? What are your strategies and techniques to improve your writing after receiving the feedback from your lecturers? What are your justifications of using these strategies? Which aspects of writing (e.g grammar/content/language) do you pay attention to in your teacher's comments?</p> <p>2. Does your lecturer allow you to write drafts before handing in your assignment? Do you read your lecturer's comments in both the first and second draft? Which comments will you pay more attention to and why? Do you think writing multiple drafts would be able to help you improve your writing? Why?</p>
Focal Points	
4.	<u>Usefulness of lecturer's feedback</u>

	<p>Do you find your lecturer's feedback useful? Are you able to make corrections after receiving the teacher's feedback? Do you understand the feedback given by the teachers? If you do not understand the teacher's feedback, what would you do to overcome the problem? Which type of feedback do you think is more useful for you to improve their writing? Do you think that feedback helps you to be better writers and what are your justifications?</p>
5.	Other comments about feedback

(Adapted from: Lee, 2008 Students' reactions to teacher feedback in two HK Secondary classrooms, *Journal of second language writing*; Diab, 2005 Teachers' and students' beliefs about responding to ESL writing: A case study; Hyland & Hyland, 2001- sugaring the pill)

Appendix N: Instructions for research participants to think-aloud

I am going to randomly select two or three assignment(s) from these anonymous assignments for you to mark. Here are two/three assignments. Now, I would like you to mark the papers in the way you normally do. As you are marking your students' papers and providing feedback, I would like you to verbalise your thoughts. As I am recording your thoughts via the mp3 player, I would appreciate it if you could speak out clearly.

Don't forget to tell me your thoughts as you are about to provide feedback on students' work. Once in a while, I may prompt you with cues if in the event you may be caught up with the markings to the extent the thoughts are not verbalised. Please take your time to verbalise your thoughts and do not worry about me waiting for you to complete the task.

(Adapted from Gass and Mackey, 2000, p.59)

Appendix O: Samples and demonstration of Think-aloud session for lecturers' references

SAMPLE ONE THINK-ALOUD SESSION (ENGLISH SUBJECT)

Assignment: Test 1, Script one

NAME		MARKS
ID NO.	CLASS	

SECTION IV: WRITING (25 marks)

Select **ONE** topic from below and write an essay in about 200-250 words. Write the number of the topic you have chosen in the space provided.

1. My biggest fear.
2. The most important day of my life. Include details such as why, how, when, what happened.....
3. Co-curricular activities in school are beneficial for students. Discuss.
4. Homework helps students to perform better in school. Do you agree?

Topic: 2

on october 2009 ^{during} in this time
~~there is something~~ ~~something~~ happened for me. ^{completed}
 my father bought a car for me, because I have finished
~~my high~~ ~~of the~~ school. It was the most important day in
 my life. 1/2

when I was outside with my friends, and
 we ~~are~~ ~~played~~ football. and ~~we~~ we went
 for shopping. I came back to my house and my father
~~sedentary~~ ~~opened~~ the door for me. He show me
 the keys. ~~asked~~ ^{said} "It was keys for car". I ~~asked~~ ^{asked} him
 what is this. He answered me ~~that~~ these keys ~~are~~ ^{are} for
 new car. 1/2

I feel ~~happy~~ happy He ^{surprised} seprise me 1/2

O - 2

C - 4

L - 3 1/2

$$\frac{9\frac{1}{2}}{25}$$

- THE END -

Transcription of the sample think-aloud

Okay Judy err the students have just finished their test 1. I am going to mark 2 students' paper. It's name of a student. Student's name is a rather weak student and the other girl is student's name. Student's name is good and this is how the distribution of marks going to be.

For the organization they will get 5 marks, for the content, and 10 marks, Language 10 marks. If they have their paragraphing, the topic sentence err thesis statement clear, then I can give them a maximum of 4 marks. We usually don't give them 5. For content, if every paragraph, if they have err one topic sentence, with 2 supporting ideas, they can get 2 marks that makes. That is usually we expect the students to write 5 paragraphs so that's 10 marks there and language, grammar, spelling and all these another 10 marks.

Okay. So this is student's name work. He has picked topic 2. The most important day of my life. Include details such as why, how, when, what happened and has first paragraph. [On October 2009, in this time there is something happened for me (reading)]. I think the sentence is not well written. In October 2009, during instead of in. The preposition is wrongly used. In October 2009, during this time would be better. (circle the word in and wrote the word during). During this time, there again tense, he has used the wrong tense instead of past, the student has used the present tense. (circle and underline the word 'is'). In October 2009, during this time,(pause a while) during this time the word there is wrongly used. During this time, something happened not for me but to me. Something happened to me (circled the word "for" and replaced with "to"). Okay I am writing all the correction for this student as he will not be able to correct himself.

My father bought car for me. My father bought me a car. Err the subject, the sentence is err not constructed properly. My father bought me a car. (write the correction) My father bought me a car because I have finished of the school. Because I have instead of finish, I think I will teach him a new word, completed. Completed (wrote the word) my high school perhaps? (My high school-wrote and verbalized simultaneously). It was the most important day in my life. That was

instead of it was I think it should be that was (wrote the word that). The most, spelling error, most(spell out the word most and wrote at the same time) important day in my life.

When I was outside with my friends, we played football and we went to the shopping. And we went to shopping and we went instead of to shopping, we went shopping full stop (cancel the word to). I came back to my house, my father opened the door for me. When I came back to my house, my father opened the door for me. He wrong tense. He showed me the keys. I wrong spelling, I was. I saw. Instead of was, I saw the keys (write the correction) for the car. Okay. I asked him what is this. He answered me these keys. (pause to think). The word err ahh. I prefer the word are. Are is missing auxiliary word. These keys are for your new car okay (write the correction). I feel happy he surprised. Wrong spelling. He surprised me. Alright he surprised (spell out the word surprised and wrote on the paper) me.

Okay, so this student has only written two and a half paragraph. So organization I will give him two and here on this day here, I can give him a mark here. On October 2009, during this time, something happened to me. my father bought me, he gets a half mark here. When I was outside with my friends, we played football and we went shopping. Okay there is a mark there. I came back to my house and my father opened the door for me. A surprise was there. He can get half mark. He showed, he showed me the keys. It was the key for the car. I asked him what is this? Okay he gets another half mark here. And half mark here. So for content, I am going to give him 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, I think would it be too much. 1,2,3,4. Content I can give him 4 marks. Four over ten. Done. For language I will give him 3 ½ marks okay. Because I find his language is very weak spelling, quite a number of spelling errors. Err the tenses are all wrong. So the total for him would be 7, 9 and a half, 9 ½ over 25.

SAMPLE TWO DEMONSTRATION THINK-ALOUD SESSION (SCIENCE SUBJECT)

LABORATORY REPORT

EXPERIMENT 7 – COMPACT FRANCIS TURBINE

Objective

To study the performance on Francis turbine using a small scale model.

Theory

Francis Turbine is an inward flow reaction turbine and works best in higher head (pressure) applications. The Francis turbine combines both radial and axial flow whereby water flow is radial into the turbine and exits axially.

As stated above, Francis Turbine is a reaction turbine. The working fluid changes pressure as it moves through the turbine. According to Douglas (2001), there will be a drop in static pressure and a drop in velocity head during energy transfer in the runner (impeller).

From Naveenagrawal's article (Bright Hub, 2009), Francis turbine has a circular plate fixed to the rotating shaft which is perpendicular to its surface and passing through its centre. This circular plate has curved channels on it and the runner is surrounded by a ring of stationary channels known as guide vanes. The exit of the Francis turbine is at the centre of the runner plate. There is also a draft tube attached to the central exit of the runner. The design parameters are such that the radius of the runner, curvature of channel, angle of vanes and the size of the turbine as whole depend on the available head and its application.

In Wikipedia's webpage and Naveenagrawal's article, the theory of operation of Francis turbine is explained vividly. Water enters the turbine via the spiral casing which is surrounded by the guide vanes. The water will lose a part of its pressure in the spiral casing to maintain its speed. The guide vanes will then direct the water to strike the blades on the runner at optimum angles. Pressure and angular momentum of water will decrease as water flows through the runner. Such reductions will exert a reaction on the runner and this power is then transferred to

the turbine shaft. Water leaves axially through the draft tube which decelerates the water velocity and to recover maximum energy from the flowing water.

Francis turbine is mostly used in electrical production due to their head range of 20 metres to 700 metres. Its output varies from a few kilowatts up to one gigawatt, with large Francis turbines operating with high efficiencies of over 90%.

Figure 7.0a – Water flow is radial into turbine and exits axially.

(Source: Douglas, 2001)

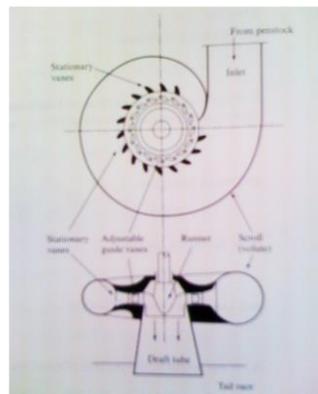
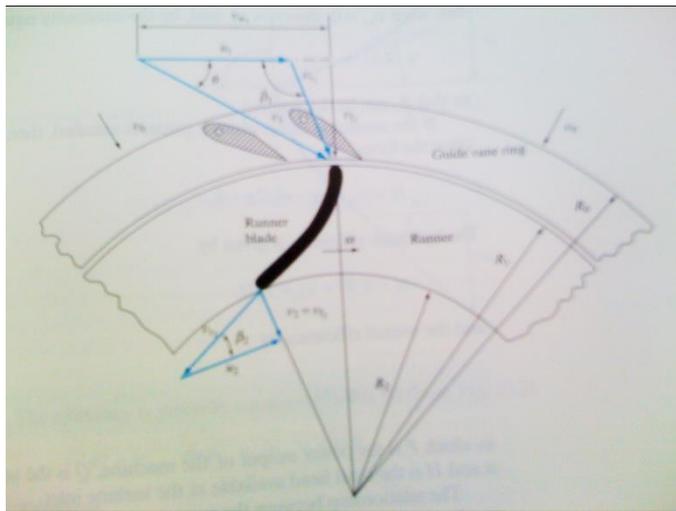


Figure 7.0b – Sections through part of a Francis turbine.

(Source: Douglas, 2001)

For this experiment, the torque, turbine speed, input power and output power will be examined to obtain the efficiency of a compact Francis turbine. The energy equation between two ends of draft tubes is given by:

$$\frac{P_1}{\gamma} = -Z - \frac{V_1^2}{2g} - \frac{V_2^2}{2g} + \text{Losses}$$

Whereby P_1 = suction head produced by draft tube

The torque can be obtained by the formula of:

$$T = 2F \times r$$

Whereby F : Force read from spring balance (N)

r : Moment arm (given as 0.075m)

The power input from:

$$P_{in} = 2\pi NT$$

Whereby N : Turbine speed (rpm)

T : Torque (Nm)

The power output from:

$$P_{out} = \rho gQH$$

Whereby Q : Volumetric flowrate (m^3/s)

H : Total dynamic head, TDH (m)

Lastly, the turbine efficiency can be obtained by the equation of:

$$\eta = \frac{P_{out}}{P_{in}} \times 100$$

Theoretically, this compact Francis turbine best operates at a head installation of 1.5-1.7 bar and has an efficiency of 40-60%.



Figure 7.0c – An example of Francis turbine used in industries.

(Source: elatecworld.com)

Procedure

- 1) The water storage tank is filled up to about $\frac{1}{2}$ capacity with clean water.
The end of draft
tube should be 5-6cm below the water surface.
- 2) The bypass valve at the water pump is opened to one-half of fully open.
- 3) The power line of water pump is connected.
- 4) The system is powered on and the pump will run. The flow rate is adjusted to 510-520 LPM for optimum flow rate.
- 5) The wicket gate of turbine is adjusted to obtain maximum turbine speed (rpm) which is in the range of 750-760 rpm.
- 6) Spring balance is used provide an adjustable torque to the turbine.
- 7) The spring balance is adjusted to give a reading of 125g.
- 8) The TDH (total dynamic head) in bar is read from the pressure gauge, while the water flow rate (Q) in l/m and angular velocity (N) in rpm are taken from the displays. All data are recorded in Table 7.1.

- 9) Step 7 and 8 are repeated using spring balance reading of 175g, 225g, 275g, 325g, 375g, 425g, and 475g.
- 10) The turbine system is then switched off.



Figure 7.1 – Compact Francis Turbine and displays



Figure 7.2 – Main switch

Results and Analysis

Conversion factor : 1 bar = 10.2 metre head

Torque, $T = 2F \times r$

Whereby F : Force read from spring balance (N)

r : Moment arm (given as 0.075m)

Power input, $P_{in} = 2\pi NT$

Whereby N : Turbine speed (rpm)

T : Torque (Nm)

Power output, $P_{out} = \rho gQH$

Whereby Q : Volumetric flowrate (m³/s)

H : Total dynamic head, TDH (m)

Turbine efficiency, $\eta = \frac{P_{out}}{P_{in}} \times 100$

The energy equation between two ends of draft tubes of the turbine;

$$\frac{P_1}{\gamma} = -Z - \frac{V_1^2}{2g} - \frac{V_2^2}{2g} + \text{Losses}$$

Whereby P_1 = suction head produced by draft tube

With respect to Figure 7.2,

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------|
| The distance 'Z' from the experiment | = | 0.4m |
| Entrance draft diameter | = | 80mm |
| Exit draft diameter | = | 100mm |

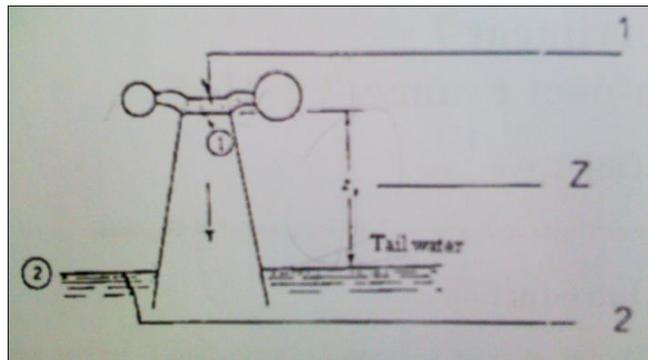


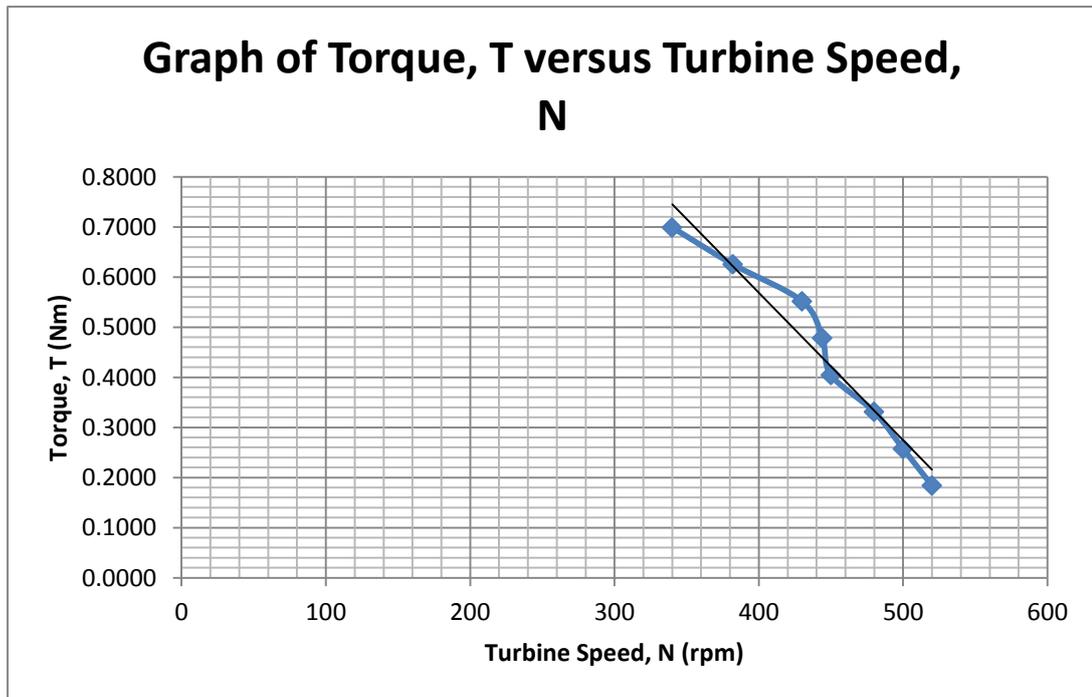
Figure 7.3 - Z measurement taken from draft tube.

(Source: Lab Manual)

Table 7.1 :Values of torque, water flow rate, total dynamic head and turbine speed.

Run	Spring Balance Reading (g)	Force, F (N)	Moment Arm, r (m)	Torque, T (Nm)	Water Flow Rate, Q (l/min)	Water Flow Rate, Q (m ³ /s)	Pressure Gauge Reading (bar)	Total Dynamic Head, H (m)	Turbine Speed, N (rpm)	P _{in} (W)	P _{out} (W)	Turbine Efficiency, η (%)
1	125	1.2263	0.075	0.1839	395	0.006583	1.3	13.260	520	601.0489	856.3640	142.48
2	175	1.7168	0.075	0.2575	400	0.006667	1.2	12.240	500	809.1043	800.4960	98.94
3	225	2.2073	0.075	0.3311	390	0.006500	1.2	12.240	480	998.6658	780.4836	78.15
4	275	2.6978	0.075	0.4047	395	0.006583	1.2	12.240	450	1144.3046	790.4898	69.08
5	325	3.1883	0.075	0.4782	400	0.006667	1.2	12.240	444	1334.3285	800.4960	59.99

6	375	3.678 8	0.075	0.551 8	391	0.0065 17	1.2	12.240	430	1491.063 6	782.4848	52.48
7	425	4.169 3	0.075	0.625 4	398	0.0066 33	1.2	12.240	382	1501.235 2	796.4935	53.06
8	475	4.659 8	0.075	0.699 0	395	0.0065 83	1.2	12.240	340	1493.375 3	790.4898	52.93



Discussion and Conclusion

From the equation of $T = 2F \times r$, the amount of torque supplied is directly proportional to the moment arm and is proportional to the force applied through the spring balance. In this experiment, since the moment arm remains constant at 0.075m, the torque supplied to the turbine is solely depending on the force applied through the spring balance. A larger amount of force is needed to increase a significant torque due to the coefficient of 2 in the force for the equation. This can be seen in Table 7.1 whereby an increase of 50g from 175g to 225g at the spring balance only increases the torque generated from 0.2575Nm to 0.3311Nm (0.0736Nm increment). The higher the force applied through spring balance, the higher the torque generated.

Also, from the power input equation of $P_{in} = 2\pi NT$, power input of the turbine is controlled by the turbine speed and torque supplied to it. Since turbine speed is not controlled in this experiment, the torque generated will be significant in affecting the input power provided to the turbine. From the equation above, power input is directly proportional to turbine speed, N and torque supplied, T. The higher the amount of torque supplied, the higher the power input generated. This is proven by the data shown in Table 7.1, whereby the power input increases proportionally from 601.0489W to 1501.235W (neglecting 1493.375W as the result is affected by the decrement of turbine speed) when the torque is increased

from 0.1839Nm to 0.6254Nm. From the equation above, it can also be observed that turbine speed is inversely proportional to the torque supplied. The higher the torque supplied, the lower the turbine speed. This point is supported by both Table 7.1 and the graph plotted, whereby turbine speed decreases from 520rpm to 340rpm when torque is increased from 0.1839Nm to 0.699Nm.

In the power output equation of $P_{out} = \rho gQH$, power output is directly proportional to volumetric flowrate and bar gauge head. As the same fluid (water) is to be used in this turbine and that experiment is conducted in room temperature and pressure, density of water and gravity value remains constant. Similarly, since the volumetric flowrate of water is not controlled in this experiment and that the bar gauge head is to be remained constant, the power output of the turbine remained fairly constant. This can be seen from Table 7.1 whereby the power output ranges from 780.4836W to 800.496W (for pressure gauge readings of a constant 1.2bar). However, from the equation above, it can also be seen that volumetric flowrate, Q is inversely proportional to the bar gauge head.

Theoretically, the higher the volumetric flow rate of water, the lower the bar gauge head. Unfortunately for this experiment, the volumetric flow rate obtained is only nearly constant (compared to the theory that it should be constant) with constant bar gauge head due to the sensitivity of the equipment. However, it is significant that the volumetric flow rate only has a difference of 0.000167m³/s from its maximum and minimum readings.

From the equation of $\eta = \frac{P_{out}}{P_{in}} \times 100$, the efficiency of turbine is directly proportional to the power output of the turbine, while efficiency of turbine is inversely proportional to the power input of turbine. In short, the higher the power output with respect to power input, the higher the efficiency of the turbine. In this experiment, as the output power of turbine remains fairly constant (780.4836W to 800.496W), the power input significantly affects the efficiency of the turbine. With the output power remains fairly constant, the higher the input power, the lower the efficiency of pump. This is clearly shown in Table 7.1 whereby the turbine efficiency decreases from 98.94% to 52.93% (neglecting alien data of 142.48%) when the input power increases from 809.1043W to 1493.375W with fairly constant values of output power. It is also noteworthy that most of the turbine efficiency obtained coincides with the theory that this compact Francis

turbine has the efficiency of 40% to 60%, compared to the experimental value obtained (mostly ranging from 50% to 70%) as shown in Table 7.1.

From the graph of torque (T) against turbine speed (N) plotted, it is observable that turbine speed increases with the decrease of torque. This coincides with the theory that torque supplied is inversely proportional to the turbine speed, as mentioned above. It is also observable from the graph that the inversely proportional relationship between torque and turbine speed can be represented by a nearly linear declining slope.

During this experiment, it is important that the turbine should not be run continuously for more than 30 minutes. Due to the disadvantages of a compact system, there will be excessive heat accumulation in water storage tank should the turbine be operated for more than 30 minutes. Drips of water can be seen and some 'burning' smell were observed when the compact turbine is operated for a lengthy period during this experiment.

It is also recommended that the bar gauge head meter is to be changed to a digital meter to increase data accuracy. For the analogue bar gauge head meter used in this experiment, the observer's eye should be directly perpendicular to the meter needle to obtain the best reading. The same can be said when reading is taken from the spring balance. At the main switch where the turbine speed and the volumetric flow rate are shown, readings are only taken when the value remains fairly constant for 1 to 2 seconds.

Another suggestion is that the water used in this experiment should be changed periodically, so that the density of water remains constant and that no residues will reside in the tank which would affect the efficiency of the Francis turbine. Monthly maintenance should also be conducted so that the turbine will operate as expected and produces credible data for the experiment.

Reference

Bright Hub (2009) "Hydraulic Turbines : Francis Turbine" (online) (date accessed: 13 March 2010). Available from <http://www.brighthub.com/engineering/mechanical/articles/27407.aspx>

Douglas, J. (2001) Fluid Mechanics (4th edition), England, Pearson Education Limited.

Raypak (N.D) “Useful Data” (online) (date accessed: 13 March 2010). Available from <http://www.raypak.com.au/os/hwman/useful.html>

WikiAnswers (N.D) “What is a Francis Turbine?” (online) (date accessed: 13 March 2010). Available from http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_a_Francis_turbine

Wikipedia (N.D) “Francis Turbine” (online) (date accessed: 13 March 2010). Available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_turbine

Laboratory Report

Marking Sheet

Criteria	Description	Weightage	Marks awarded
Introduction / Theory	<p>Good coverage of the theories on the subject and demonstrate the ability to relate its significance to the experiment.</p> <p><i>0 – 5: Theories are copied from the lab manual</i></p> <p><i>6 – 10: small amount of research is completed</i></p> <p><i>11-15: comprehensive research relevant to the topic is done</i></p>	15	15
Results / calculations	<p>Results to be presented professionally and relevant calculations are shown. Graphs are drawn professionally where necessary.</p> <p><i>0- 5: minimum presentation of results</i></p> <p><i>6 -8: basic results are shown with necessary calculations.</i></p> <p><i>9-10: further analysis of the results using graphs, tables, etc.</i></p>	10	7
Discussions	<p>Demonstrate the ability of analysing the results in an independent and critical way. In-depth discussion is presented on the variance of the results with theory, or the effect of the changing of any parameters to the results. Further discussion is</p>	25	19

	<p>presented on the improvements of the accuracy if there is any discrepancy.</p> <p><i>0- 5: reiteration of the results</i></p> <p><i>6 -10: insufficient discussion on the results</i></p> <p><i>11-15: discussion is done based on the general knowledge</i></p> <p><i>16-20: critical discussion with limited constructive suggestions</i></p> <p><i>21-25:detailed, critical analysis of the results</i></p>		
Format / Presentation	<p>The ability of presenting the neat and tidy report in the format stated.</p> <p><i>0-5: lack of standard format, structure and incomprehensible.</i></p> <p><i>6-7:basic structure and format is presented</i></p> <p><i>8-10:professional report with standard format and complete structure and presentation</i></p>	10	9
TOTAL		60	50

COMMENTS:

You have been improving since the last report, and you have taken my advice on board with you. Keep working hard for the subject, and I am looking forward in receiving a good research paper from you.

Transcription

Assignment: Laboratory Report, Experiment 7 – Compact Francis Turbine

Right this is the marking of err my _____ laboratory report. Here the student is doing the err one of the experiment which is err Compact Francis Turbine and now I am taking one of the student's err name to mark his report and this is the report students have done one week ago and normally they have one week to do the experimental report.

To mark this report, I have my marking scheme which is on the other side here, which consist of err few criteria mainly Introduction and Theory of 50 marks, results and calculations of 10 marks, discussions of 25 marks, format and presentation of 10 marks. Total up 60 marks and over here, each of the criterions, I have a breakdown like for example Introduction and Theory, my criterion or my description of that criteria is that to have a good coverage of the theories on the subject and demonstrate the ability to relate its significance to the experiment. And to further break these 50 marks down, I have classified in the category saying that zero to 5 marks means that the theories are basically copied from the lab manual, in other words fail. 6 to 10 marks saying that the students has done a small amount of research of which and err sorry later err 11to 15 marks shows that students have done a comprehensive research relevant to the topic is done. So what I am doing now is I copy everything here and err paste at the end of students' report.

So now I can start marking the reports here. So the report will start with the objectives and again I am now marking on the student part, which I turn on the track changes so students will see the things I add in.

The first thing I am going to mark out is to cancel the rest of the objectives because I have one objective here so there is no "s" after that. So if I want to do this, normally I have to put in the comments. There is only one objective (type and verbalize at the same time).

Okay now I am going to do the theory part. Let's have a read on the theory. Erm it seems okay quite comprehensive. Good thing the student has done the citation here. Good that you have done the – type and verbalise. Okay this particular student has taken my advice on board because I think if I am not mistaken in the few, the few lab reports before I did ask the students to do the citation because he has done the reference at the back. So, which is kinda of a good improvement for this student and err opps, another one okay another citation here which is good talking about the history and if I go down, opps I go down a little bit, hmm, the figure is a little bit blur, can still be a little bit improved. So I will put “the figure can be made clear so that opps, the labelling is clear” (type and verbalized at the same time). Over here you can see that the wording is a bit blur. Right, over here he takes from Douglas but the figure 7.0 which is correct, the number and figure is correct, the experiment 7 here okay so here he takes something from Wikipedia as well. Yeah. Right. Okay. Talking about the equations and the equations are presented professionally from the equations editor. This is going to be back, alignment problem. Alignment problem here. And err okay, power output. We have no problem to be changed as well. Okay. Right basically the theory is okay. If I were to award on the theory side, I will say that the student has done a comprehensive research with the proper reference at the back here as well. So out of 15, in fact I will award a full mark for him which is 15 marks out of 50 due to his comprehensive research as well as the citation as his referencing.

Right the next one that I am looking for is the result presentations. Right let's have a look on the results. Okay the student has come out with the basic equations for the calculations. Err from the experiment, that the reading coming out in this table. By right this table should be labeled and captured yes there is a figure, a label or figure as well as the captions. So the table is done professionally and err let's check the figure here. At a glance, the figure here seems okay to me, with reasonable result as well as the efficiency although the first reading is a bit out but the rest seems okay to me and if presented the graph, however if there are some explanation here will be good. Comment “labelling caption and explanation of the graph will be good over here”. Hopefully, he would change then okay the result that will be the result – okay it seems reasonable the result the efficiency good as well as the turbine increase, now if I give marks on the results and calculation says that it is presented professionally, relevant to calculation shows. Graphs are

drawn professionally where necessary. 0 to 5 marks shows minimum presentation of results. 6 to 8, results are shown with necessary calculations, 9 to 10 marks further analysis of the results using graphs, tables, etc. Obviously he is not fail, he's not into the 9-10 category but 6-8 yes. Let me double check again, yah. If zero to 5 marks means he draws the tables without any other things. So the mark given to him will be ranging from 6 to 8. Let's double check again. He should show me the calculation needed and followed by the table and graph so I will award him 7 if he could show me further a bit of the calculation would be better.

Now on the discussion is requested that the students need to demonstrate the ability to analyse the results in an independent and critical way. In-depth discussion is presented on the variance of the results with theory, the effect of the changing of any parameters to the results. Further discussion is presented on the improvements of the accuracy if there is any discrepancy. Over here is 25 marks because I put a lot of concentration on this of 0 – 5 marks is the reiteration of the results, 6 -10: insufficient discussion on the results, 11-15: discussion is done based on the general knowledge, 16-20: critical discussion with limited constructive suggestions and 21-25: detailed, critical analysis of the results. Let's have a look over here. He starts off with talking about the equations and the first paragraph shows the err he shows the relations of the graph on what's he's talking and relates to tables here in 7.1 which is the table showing that whenever it change, it affect on the other thing. Now, I think "This is better to be put as part of results". (Verbalized and type at the same time). Okay now also the second paragraph, (mumble some technical terms) he is talking about the a little bit of defect, on the turbine that is affected and relate to the equation which is quite good. The higher () is proven, okay in relate back to his result doing that shows he really analyzing his result the theory that has been given to him. Okay. Now the next paragraph () okay. Right (mumbles) yeah he did the detail analysis on err power is given to us here. A little bit more detail can be done here. This is always what I like do to "so?" (Type and verbalised. Be more critical on this part. So, plus this one talking about efficiency yah. Seems okay. (Mumbles) relate to the table as well. It will be good if explain about this efficiency "It can be good if you can discuss about the 142.8% efficiency in your discussion" (type and verbalise). So from the graph part now this part he is talking about the graph. Okay. It seems to coincide with the theories which is correct. Yeah. It is important that the turbine

should be (). Okay. Right. Good talking about the limitations of the experiment. It is recommended that Bathometer is to change okay, is to increase the data accuracy here because here he is using the analogue Barrelage? Okay good. Right other suggestions to the experiments right so it's okay so provided suggestions to the experiment. So now done, let's check on the discussions. Definitely he won't be fall in zero to five. And 6 to 10, out of 5, I will definitely give above 16. Now I'll give in the range of 16 and 20 because it is not critical enough due to my comment on the volume on the fluid difference which I asked so as well as the comments on the percent on the efficiency on 100%. So 16- 20, it's more towards the 20 side. I will give a mark of 19 opps.

Now last but not least, for me the presentation is to test the ability of presenting the neat and tidy report in the format stated. From 0-5 is for the lack of standard format, structure and incomprehensible. 6 to 7: basic structure and format is presented and 8-10 shows the professional report with standard format and complete structure and presentation. In fact from what I can see here I never commenting anything on the format. Seems okay for me the format that student has done through few error improvement here and error all the figures are labelled with captions, which is required and all tables are labelled as well with captions. The only thing the graph without the labels so but considering quite good and the is definitely comprehensible so not under the range of 0 to 5 and error I would give within 8 to 10. But for this one I will give a mark of 8 why? Because of the graph, I didn't give the mark to him. Let me see if I can. In fact, this is a very good job already to me. Like I give another mark to him then (). So total up of his mark is error 15 and 19 is 34, 41, 50 out of 60. And I want to give a comment here. "You have been improving since the last report, and you have taken my advice on board with you. Keep working hard for the subject, and I am looking forward in receiving a good research paper from you". (Type and verbalize at the same time). To have another assignment on a research paper to be submitted soon so hopefully they can do a good thing. Taking all the advice from the experiment. Right job done.

Appendix P: Sample feedback 1-2 (English)

Sample 1

Topic: Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of traveling by public transport

Thesis

Topic

senten

The issues of whether or not people should take public transport to travel has been widely debated currently. Quite a few people, especially people who advocate taking public transport, claimed that it would not only help to protect the environment, but also to realize the traffic jam. One the other hand, those who think differently argue that taking public transport is to make good use of their limited time and acquire the chance to save money.

Examples

Repeating

The points

→ People who vote for taking public transport to travel hold the following reasons. To begin with, it provides a chance for people to make devote to our environment. In addition, taking public transport is beneficial to the heavy traffic and the waste of time. It is helpful for the public order. Then we have to take a long time to go to work, we will become more and more upset. Thus, our mood will be influenced, seriously and we will live a uncomfortable life. Besides it enable people to protect our environment from being polluted by gas. And telling people it is important to keep the air clean! It needs everyone's efforts.

→ But people who think otherwise also have strong reasons.

They argue that

valuable

taking public transport to travel will occupy much valuable of time of people.

Today, more and more people are becoming rich. They can afford to buy cars.

?? replace/suitable vocabulary

They think it is honorable to own a car. Owning a private car can make their life easily and comfortable. They prefer to take their cars to travel. They argue that taking public transport is roughly. Meanwhile, people are not happy to stand too close to others and it is not comfortable. As the public transport is not so perfect, people [have to wait the bus everyday]. Waiting public transport is also a main problem that people don't like to take it. Worst of all, it is true that

Wrong Chr
S.C.

Good

→ people feel it is free to take themselves cars to travel, while [contaminate their minds].—??

→ Obviously, there are some element of truth in both arguments. The question is whether we can find balance the between two. All things have advantages and disadvantages. What we must do is make sure positive ones are encouraged and negative ones are eliminated as far as possible.

Sample 2

What are the effects of air pollution to human? Support your essay with appropriate examples

The effects of air pollution to human

Now, our world have lots of problems. One of the biggest problems is air pollution. So what are effects of air pollution. And how can we stop this.

?
? || First, air pollution are effect our health. So many people leave the city go to the college. Because you live in clean air or dirty air are very different. People go to college because they what a good body.

?
?
Then if we still broken the air. After many years, people will can not live in earth. So we must stop to broken the air. And now, the earth already broken. Air pollution also effect the weather. Many place have weather harm. It will be air pollution. And some beautiful place become bad. Because many people go to there and broken the air. So air pollution is a very importain problems.

We must stop to the air. We must to keep our air clean.
Because it is our earth.

Out of topic

Appendix Q: Sample feedback (Science)

Sample Feedback 1

What is biotechnology? With around 500 words, introduce the brief history of biotechnology followed by the examples of several biotechnology applications of your choice.

Biotechnology is generally defined as any technological application that uses living organisms to make or modify products or processes for specific uses.

There are also applications of biotechnology that do not necessarily use living organisms like radioactive tracers used in medicine and DNA microarrays used in genetics (Transgalactic Ltd., 2005).

Biotechnology existed since 10, 000 B.C. where men already knew how to
(ref)
plant crops and breed animals[^]. The discovery of fermentation, where this natural
defining
process involved microorganisms for the production of food and medicine, was
the beginning of biotechnology. Archeologists revealed that there are evidences
of Babylonians, Egyptians and Romans using selective breeding practices to
(ref)
improve livestock in 8000 B. C[^]. A few centuries into the future at 6000 B.C,
men were brewing beer, fermenting wine and baking bread with the help of yeasts
followed by yogurt and cheese making with the help of lactic-acid producing
bacteria (Wikipedia, 2010). **This is not the most reliable reference. Would be good if you could also include a second ref.**

Sample Feedback 2

1. Ann, ~~W.~~ And Judy, ~~J.~~ (1993). 'Overview and Brief History', A Further Look at Biotechnology, (online). Available from URL:
http://www.accessexcellence.Org/RC/AB/BC/Overview_and_Brief_History.php

Please use consistent format

2. ~~Peter Emerson~~, (2006) 'History of Biotechnology' Available from
URL:<http://ezineartilces.com/?History-of-Biotechnology&id=354562>
3. Biotechnology Institute (2005). 'Historical event in Biotechnology'
Available from URL:http://www.biotechinstitute.org/what_is/timeline.html
4. ~~Christina, C. Craig H. Keith, J. Lawrie, Q.~~ (1996) "Manufacture and use
of

Pls check format

cheese products' Food Science Section and 2Cheese) and Milkfat Technology

Section (online) (cited 28 May 2010) Available from

URL:<http://nzic.org.nz/ChemProcesses/dairy/3D.pdf>

5. Shuler, ~~M.L.~~ Kargi, ~~F.~~ (2002) Bioprocess Engineering: Basic Concepts.
(2nd ed), Prentice Hall. Craig, C.C., Keith, H. & Lawrie, C. (1996)...

Sample Feedback 3

Question: State and explain 3 methods on how to stabilize enzyme

- Using nanoreactor ✓ → by using nanoreactor, enzyme are station in the small nano tube like structure to immobilize the enzyme. This allow the enzyme to be more stable because is bonded to a solid phase in membrane or covalent bonding. **less easy to unfold BOD**

- Using Biphasic system ✓ → In most of the solvent enzyme will be denatured due to the amino acid group that are unfavorable, by using surfactant to induce the water to form reverse micelle around the enzyme will increase the stability of the enzyme and the enzyme can be more thermo-stable in any solvent.

Water interphase less easily disrupted

Appendix R: Procedures of data analysis

Steps	Focus	Pre-analysis	Steps in analysis	Outcomes
1. Analysing the questionnaires	Beliefs of providing feedback, self-reported practices of providing feedback and sources of these beliefs	Look at individual lecturer's responses in the questionnaires to form questions in the interview to elicit more information	Identifying key phrases and coding them	Eliciting three broad themes, namely the lecturers' beliefs, practices of providing feedback and sources of the beliefs and their subcategories
2. Analysing the interviews	Beliefs of providing feedback, self-reported practices of providing feedback and sources of these	Transcribe and identify for more broad themes, if there were any, and new subcategories. All these are then	Axial and selective coding among the five English lecturers within the department. Axial and selective coding among the five science lecturers. Axial and selective coding between the English and the science lecturers	Eliciting, comparing and contrasting the information about beliefs, practices and sources of beliefs

Steps	Focus	Pre-analysis	Steps in analysis	Outcomes
	beliefs	summarised for lecturer validation		
3. Analysing the think aloud data	Lecturers' actual practices of providing feedback	Transcription of think aloud data	<p>Axial and selective coding among the five English lecturers within the department.</p> <p>Axial and selective coding among the five science lecturers.</p> <p>Axial and selective coding between the English and the science lecturers</p>	Eliciting, comparing and contrasting the information about lecturers' actual practices of providing feedback

Steps	Focus	Pre-analysis	Steps in analysis	Outcomes
1. Analysing the stimulated recall	Beliefs of providing feedback, lecturers' actual practices of providing feedback and sources of these beliefs	Transcription and identification of additional broad themes, if there were any, and new subcategories. All these were summarised for lecturer validation	Axial and selective coding among the five English lecturers within the department. Axial and selective coding among the five science lecturers. Axial and selective coding between the English and the science lecturers	Eliciting, comparing and contrasting the information to examine to what extent lecturers' beliefs were practised (within the same department and different faculties)
2. Analysing the students' responses	General and specific student responses to their lecturers' feedback		Transcription and identification of the broad themes.	Elicit the information about students' beliefs and their expectations of the lecturers' feedback
3. Lecturers' reflection sessions	The lecturers' reflections on	Summarised points from the	Getting the lecturers to reflect and react to the	Elicit the lecturers' reflections of the students' responses to their written feedback

Steps	Focus	Pre-analysis	Steps in analysis	Outcomes
	either retaining or changing their beliefs and practices in their provision of the written feedback	students' general and specific beliefs and expectations of the written feedback	students' views and responses to the written feedback	
4. Triangulation of findings	Try to find the convergences and divergences of lecturers' beliefs and actual practices. The factors that influence the beliefs are also elicited	Compare and contrast all the analysed data	Finalised codes of lecturers' beliefs, actual practices and factors	Make a summary of the entire findings

Appendix S: Coding for questionnaires and interviews

TEACHERS' ATTITUDE

Purpose (Q21: open ended questions)

- 15a) Giving feedback (oral or written) to students is a waste of my time
- 15e) Teachers must provide feedback to students even if they believe that the feedback may not assist students to improve their writing
- 15g) Feedback should be given only to students who are interested in improving their writing
- 15p) Teachers ought to be trained to provide constructive feedback to their students.

Students' Independence

- 15b) Students want all their mistakes to be corrected
- 15i) Giving written feedback helps students improve their writing only to a limited extent
- 15j) Some students do not take teachers' feedback seriously
- 15k) Students should learn to identify their errors
- 15n) Students should be taught to analyse their own errors.
- 15o) Students should learn to correct their own errors.

Focus of feedback

- 15d) Teachers should provide feedback only on grammatical errors in students' writing
- 15f) It is important for teachers to provide feedback on the overall structure of a piece of writing
- 15h) Teachers should provide feedback only on the content of the writing

Types of feedback

- 15c) Giving oral feedback to students is the best way to help students to improve their writing
- 15l) Giving written feedback on students' written work is more useful than oral feedback
- 15r) Doing peer editing (students giving feedback to another student) is not effective in my class

Multiple Drafts

- 15q) Multiple drafts help students improve their writing

Students' motivation

- 15m) Overcorrection may de-motivate students.

Effectiveness (Question 20) rate and reasons

My students make excellent progress

My students make good progress

My students make average progress

My students make no progress

PRACTICE (Question 16: types of feedback provided, 17: Frequency of type of feedback given)

Oral Feedback

- 12f) Discuss my feedback orally with only students who have issues with their assignments
- 12g) Discuss my feedback (orally) with all students individually
- 12h) Provide general feedback of the overall students' performance in class
- 12i) Provide feedback orally with groups of students during class time.
- 12j) Provide feedback orally with groups of students out of the class time.

Written Feedback

- 12c) Mark the assignments and provide written feedback
- 12d) Spend more than half an hour on each student's assignment on marking and providing feedback
- 12e) Mark assignments using impression marking, without providing written feedback

Focus of the written feedback

- 13a) Grammatical; accuracy at sentence level
- 13b) Vocabulary - accuracy of spelling
- 13c) Vocabulary – range and choice of words
- 13d) Paragraph structure – sentences clearly linked together
- 13e) Paragraph structure – logical sequence of ideas (e.g. development from topic sentence)
- 13f) Overall structure – logical sequence of paragraphs
- 13g) Content (on-topic, according to the question requirement)
- 13h) Content – number of ideas presented/discussed
- 13i) The ability to paraphrase the articles
- 13j) Avoidance of plagiarism , according to level of task
- 13k) The ability to cite relevant sources of information correctly
- 13l) Accurate referencing of background sources and reference list
- 13m) Register (tone of language appropriate to target audiences)
- 13n) Evidence of critical thinking
- 13o) Evidence of problem-solving ability (where appropriate)
- 13p) Evidence of creativity (indicating original thinking)

Method of providing written feedback

- 14b) I indicate only a few errors and hope students can identify the others.

- 14c) I indicate most of the errors (e.g. underline or circle the errors)
- 14d) I indicate all errors (e.g. underline or circle the errors)
- 14e) I indicate errors and specify the type of errors to students (e.g. underline/circle the error and indicate e.g. T for a tense error)
- 14f) I indicate errors and write the correct version for the students
- 14g) I indicate errors, specify the type, and write the correct version
- 14h) In addition to any of the above, I provide comments to students
- 14i) I only give brief comments and the grades
- 14j) I provide a longer written comment on students' work
- 14k) I mark by impression and do not identify errors or give comments
- 14l) I highlight a few errors, and give comments and the grades.

Peer Editing

Self-editing

Motivation

- 14n) I motivate students by providing positive feedback

Criteria/Guidelines

- 12 a) Provide specific guidelines for completing assignments each time an assignment is given
- 12 b) Review drafts of students' assignments and provide 'feedforward' (i.e. to help students improve the work)
- 14m) I distribute a check list to students to assist them to edit their assignments before I give out the assignment questions.

Grade

- 14a) I grade all written work submitted by students

Multiple Drafts (Question 18: If lecturers practice multiple drafts and the number of drafts allowed)

Sources of beliefs (Question 19)

My own decision

Course/Syllabus requirement

The requirement set by the partner universities

Textbooks or reference books on how to teach writing \

The influence from the teacher education programme

Parents' expectations

Students' expectations

The head of department/head of programme

The requirement set by the government

The nature of the task

INTI-UC management

My colleagues/a group of teachers' decision

Others (please specify)

Appendix T: A Sample coding of a lecturer's interview

Extract	Codes	Themes
<p>Me: When you are assessing a student's work, how do you <u>highlight the problems and errors?</u></p> <p>E1: Okay for <u>language wise, I underline. I circle and then I write gr for grammar, verb and for the content. I also circle and write at the side, if it is a good thesis or whether it is not clear and how they can improve</u> and err I also write for the <u>organisation.</u> I normally write at the end but sometimes when the piece of work is just so bad, I will write <u>a general comment at the bottom.</u></p>	<p>Highlight problems and errors</p> <p>Language: underline, circle</p> <p>Content: thesis statement</p> <p>Organisaion</p> <p>General comments at the bottom</p>	<p>Lecturer's self-reported practices of providing feedback</p> <p>Techniques of highlighting errors</p> <p>The overall practices of providing written feedback in general</p> <p>Focus of feedback</p>

Appendix U: Checklist of the list of themes and subcategories for the lecturer's interviews

<u>Lecturers</u>	<u>E1</u>	<u>E2</u>	<u>E3</u>	<u>E4</u>	<u>E5</u>	<u>S1</u>	<u>S2</u>	<u>S3</u>	<u>S4</u>	<u>S5</u>
Written feedback	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
a) Focus										
b) Technique of highlighting errors	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
c) General techniques of providing feedback	x				x		X	x	x	

Appendix V: A sample coding of a lecturer's think-aloud session

Transcript (Italics= reading from the students' written assignment)	Associated actions	Actions versus beliefs	Issue of addressivity	Strategies used
<p>Now discussions, hmm pretty short. (3 seconds pause) Let's check. <i>The flow rate of the parallel pump did not increase or decrease gradually.</i> (6 second pause). <i>Actually pump connected in parallel will increase the flow rate</i> (3 seconds pause) <i>of the fluid. But the results above show the flow rate of the highest power did not provide greatest flow rate. There is a possibility that</i> (2 second pause) <i>with high speed generated by pump electrical</i> (2 seconds pause) <i>power more friction produced in the pipes.</i> (2 second pause) <i>So</i> (2 seconds pause) <i>the</i></p>	<p>S3 typed and verbalised the following in his track changes in his computer: "you may need a short explanation on each graph, so that the reader will be able to understand your presentation" "So?"</p>	<p><u>Convergence:</u> Interview: He mentioned that he focused on discussion part on how student analysed their work in a critical way Focused on the discussion part in the think-aloud <u>Divergences:</u> Motivation: He said he tried to be positive.</p>	<p>Now discussions, hmm pretty short. (addressing researcher and student) Let's check. (addressing himself?) <i>So?</i> (addressing student) What? (addressing student) So I will tell the students (addressing me) so? Really? Type and</p>	<p>He provided me with the heading so that I was able to track the assessment He mentioned that the discussion section was short as he expected a substantial length for discussions. After pausing for 3 seconds he said "let's check". He read the student's entire paragraph After pausing for 4 seconds, to maybe digest the info, he asked "What?"</p>

Transcript (Italics= reading from the students' written assignment)	Associated actions	Actions versus beliefs	Issue of addressivity	Strategies used
<p><i>flow rate, Q decreases.</i> (2 second pause). What? (4 second pause). The <i>flow rate of the pump did not increase or decrease gradually.</i> (2 second pause). So I will tell the students, (2 seconds pause) so? (2 seconds pause). <i>Actually pump connected in parallel will increase the flow rate of the fluid?</i> (7 seconds pause). Really? (3 second pause - type). <i>But the result above show</i> (4 seconds pause). Type and verbalised simultaneously “It would be great if you can use (5 seconds pause) conjunctions (4 seconds pause) opps (4 second pause) such as, however, (5 seconds pause), nonetheless (5 seconds pause) here, instead (2 second pause)</p>	<p>“Really?”</p> <p>“It would be great if you can use conjunctions such as however nonetheless here, instead starting the sentence by using “but”</p> <p>“And?”</p> <p>“Which graph exactly you are referring to?”</p>	<p>(interview)</p> <p>TA: He could be a bit sarcastic with the usage of question form in his feedback: e.g. So? Then? And?</p> <p><u>Convergences</u></p> <p>But he was more positive in providing motivation for the student to perform better</p>	<p>verbalised simultaneously “It would be great if you can use (5 seconds pause) conjunctions (4 second pause) opps. (4 second pause) such as, however, (5 seconds pause), nonetheless (5 seconds pause) here, instead (2 second pause) starting the sentence (3 second pause) by using (2 second pause) so? (3 second pause) and?</p> <p>(addressing student)</p>	<p>But did not write the comment “what?”.</p> <p>He read another sentence and verbalised “so” and typed it.</p> <p><i>Read another sentence, paused for 7 seconds and asked “Really”? and then typed</i></p> <p><i>Paused for another 3 seconds and read the work halfway and highlighted the sentence and typed and verbalised simultaneously “It would be great if you can use”.</i></p> <p>He paused for a while</p>

Transcript (<i>Italics= reading from the students' written assignment</i>)	Associated actions	Actions versus beliefs	Issue of addressivity	Strategies used
<p>starting the sentence (3 second pause) by using (2 second pause) “But”. (8 second pause) so? (3 second pause) and? <i>There is a possibility that with high speed generated produced, so the flow rate, Q decreases.</i> Hmm (4 second pause). Anyway <i>the efficiency against flow rate graph did not show a linear or smooth curve.</i> (4 Second pause) right. I don’t understand this. (Type and verbalised at the same time – which (3 second pause) graph (3 second pause) exactly are you referring (2 second pause) to?” <i>This was due to the pump.</i> (6 second pause). (Type and verbalised at the same time: Don’t get what you mean here. (5 second pause)</p>	<p>“Don’t get what you mean here. I take it as a fragment”</p> <p>“So?”</p> <p>“Then?”</p>		<p>Right. I don’t understand this. (addressing the researcher/himself) graph (3 second pause) exactly are you referring (2 second pause) to?” Don’t get what you mean here. (5 second pause) I take it as a fragment”. (6 seconds pause). Again so? (3 second pause). <i>It is supposed</i> (2 second pause) to have a d here. <i>It is supposed to have the same value</i></p>	<p>maybe to think of the appropriate word to use. <i>He read again and paused, maybe to make sense of the information.</i> <i>He read the next paragraph. After pausing for 4 seconds, he mentioned that he didn’t understand this. He typed and verbalised at the same time in the comments, asking the student which graph the student was referring to.</i> <i>He read a fragment and paused for 6 seconds,</i></p>

Transcript (<i>Italics= reading from the students' written assignment</i>)	Associated actions	Actions versus beliefs	Issue of addressivity	Strategies used
<p>I take it as a fragment". (6 second pause). <i>The data in the Pout1 and 2</i> (2 second pause) <i>had different values.</i> (5 second pause). Again so? (3 second pause). <i>It is supposed</i> (2 second pause) to have a d here. <i>It is supposed to have the same value here because they are the same pump.</i> (4 second pause) ahhh then? (3 second pause)</p>			<p><i>here because they are the same pump.</i> (4 second pause) ahhh then? (3 second pause) (addressing all to student)</p>	<p><i>maybe trying to make sense of the info. He typed and verbalised at the same time, that he didn't understand what the student was trying to say.</i></p> <p>He read the next sentence and after pausing for 5 seconds, he verbalised and typed the comment. Then he made the corrections to the other errors made by student in terms of language use.</p> <p>After a few seconds' pause, he made the comment about the content</p>

Appendix W: A sample coding of a lecturer's stimulated recall session

Extract	Codes	Themes
<p>I: Okay what is the <u>meaning of question marks?</u></p> <p>F: <u>Usage of question marks is usually used when I don't understand what they are trying to say.</u> So yeah, I put a question mark there. <u>I get these strategies from my supervisor I</u> had for my dissertation in my undergraduate ah for my during my undergraduate days when I was doing my final year dissertation under <u>him, he influence me in terms of a kind of err attention and detail given to marking.</u></p>	<p>Usage of question marks</p> <p>Strategies used from the supervisors</p>	<p>Explanation of the symbols used/Techniques of highlighting errors</p> <p>The overall practices of providing written feedback in general</p> <p>Factors which influenced beliefs and practices</p>

**Appendix X: Checklist of the list of themes and subcategories for the
lecturer's stimulated recall**

	<u>E1</u>	<u>E3</u>	<u>E4</u>	<u>E5</u>	<u>S1</u>	<u>S3</u>	<u>S4</u>	<u>S5</u>
1. <u>Style of providing feedback</u>								
Specific Strategies of providing feedback		<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>		<u>x</u>			
a) <u>General style of providing feedback</u>								
i) Comments (at the end of the essay/ at the sides of the paragraph/no comments)		<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>					<u>x</u>
ii) Using abbreviations in providing feedback or using complete sentences in providing feedback	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>x</u>				<u>x</u>
iii) Short and concise/long feedback			<u>X</u>					<u>X</u>
iv) Motivating students			<u>X</u>			<u>x</u>		<u>x</u>
b) <u>Specific style of providing feedback</u>								
<u>Content errors</u>								
i) Highlight the errors through symbols (e.g. underline, circle, brackets, arrows, etc.)	<u>x</u>			<u>X</u>				<u>x</u>
ii) Providing cues to help students make the corrections(questioning technique)	<u>x</u>					<u>x</u>		
iii) Give opinion about the errors								
iv) Explain the errors generally								
v) Provide suggestions of correcting errors						<u>x</u>		