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**Rethinking formative assessment through peer
observation and reflection:**

A case study of Pakistani ESL lecturers' cognition and practices

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

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Abstract

Peer observation can be applied to assess teachers' performance. Despite an ever-growing corpus of literature on peer observation of teaching in education, very little research has been undertaken in tertiary level contexts where English is a second language (ESL), and no such study has been undertaken in a Pakistani context.

Peer observation is commonly used to assess teachers in Pakistan. It is regarded as the first step towards quality assurance to provide evidence for reappointment or promotion decisions. Such summative peer observation done for evaluative purposes is generally seen by observed teachers as a threat to their professional autonomy, because it is often considered as a fault-finding tool. However, formative peer observation has the potential to play a pivotal role in teachers' professional learning and growth. It can be an effective means of assessing teachers by identifying both areas of weakness and strength, thereby promoting teacher development.

This qualitative case study was conducted from August 2016 to April 2017 in the context of a renowned private university in Pakistan. It followed an interpretive approach, wherein each individual was believed to have a unique perception and interpretation of the praxis of assessment by means of peer observation of teachers. The study focused on the cognition and practices of a group of six Pakistani ESL lecturers, the observer of their classes, and a member of the Quality Assurance Committee in the context. Data were collected from the lecturer participants through a combination of questionnaires, initial focus group discussions, auditing of post-observation meetings, stimulating the recall of participants of these sessions, individual interviews, and written narrative frames. All data were subjected to a process of grounded analysis. The application of this inductive and multi-method approach to the six lecturers, alongside the interviews with the management personnel, and the collection of pertinent documents have provided a detailed picture of peer observation. This was achieved by first identifying the institutional perspective, and then by presenting the practitioners'

cognitive development, discussed in light of Kolb's (1984, 2015) Experiential Learning Theory.

In brief, findings revealed substantial diversity in views across the sources obtained within the institution. This study also provided a systematic structure for reflective practice to the lecturers and their repeated engagement in the research project facilitated their learning and enhanced their cognition, collectively and generally, and then individually and more specifically. This process enabled them to articulate their beliefs, which led to build on their understandings about peer observation more positively at the university context. Therefore, the idea and significance of reflective practice in peer observation to ensure that professional learning takes place are endorsed in the findings of this research.

This research potentially contributes to the current corpus of literature theoretically, methodologically, and contextually. The findings of this study also offer practical implications for researchers, institutional leaders, and practitioners of peer observation.

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List of Acronyms

Acronyms	Long form
APT	Appointment Promotion Tenure
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELT	Experiential learning theory
ERP	Educator Role Profile
ESL	English as a second language
HoD	Head of Department
HRE	Human Research Ethics
HSS	Humanities and Social Sciences
PO	Peer observation
QAC	Quality Assurance Committee
QA	Quality Assurance

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Assessment in education is a complex procedure that is usually employed to measure or contribute to the development of a learner's learning (Popham, 2018). In the context of this study, assessment of the lecturer participants was perceived to be an activity to evaluate their practices; however, it had potential to also contribute to their professional learning.

Globally, many educational institutes employ peer observation to assess teachers' performance for quality assurance or quality enhancement of the teaching and learning process. Peer observation is also commonly considered to be a useful means of assessing teachers for professional learning; depending on the context, it can be implemented as a bottom-up or top-down initiative underpinned by a summative or formative assessment approach. In Pakistan, peer observation is used as a component of teacher appraisal and is carried out by authoritative staff members to examine teachers' performance in class (Shah, Ali, & Ali, 2015). As a response to such an apparently summative mode of peer observation, situated within performance evaluation, teachers tend to "react" to, rather than to "reflect" upon (Gün, 2011, p. 126) peer observation of teaching. Although such peer observation such as that which was conducted in the research setting, where the convener of the English course observed lecturers once a semester, is primarily intended to be evaluative, it may still have some benefits for teacher learning. Peer observation has potential to improve the teaching of both the observer and the observed teacher if constructive and collegial feedback is received from peers and then reflected on for future action (Farrell, 2007). Therefore, this study provided a systematic structure for lecturer participants (observees) to rethink, reflect, and re-evaluate their understanding of peer observation. This study also gathered the institutional point of view of peer observation from the convener (observer), and the member of the Quality Assurance Committee, who were key people in implementing and facilitating peer observation in the research setting. The findings suggest that evaluative peer observation, although typically perceived as summative assessment, could also be viewed as a top-down approach to professional learning with potential to develop mutually beneficial relationships between teachers and their institutions of employment. Nonetheless, it is the

responsibility of the institution to make teachers aware of the explicit and implicit principles and procedures of this practice and to ensure that peer observation is non-threatening and developmental.

This chapter briefly outlines the study by introducing: the initial motivation for conducting the research, the research aims, the methodological framework, the context of the data collection, the working definitions of key terms, and the significance of this study. Finally, the chapter summarises the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Personal experiences leading to my initial interest

This study of lecturers' beliefs about, and practices of, teacher assessment through peer observation arises from my personal and academic experiences and subsequent interest in this issue. I have taught English as a foreign and second language for over a decade. During this time, I have been routinely observed by heads of department and senior teachers, yet I have always been left muddled about the rationale behind this practice for my professional growth. In my opinion, it was primarily used as summative exercise – a one-off event – and was carried out as part of the evaluation of teaching to determine career progression.

My interest in this issue increased when I undertook the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) in 2011. Peers and a tutor observed me to evaluate my teaching skills, a procedure which was initially intimidating for me partly due to my past experiences of peer observation. However, I realised that formatively constructive feedback received from my peers and tutor could help me to reflect on and self-evaluate my teaching skills and identify areas for further growth. Nonetheless, the difference between an appraisal process and professional learning through collegial discourse is yet to be thoroughly explored in Pakistan, preventing greater understandings of the ways in which the assessment practice of peer observation is used to *measure* teachers' competence rather than to *enhance* their teaching skills. Thus, teachers may feel uneasy or alienated in their own classrooms when observed by a senior colleague or an authoritative staff member.

My own experience as a student and teacher in the Pakistani tertiary sector prompted me to investigate the effectiveness of current peer observation practices

in instigating professional learning amongst teaching staff. In universities, lecturers are periodically assessed through peer observation, but this assessment does not necessarily focus on the processes of learning or how they can learn after the point of assessment. There is a need for educational institutions in Pakistan, as with elsewhere, to understand the quality of assessment in terms of how it influences the learning of those who are being assessed. This lack of conceptual clarity guided my decision to explore the ways in which individuals perceive the effectiveness of peer observation to bridge this gap. Through this inquiry, I have also explored where and to what extent the lecturer participants' cognition could be further developed in relation to peer observation as a tool for assessing teachers.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This thesis reports a case study undertaken in a private university in Pakistan. Through the lens of tertiary English as a second language (ESL) teachers' cognition, the study explored the potential for the assessment of teachers through peer observation to instigate professional learning. The research commenced with the broad aim of investigating the extent to which the current praxis of peer observation of teaching in the specific context was summative in nature, and whether it included elements of formative assessment.

The following are the specific objectives that led this study:

- Elicit ESL lecturers' beliefs about assessment of teachers through peer observation in a tertiary education context in Pakistan.
- Investigate the principles and procedures of peer observation in this context.
- Examine the extent to which the actual practice of peer observation converges with, or diverges from, lecturers' beliefs.
- Explore the role of feedback and observational learning for both the observer and the observed lecturers in the practice of peer observation.
- Uncover the developing emotional and cognitive factors that influence teachers during and after peer observation.

- Analyse and interpret the findings of this study in order to contribute to the academic understanding of the praxis of assessment through peer observation and reflection.

1.3 Methodological framework

This study is an inquiry into lecturers' cognition about, and practices in, peer observation as a tool of professional learning. It adopts interpretive inquiry as its paradigm; as such, each individual is believed to have a unique perception and interpretation of the phenomenon under study. An intrinsic case study was conducted to explore peer observation amongst ESL lecturers (non-native speakers) in a private university in Pakistan (hereafter referred to by the pseudonym ALI). A multi-method approach was employed, involving various data collection procedures, to capture the complexities of this particular setting.

Data were collected chronologically between August 2016 and April 2017 via: questionnaires, initial focus group discussions, the auditing of post-observation meetings, stimulating the recall of participants of these sessions using oral prompts, individual interviews, and written narrative frames. The lecturers were given opportunities to reflect on and articulate their beliefs, emotions and knowledge about peer observation to develop their thinking and understanding about this practice. Since peer observation at the research site appeared to be evaluative, I intentionally was not present during any of the observed lessons to avoid any possible intrusion. I only audited post-lesson discussions between the observer and the observed lecturers and then elicited the lecturers' subsequent reflections on these interactions and the observed lecture through stimulated recall sessions. This helped to uncover lecturers' practices and cognition during the process of peer observation. It also enabled exploration of the possible sources of their cognition and the ways in which emotions and cognition interacted. In addition, this combination and series of data collection procedures revealed the lecturers' assumptions and understandings at the collective level and then demonstrated the development of their cognition at the individual level.

1.4 Background of language education in Pakistan

Teacher cognition encompasses beliefs, which Borg (2003, 2006) asserts to be partially formed by their respective contextual backgrounds. Subsequently, the ESL context of this study, Pakistan, is an important factor in the exploration of the convergences and divergences between lecturers' beliefs and practices concerning peer observation.

Pakistan became an independent country in 1947, as a result of the partition from the former Indian subcontinent, which was under British rule. Pakistan is a multi-ethnic and multilingual society (Channa, 2012; Shamim, 2008; Tamim, 2014). The four provinces of Pakistan have four dominant languages: Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi (Ahmed & Zarif, 2013), and there are many minority languages which are considered indigenous (Manan, David, & Dumanig, 2014). Although Urdu was the mother tongue of only a small percentage of the population (Government of Pakistan, 2001), it was declared the national language after partition and the main medium of instruction at state-owned schools (Rahman, 2009; Tamim, 2014). The political ideology behind establishing Urdu as the national language was to bring unity among the diverse ethno-linguistic groups of the country (Rahman, 1997). English remained an official language even after partition, but a strong commitment was endorsed by the constitution to replace English with Urdu in the future (Rahman, 1997, 2009). However, such a replacement was not possible as English was regarded as the language of power and prestige, and it has been in widespread official use in government, education, law, the corporate sector, research and the media (Coleman & Capstick, 2012; Manan et al., 2014). Subsequently, in Pakistan, English is viewed as the language of development at both the individual and the national level (Shamim, 2011). Due to the global importance of the language, literacy in English is considered a prerequisite skill for a recognised career and upward global mobility (Mansoor, 2005; Rahman, 2002; Shamim, 2007, 2008). Paradoxically, studies show inadequate support for English language education across sectors (Mansoor, 2005).

The most recent language policy of Pakistan states that English is a language for all citizens and is to be used in all public and private higher educational institutes

(Government of Pakistan, 2009). However, the teaching and learning of English in public institutes has been shown to be below acceptable standards (Azam & Khurram, 2009; Shamim, 2011). No major actions have been taken to bring the English language policy fully into practice for the public education system (Azam & Khurram, 2009). In the private education sector, English is the main medium of instruction in all schools and universities (Azam & Khurram, 2009). This indicates that there is marked disparity in the quality and medium of instruction between the public and private sectors. As such, serious discrepancies occur in the same type of courses offered in the two sectors as there is no standardised way of teaching the English curriculum (Chaudary, 2011). The major reason for this widening disparity in the quality of education is attributed to the quality of teaching in the public sector, where most of the ESL teachers commence their careers with poor or no training (Aly, 2007; Azam & Khurram, 2009; Jalal, 2004). Additionally, there are inadequate in-service professional learning opportunities for teachers (Ali, 2014), particularly at higher public education levels (Aslam, 2011), further hindering effective teaching and the development of overall educational standards in Pakistan. However, this does not necessarily mean that private education is significantly superior to public education in Pakistan - according to the Punjab Education and English Language Initiative Project report (2013), English learning and teaching in both sectors remain poor. This research reported here focuses on the private sector, which is considered to be the primary provider of educational services in Pakistan because of its more effective and prestigious academic environment (Nisar, 2017).

Therefore, research is required in the area of teachers' professional learning in both sectors to identify ways by which effectiveness of teaching and the overall quality of education could be improved in Pakistan (Aslam, 2011). Hence, this study provides a detailed picture of the lived experiences of Pakistani ESL lecturers in terms of their assessment through peer observation in a private university context. These experiences could be related to similar settings in the private and public sector to improve the general quality of education in Pakistan. This research may also aid teachers to become more professionally adept and have a clearer understanding of their professional needs.

This study was conducted in the English Stream which is part of the Humanities and Social Science School at ALI. This university is ranked in the top ten private universities of Pakistan and is considered exemplary. The participants of this study were

- Six ESL lecturers employed to teach academic writing skills to first year undergraduates,
- The convener of the English Stream, and
- The representative of the HSS School as a member on the Quality Assurance Committee (hereafter QA member).

The lecturers were mostly employed on a full-time basis and had diverse teaching and educational backgrounds. Their main professional responsibility was to substantially improve freshmen's English reading and writing skills and help them reach higher proficiency levels essential for the completion of their academic courses.

1.5 Significance of the Research

After reviewing the relevant literature on teacher cognition in relation to peer observation studies, some research gaps were identified, which this study seeks to occupy. The significance of the study lies in the following dimensions.

Firstly, according to my reading to date, no research on teacher assessment via peer observation for the purpose of professional learning has been conducted in university contexts in Pakistan. To address this gap, this research study was conducted as a comprehensive and holistic case. All individuals involved in the peer observation process (the QA member, the convener of the course and the lecturers) participated in this research, to show different perspectives of the issue in a Pakistani context.

Secondly, according to the review of relevant literature done to date, data in peer observation studies are usually collected through questionnaires, interviews and observations. No multi-method studies have been found that address teacher cognition in relation to peer observation via data collected through such procedures as focus group discussions, the auditing of post-observation meetings,

stimulated recall sessions, interviews, and written narrative frames. This multi-method approach adopted in this study revealed the development of the lecturers' cognition over time. This combination of data collection procedures also gives a robust structure of reflective practice to the lecturers, first orally, and then a recapitulation through written data.

Thirdly, this study investigated individual lecturers' feelings, thoughts and emotions during each stage of the peer observation process. The findings reveal a transformation in lecturers' perceptions about peer observation in general, which, as a result, may increase the effectiveness of this practice for professional growth for these particular participants. This transformation could be extended to teachers in relatable settings. Hence, the importance of reflective practice is endorsed in the findings of the present study.

Fourthly, the findings contribute to understandings of the relationship between the development of teacher cognition and reflection on experience regarding peer observation in relation to Kolb's (2015) Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). While a small number of previous studies about teachers' beliefs and practices of peer observation have adopted experiential learning as a predefined framework (Donnelly, 2007; Peel, 2005), in the present study, grounded theory analysis was applied to the data collected. This inductive approach to data analysis and interpretation led to the adaptation and refinement of the ELT learning cycle, its principles, and the role of the educator.

Fifthly, this research project suggests practical implications for educational leaders, policy-makers and facilitators. It could also benefit participants of peer observation (the observer and the observed) regarding both the practice of peer observation as well as cognitive understandings of this process in comparable settings. The diverse and complex reality revealed in this research provides a comprehensive reflector to institutional leaders to critically review their policies of teacher assessment to ensure conformity between their actions and beliefs. In addition, the outcomes of this study direct attention to the importance of creating situations to help teachers articulate their beliefs about professional learning.

Through the multi-method approach to an in-depth identification of the cognitive and emotional factors of Pakistani ESL lecturers, this study has provided a base for developing effective ways to promote professional learning through peer observation.

1.6 Understanding of key terms in the context of the present study

Below are definitions of key terms that have been derived from the context of the present study:

Assessment is the process of evaluating and improving teachers' competence. It involves collecting information about teachers' skills and practices to help them understand their current competency level and suggesting measures to assist teachers with enhancing their competence to the optimum level. Assessment in the scope of this study is viewed through the lens of conducting peer observation of teachers.

There are two main types of assessment: **summative** and **formative**.

Summative assessment is fundamentally evaluative and is used to measure the teacher's competency level. In this study, peer observation done for evaluative purposes is considered an act of summative assessment.

Formative assessment is essentially done to improve teacher practice. In the context of this study, the practice of formative peer observation is developmental. It facilitates learning beyond the completion of the activity by encouraging teachers to continue reflecting on their practices and engaging in observation over the longer term.

Professional learning is the enhancement of teachers' professional skills and knowledge. It is a journey from lecturers' beliefs, which may be considered as unsubstantiated knowledge, to validated knowledge by reflecting on their experiences. Although the terms professional development, professional learning, and professional growth have been used interchangeably in the literature, in this thesis the term professional learning is generally used throughout.

Peers comprise a variety of relationships within a community of practice. They may or may not be of equal professional status. The classroom observer in the present study is a peer in the sense that he is a colleague of the lecturers he observes, albeit one with a higher status.

Peer observation of teaching is a non-reciprocal process between two peers with varying hierarchy levels. In the research context, the course convener assesses and observes lecturers' teaching skills once a semester with the aim that the lecturers will learn by receiving constructive feedback. The terms peer observation, peer review, classroom observation, and peer evaluation have been used interchangeably in the literature; however, in this thesis, peer observation is used throughout.

These terms are more fully discussed in the next Chapter 2: Literature review.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is composed of six chapters. This first chapter has briefly introduced the theoretical, personal, methodological, and contextual background of the study and stated the research objectives. It also introduced the purpose of the study, and the contributions it makes to the literature addressing teacher assessment, professional learning, peer observation, and teacher cognition.

Chapter 2 presents a critical and comprehensive review of relevant literature. It summarises selected literature on assessment in education, assessment of teachers, professional learning, peer observation, and teacher cognition. It also examines Kolb's ELT with reference to the enhancement of teachers' cognition and practice. This chapter concludes by highlighting research spaces occupied by this study, and the research questions derived from the relevant literature which are addressed through this research investigation.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodological framework used in this study. It explains and justifies the research design, research style, research methodology, and data collection methods. The data were analysed through a grounded theory approach, which is also discussed in this chapter. This is followed by outlining ethical

concerns in carrying out data collection procedures and the trustworthiness of this study. Finally, a summary of this chapter is presented at the end.

Chapter 4 presents a comprehensive picture of peer observation in a specific higher educational setting in Pakistan. The findings are reported and interpreted within the following perspectives on peer observation: a) the institutional point of view; b) the lecturers' cognition; and c) the lecturers' emotions. The final section of this chapter provides a summary of the key findings.

Chapter 5 first presents an overview of the key findings which are then discussed in relation to the findings of other theoretical and empirical studies of peer observation and teacher cognition. The discussion starts with a conceptual understanding of the professional learning of teachers. Next, it discusses the broad picture of rethinking assessment of teachers through peer observation from the institutional and practitioners' perspectives. Then, reflective practice, which helped to reveal micro details of peer observation (in terms of *how*, *who*, and *why*); and aspects such as the role of feedback and the emotional impact of peer observation are discussed. Lastly, the chapter examines the complexity of the key findings through a grounded interpretation and refinement of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory.

Chapter 6 presents a summary of the entire project. The chapter outlines contextual, methodological, and theoretical contributions and implications of the study to current understandings of peer observation. It also suggests practical implications for the praxis of teacher assessment, professional learning practices and policies, principles, conduct and stages of peer observation, the notion of 'peer,' and stakeholders. The chapter also makes recommendations for further research and concludes with a final reflection on my research journey.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 reviews relevant theoretical and empirical literature in relation to five key concepts: assessment in education, professional learning, peer observation, teacher cognition, and experiential learning. The chapter first provides a broad understanding of the wider concept of assessment in education and then narrows down to assessment of teachers through peer observation to achieve professional learning. It explores the possibility of making a clear connection between formative assessment of teachers and teachers' professional learning by means of reflecting on the experience of peer observation. The complex interplay of the factors associated with assessing teachers through peer observation is then considered from the perspective of teacher cognition and practice. The concept of teacher cognition, with particular emphasis on the emotional experience of the teachers who are observed, is important to this study.

The chapter is organised into six sections, introduced briefly in the subsequent paragraphs. Section 2.1 gives an overview of the theoretical understandings of assessment in education in general. It clarifies the link between assessment and evaluation and then outlines the two main approaches to assessment: summative and formative. The various means of assessing teachers through formative and summative approaches are described in reference to related empirical research.

Section 2.2 reviews the concept of teacher professional learning and explains differences between professional learning and teacher training. This section also illuminates two approaches to professional learning: top-down and bottom-up, and it explains the significance of institutional policy in the professional learning of teachers. Views of professional learning for ESL teachers in general are explored, followed by an examination of professional learning for teachers in Pakistan with reference to the limited number of empirical studies conducted in the Pakistani context.

The focus then turns to peer observation in Section 2.3, which presents an analysis of current empirical research on peer observation as a practice to assess teachers. This section first outlines the conceptual understandings of peer observation in regard to three main models. This is followed by a review of the relevant

empirical studies that are important to the present study. The key points are procedures of peer observation, formative approach to peer observation, role of feedback, reflective practice, and emotions in the process of peer observation. Finally, some concerns with power relations and cultural biases are addressed.

The concept of teacher cognition is reviewed in Section 2.4. The theoretical underpinnings of teacher cognition and language teacher cognition are defined, and the relationship between teachers' cognition and practices is explored. The ways by which emotion and cognition interact with each other and may impact upon teachers' practices are then identified. Thirdly, the section critiques – methodologically, theoretically and conceptually – the few studies that have been conducted on teacher cognition in relation to peer observation. Lastly, it highlights the particular context of Pakistan, which lacks research on teacher cognition in general and research on peer observation in particular.

The penultimate Section 2.5 deals with Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), which emerged as the theoretical framework of this current study after a grounded analysis of the data and interpretation of the findings. The final Section 2.6 identifies and justifies the research spaces that this study seeks to occupy and then presents the research questions that drive this study.

2.1 Assessment in education

This section is divided into two sub-sections. The first demonstrates the fundamental concepts of assessment within the existing theoretical understandings of assessment in education in general. These concepts include the meaning, significance, and purposes of assessment. These are followed by a brief explanation of the relationship between assessment and evaluation. Then the two main approaches to assessment in education, summative and formative, and the relationship, differences and difficulties between them, are outlined. All these fundamental concepts of assessment have been derived from the theoretical literature on assessment that focuses on students as learners. This literature is important to this study as it gives a broad sense of assessment and identifies the principles and the complexity of assessment in education. These understandings and concepts have been extrapolated to teachers as learners in this present study in order to comprehend assessment of teachers more holistically.

The second sub-section then frames the teachers' assessment within existing understandings of assessment in general. It describes common instruments used for assessment of teachers, including student course evaluations, self-assessment, and observations of teaching. While student course evaluations are usually considered summative, and self-assessment formative, observation of teaching could be summative, formative or even both.

2.1.1 Fundamental concepts of assessment in education

While theoretical understandings of assessment in education have generally focused more on students as learners and comparatively less on teachers as learners (Astin, 2012; Smith, 2013), this present research focuses on assessment of teachers to enhance their performances and practices.

Assessment in education is “multifaceted and complex” (Swaffield, 2008a, p. xi) and there are varying viewpoints about assessment in the literature reviewed to date. According to Astin (2012), assessment is the “gathering of information concerning the functioning of students, staff and institutions” (p. 3) to improve the overall performance of the educational organisation and its people (Atjonen, 2014). Although assessment has been considered a necessary part in ensuring quality control of institutes (Broadfoot & Black, 2004), its ultimate purpose is to facilitate student learning and development (Astin, 2012; Gardner, 2010). So, from a broader perspective, assessment involves “deciding, collecting and making judgments about evidence relating to the goals of the learning being assessed” (Harlen, 2012, p. 87). However, it depends on how the evidence is used – to report on learning or aid learning (Gardner, 2012). In the context of student learners, assessment is about knowing the learner (Rowntree, 2015), as it gives an understanding of what has been acquired and what needs to be learned (Carless, 2015). It is often carried out to support continued learning (Black & Wiliam, 2006; Reynolds, Livingston, & Willson, 2009), to enhance the horizons of knowledge and eventually to allow learners to make a positive contribution to the society (Astin, 2012; Boud, 2007; Boud & Falchikov, 2007). To sum up, assessment plays a major role in learning (Conway & Artiles, 2005; Gardner, 2006; Swaffield, 2008a).

In general, assessment is said to be an integral part of an educational organisation (Irons, 2008; Pishghadam, Adamson, Sadafian, & Kan, 2014; Swaffield, 2008a) and the assessment structure of an institution is the reflection of its values, culture, and standards (Astin, 2012). As Boud and Falchikov (2007) observe, “assessment is a value-laden activity surrounded by debates about academic standards” (p. 9).

2.1.1.1 Assessment and evaluation

Confusion reigns over the two terms, assessment and evaluation, as they are sometimes used interchangeably. Their usage depends on the meaning inferred in various contexts. On the one hand, evaluation of teaching is often referred to as the act of judgment about the effectiveness of the pedagogical practice (Astin, 2012; Elton, 1984) and is mainly used as an aid to decision-making or to draw a conclusion about teachers’ teaching. On the other hand, assessment is ideally not to be looked at as an act of judgment; rather, it is seen as a process to measure and then see how the results could influence and facilitate continued learning for the one being assessed (Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Elton, 1984; Harlen, 2007). In this sense, assessment can refer to two different accomplishments. The first is evaluation, the collecting and judging of relevant information for measurement purposes, and the second is progression, the use of that information for the improvement of institution and student learning (Astin, 2012; Pishghadam et al., 2014). This understanding indicates that evaluation is perhaps a component of all assessment (Astin, 2012; Roberson, 2008).

Therefore, assessment is used as an umbrella term for this study. It embraces the idea that assessment of teachers may not only be used to evaluate a teacher’s competence but may also be used to initiate professional learning of teachers.

2.1.1.2 Two approaches to assessment: Summative and formative

The two main approaches to assessment, summative and formative, are discussed below.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment has been widely emphasised in education when it comes to the assessment of students as learners (Irons, 2008). It involves evaluative testing (Boud, 2007; Irons, 2008) where the information collected is intended to

reveal the level of knowledge or skills that a learner possesses (Atjonen, 2014). Summative assessment usually comprises summing up the progress and accomplishments of the learner (Carless, 2015; Sadler, 1989), or a judgment or evaluation that captures and summarises all the evidence gathered to a certain point (Irons, 2008; Taras, 2005). It is a ‘snapshot’ or a ‘one-off’ exercise and usually seen as the conclusion of a learning period (Sadler, 1989; Taras, 2005). Summative assessment is considered a traditional method of assessment for reporting and recording information about the learner (Atjonen, 2014). It may not immediately have any impact on the learner’s learning. However, it usually influences decision-making by educational institutions, which consequently may have profound outcomes for student learning (Astin, 2012; Sadler, 1989). Nevertheless, summative assessment may not represent the learners’ accomplishments in terms of what they have improved or achieved (Atjonen, 2014; Black & William, 2006). For this reason, summative assessment has been criticised for lacking validity, as it may merely assess at the superficial level and hence, may be perceived to be biased and sometimes an aggressive form of assessing learners (Falchikov, 2007).

In summative assessment, the focus seems to be on the product and not the person or the process (Popham, 2009), although under the right conditions, the evaluative element in summative assessment could be harnessed for constructive purposes. There is a possibility for summative assessment to provide an opportunity to lead to formative assessment; it can be a good way to initiate and facilitate learning rather than seeing it as an end in itself. The present study supports the view that evidence gathered in summative assessment could be subsequently or concurrently used for formative assessment to promote learning and development, which is explained next.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment comprises forming or shaping learners’ learning to accomplish a desired goal (Carless, 2015; Sadler, 1989). One of the essential elements of formative assessment is that it can give learners the opportunity to be involved in their own assessment either through self-assessment or peer assessment practices (Dann, 2014; Harlen & James, 1997). In this way, on-going

learning is initiated, which guides the learner to reach the desired standard (Dann, 2014; Taras, 2005).

Feedback is an essential element of formative assessment as it identifies the learner's progress (Atjonen, 2014; Wiliam & Black, 1996; Hamm & Adams, 2009; Sadler, 1989; Swaffield, 2008b). The feedback is used to bridge the gap between the actual level of the work being assessed and the required standard (Dann, 2014; Ramaprasad, 1983). As Sadler (1989, p. 121) asserts, "the learner has to (a) possess a concept of the *standard* (or goal, or reference level) being aimed for, (b) compare the *actual* (or current) *level of performance* with the standard, and (c) engage in appropriate *action* which leads to some closure of the gap."

For these reasons, formative assessment has also been strongly emphasised in higher education; however, the relationship and the differences between summative assessment and formative assessment in education continue to be explored (Taras, 2005). Summative assessment is generally seen as conducive to a surface learning approach as it intends to focus learning only on assessment requirements (Atjonen, 2014; Harlen & James, 1997). On the contrary, formative assessment is seen as facilitative of a "deep learning" (Crooks, 1988, p. 467) approach that is intended to develop the learner's knowledge by linking prior knowledge to experience. However, efficient learning is often a combination of both surface and deep learning (Atjonen, 2014; Wiliam & Black, 1996).

Hickey (2015) considers that it is important to look beyond the intended purposes of assessment (whether it is formative or summative) to their intended and unintended consequences on learners at the individual level and then at the collective level. Hickey's perspective is based on assessment of students, but this notion could also be extrapolated to assessment of teachers by means such as peer observation. For example, when peers assess teachers through observations, the observer may act with the intended purpose of assessing the other teacher formatively, whereas the one being assessed may experience the practice as summative. So, in this case, it could be concluded that the observer has the intended *purpose* of formative assessment, but the observee may undergo both the intended (formative) and unintended (summative) *consequences*. This enduring

debate over the two types of assessment formats has become the root cause of the “conundrum” between formative and summative assessment (Hickey, 2015, p. 202), and suggests that formative and summative assessment can occur at the same time.

In summary, formative assessment is considered to be more effective than summative in promoting on-going learning. However, there is significant support for assessment which combines summative evaluation and formative feedback. Therefore, summative assessment should not be condemned due to its evaluative nature. This study concurs with the claim made by Taras (2005, 2009) that, until the centrality and perceived neutrality of summative assessment are acknowledged, the real blossoming of formative assessment cannot occur. Both formative and summative teacher assessment are important and both forms of assessment should be implemented as components of emerging teacher-assessment systems.

2.1.2 Assessment of teachers: Formative and Summative

Teaching is a complex and a multi-dimensional undertaking and therefore should be assessed through a multi-faceted approach (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Irons, 2008; Lewis, 1974; Smith, 2013). Due to the dynamics of teaching, it is hard to say that a single instrument can assess all aspects of any individual’s style or method of teaching as teachers may not behave the same or use the same methods in similar situations (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Irons, 2008; Smith, 2013). Therefore, it is important to consider alternatives to conventional means of assessment (Drummond, 2008) that are acceptable to teachers and are adapted according to the complexity of the teaching skill itself (Conway & Artiles, 2005).

2.1.2.1 Student course evaluations

Teachers are often assessed by student course evaluations. Evaluations are typically conducted annually or at the end of a term. These may include students reviewing teaching content, style and perceived ability through an instrument such as a questionnaire or a checklist (Bailey, 2009; Kember & Wong, 2000; Lavigne & Good, 2014). However, this practice is not typically conducive to enhance

teacher practice or development of skills (Astin, 2012; Dunkin & Barnes, 1986), which inclines it towards a summative approach to teacher assessment. Also, the student evaluation raises concerns of validity as this assessment of teachers' practice and style is based on the students' beliefs about teaching and learning, and it may be influenced by subjective experiences, such as grades obtained. Therefore, this assessment procedure may be biased, naïve, and ill-informed (Greimel-Fuhrmann & Geyer, 2003; Kember & Wong, 2000).

2.1.2.2 *Self-assessment*

Farrell (2013, 2015) argues that teachers should determine the appropriate method of teaching themselves instead of following teaching theories developed by experts. Hence, he encourages teachers to get into the mode of self-assessing and self-reflecting. This may help teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses as teachers and find ways to overcome their weaknesses and improve their teaching practices. Therefore, teachers may also self-assess, as it is important for them to look at their work more closely (Edge, 1992a, 1992b, 2002), and for them to gauge their own pedagogical efforts to decide what kinds of changes should be made to facilitate better student learning (Conway & Artiles, 2005; Kulik & McKeachie, 1975; Sadler, 1989; Smith, 2013). For example, teachers could write self-reports about their teaching practices (Lavigne & Good, 2014), keep a journal (Farrell, 2013, 2017), or maintain teaching portfolios to record their skills, achievements, efforts and contributions in teaching (Bailey, 2009; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Porter, Youngs, & Odden, 2001). Self-assessment is a formative measure and is considered an effective technique for self-reflection and professional learning (Lavigne & Good, 2014). Increasingly, such reflections are facilitated by the teachers' own audio- or video-recording of their lessons (see Lee, 2017; Tien, 2017).

2.1.2.3 *Observation of teaching*

Bailey (2001, p.114) refers to observation of teaching as “the purposeful examination of teaching and/or learning events through systematic processes of data collection and analysis” and outlines the four broad functions of observation of teaching in language teaching classrooms. First, pre-service teachers are normally observed by teacher educators in the practicum context to assess

development of their teaching. Second, peers or newly hired teachers observe in-service teachers for the purposes of professional learning of the observer. Third, supervisors or the head of the school observe practising teachers, to evaluate the extent to which the teachers adhere to the institute's expectations for teaching practices. Fourth, observation is widely used as a means of collecting data in classroom research. (See Andrade, 2016; Davys & Beddoe, 2016; Casabianca, Lockwood, & Mccaffrey, 2015; Goe, Biggers & Croft, 2012; Sierra & Lasagabaster, 2011 for the first three of these functions, and see Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018 for the fourth function.)

For the first three functions, peers, senior teachers or a supervisor make observations in classrooms. This is a conventional approach to the assessment of teaching and has been carried out widely (Bailey, 2009; Elton, 1984; Kulik & McKeachie, 1975; Lavigne & Good, 2014; Lewis, 1974; Porter et al., 2001; Smith, 2013). Since it has been suggested that teachers should be assessed preferably in their natural classroom setting and that contextual factors should be taken into account (Beijaard & Verloop, 1996; Conway & Artiles, 2005), these observations can be considered an effective way to critique and analyse teaching practices (Schultz & Latif, 2006). When supervisors assess teachers through observation, there are many ways in which the collected information could be reported. Checklists are often used as the main tool to conduct this type of assessment (Porter et al., 2001) However, this approach is restrictive for autonomous professional learning, as the thoughts of the observer and the success of the observee are limited to the length and content of the checklist (Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999). Moreover, this type of observation is usually the means to do record keeping about the quality of teaching and helps in feeding into decisions such as promotions, tenure, and probation (Astin, 2012). Thus, it would be considered to be primarily summative (Amrein-Beardsley & Osborn Popp, 2012). Such summative forms of observations are condemned by O'Leary (2014), who claims that such means of assessment are "ill-suited" for teachers' appraisal because the observed performance may show little resemblance to the usual performance of the teacher in class. Therefore, it has been suggested that this type of observation should be cautiously practised (Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999), as the evaluation of 'good teaching' or 'bad teaching' may be dependent on the

experience and perception of the observer (Andrade, 2016; Bailey, 2009; Conway & Artiles, 2005). Teachers in one study have also reported the feeling of anxiety because of the abrupt classroom visits (Hişmanoğlu & Hişmanoğlu, 2010).

Therefore, teachers' emotion is a crucial factor to examine and is discussed in more detail in Sections 2.3.6 and 2.4.4.

In addition, observation of teaching as a means of assessment has been discouraged in recent research due to the "issue of reactivity" (O'Leary, 2014) from the teachers and even students; such observation disturbs the overall environment of the class. O'Leary (2014) argues that teachers' behaviour is affected due to the physical presence of the observer and by the mere act of being assessed through observation. To minimise the effect of the observer's presence, the use of video cameras has been suggested, which may not distract the class in any way (Bailey, 2001; O'Leary, 2014). Although video recording can be an unbiased way to provide information to teachers about their teaching skills, video is not a complete picture of reality (Stigler, Gallimore, & Hiebert, 2000). Video provides unreliable evidence and limited data as much of what is happening in the classroom may not be visible on the screen (Stigler et al., 2000), and the direction of the camera is, of course, not entirely unbiased. These advantages and disadvantages of using video recording to observe teaching performances leave researchers and practitioners questioning whether to use it for observations.

The main debate that could be raised here (and which this study seeks to explore) is that in observations of teaching, the authoritative peer or supervisors have potential to not only assess but to guide and mentor teachers in developing effective teaching strategies. Providing constructive feedback to teachers after observations is often recommended to improve their teaching skills and future performances. This hybrid of the summative and formative assessment of observed teaching may help teachers to bridge the gap between their actual levels of competency and the desired level of competency, and thereby refine teachers' professional practice.

Lastly, observation of teaching for the professional learning of teachers could be done in two ways: alone (self-observation) through audio or video recording or in pairs/groups (peer observation) in which teachers observe each other (Farrell,

2007) as explained in this section and more specifically and fully in Section 2.3. Peer observation could be summative or formative, whereas self-observation is usually considered as a formative approach to teacher assessment. Since strong emphasis has been placed on formative approaches, the present study focuses on ways to develop teachers' professional learning by assessing them formatively when they are undergoing peer observation. In this way, the information gained from assessment can serve more than one purpose if mutually agreed by the assessor and the teacher/s being assessed.

In summary, Section 2.1 has reviewed the theoretical understanding of assessment in education in general. The reviewed literature has indicated two approaches to assessment, summative and formative. Similar to student assessment, in teacher assessment a formative approach is indicated to be more beneficial for teachers to expand their pedagogical expertise. This section has also established a foundation for this study to rethink a combination of summative and formative approaches to assessing teachers through peer observation of teaching to promote professional learning.

2.2 Professional learning of teachers

Teacher development theory and research have provided the context for this study. The following section presents the concept of professional learning of teachers and briefly explains the difference between professional learning and teacher training. It also introduces the two main approaches to professional learning: top-down and bottom-up. This section highlights the significance of institutional policy in the professional learning of teachers, and the practices of professional learning with particular regard to language teachers. Lastly, it reviews the few studies related to teacher professional learning conducted in a Pakistani context.

2.2.1 Concept of professional learning

A review of selected literature on professional learning suggests that it plays an important role in enabling teachers to adopt a more dynamic and innovative approach to teaching (Dayoub & Bashiruddin, 2012; Guan & Huang, 2013; Rout & Behara, 2014; Saroyan & Trigwell, 2015). Despite professional learning being

a common term used within the field of education, there appears to be no widely accepted definition. For example, Ahuja, (2015) defines professional learning as the “skills and knowledge attained for personal as well as career development” (p. 11), whereas Borg (2015b, p. 541) defines it as development and growth of one or more aspects of teaching, which include “behavioural, (meta) cognitive, attitudinal and emotional” facets. It is said to be “an essential mechanism for deepening teachers’ content knowledge and developing their teaching practices” (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002, p. 81), as it involves “teachers looking intensively and systemically at their practice” (Farrell, 2013, p. 26). These systematic efforts are claimed to “bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students” (Guskey, 2002, p. 381). Despite these different shades of meaning, professional learning is believed to be beneficial for teachers to equip them with knowledge and skills to implement the necessary changes in their pedagogy (Chalmers & Gardiner, 2015). For the present study, professional learning is intended to be driven by the learner, and teacher autonomy is pivotal in terms of facilitating and developing teachers’ skills, beliefs and knowledge.

Some important factors have also been identified regarding the effectiveness of professional learning practices. Firstly, it has been argued that teachers’ professional learning initiatives practised by traditional, top-down methods are ineffective, as the idea of such methods is transmitting knowledge rather than building knowledge (Rout & Behara, 2014; Thomas, McNaught, Wong, & Li, 2011). However, this argument can be counteracted as such methods may have the potential to benefit teachers’ learning if teachers are given some space to delve into these practices more deeply. It may also depend from individual to individual as to what is effective for them among the varied professional learning practices in their context (Borko, 2004; Van Schalkwyk, Leibowitz, Herman, & Farmer, 2015). Teachers simply may have different learning preferences and it is better for them to choose a professional learning exercise that suits their needs best.

Nevertheless, power should not only be centralised on the policy makers as the mediators or initiators of learning; some power should also be transferred to the teachers as both the beneficiaries and agents of learning. Secondly, professional learning is not only about enlightening teachers with knowledge and spreading

awareness of new teaching techniques; rather “support is also needed for teachers to reflect on their current practice and adapt new knowledge and beliefs to their own teaching contexts” (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 598). To enable teachers to become adaptive practitioners, they should be facilitated towards constructing knowledge and systematic reflective practice (reviewed more fully in Section 2.3.5), which can be a key to foster teachers’ agency (Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015). Fostering critical reflection with a purpose of discovering and developing awareness can enable teachers to be the agents of change of their own reality and cognition (Taylor, 2017). Thirdly, the institutional environment and culture ought to be supportive to bring change in teaching methods from conventional to innovative and effective (Gosling, 2009; Guskey, 2002; Loucks-Horsley, Stiles, Mundry, Love, & Hewson, 2009). Lastly, the availability of time, resources, and funding are essential factors to consider for professional learning activities to take place successfully (Hişmanoğlu & Hişmanoğlu, 2010).

If the aforementioned factors are ignored, efforts and practices introduced by institutions to their faculty for professional learning may remain invalid and unreliable (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2015). Therefore, it has been suggested that effective professional learning should instil teachers with practical applications by providing opportunities to self-evaluate, develop, and collaborate with other teachers (Darling- Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Loucks-Horsley et al., 2009).

Attention now turns to briefly explaining the differences between teacher training and professional learning, which are crucial to understand, because in Pakistan, the two terms, teacher training and professional learning are used interchangeably (Faiz ul Hassan, Khan, & Ahmed, 2015). Therefore, the differences between them need to be identified.

2.2.2 Professional learning and teacher training

There are numerous misconceptions that tend to surround teacher training and professional learning; they are usually displayed as “mutually exclusive,” which is not the case (Freeman, 2001, p. 75). Richards and Farrell (2005) have made a clear distinction between teacher training and professional learning. They argue

that the former aims at preparing teachers with fundamental teaching strategies, methodologies and approaches and fulfils only immediate goals. The latter enables teachers to comprehend more deeply and widely their profession and professional needs. Professional learning is a much more dynamic approach to teacher learning than training (Farrell, 2013; Guan & Huang, 2013).

Unlike teacher training, which is considered an initial introduction to teachers about some teaching methodologies and skills that they could apply into practice in their classrooms, teachers' professional learning emerges from building new knowledge and information on their current knowledge and beliefs (Borg, 2015b; Tinoca & Oliveira, 2013). New information is gathered from their personal and social experiences which is incorporated in their teaching practices. This process develops teachers professionally and subsequently promotes student learning (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Guan & Huang, 2013; Guskey, 2002). However, the practices of professional learning have been split into two different approaches: the bottom-up and the top-down approaches (Farrell, 2007, 2013; Richards, 2001), which are reviewed as follows.

2.2.3 Top- down and Bottom-up approaches

The top-down approach is a formal process organised by administrators. It is not considered to be very effective as teachers cannot fully determine the trajectory of their own learning. In some cases, teachers may participate voluntarily in professional learning activities like seminars and workshops. It is done to make teachers aware of the latest developments in their respective fields, so they could integrate those changes in their instructional practices (Alberto, Paulina, & Ruth, 2014; Farrell, 2013; Rout & Behara, 2014).

By contrast, the bottom-up approach comprises initiatives taken by the teachers themselves to reflect on their teaching practices and fine-tune them accordingly (Farrell, 2013; Rout & Behara, 2014). Reflective practice is a bottom-up approach (Farrell, 2013), which is derived from the teachers' intrinsic motivation to improve their teaching skills by self-examining their practices and beliefs (Farrell, 2007, 2013). Reflective practice is the beginning of autonomous professional growth (Farrell, 2013). In totality, the main difference between the two approaches is in regard to the implementation of professional learning activities.

Practices applied by institutional leaders are considered to be top-down, whereas practices that value teachers' perspectives are considered to be bottom-up (Sierra & Lasagabaster, 2011).

Farrell (2013) suggests that the two approaches can prove to be effective for teachers' professional learning if they are carried out concurrently. For example, teachers may first engage in top-down undertakings and gain knowledge to evaluate their position and bring about changes in their teaching practices through the bottom-up approaches (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Fullan, 2001). This could be a cyclical process throughout their careers. Hence, the present study supports incorporating both top-down and bottom-up approaches to professional learning of ESL lecturers through peer observation.

2.2.4 The significance of institutional policy in professional learning of teachers

The institutional context of teachers is important to consider when studying professional learning of teachers (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2001).

While the individual performance of every teacher is a crucial factor in maintaining quality teaching (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012), it has been claimed that gaining improvements in teaching quality can be achieved more promptly and more effectively if managed as a cooperative effort that is underpinned by a well-aligned institutional policy (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Hénard & Roseveare, 2012). Hence, it has been suggested that institutional policy regarding professional learning of teachers should illustrate a conceptual framework that defines "important features of teacher learning experiences" which have the "potential to move the field forward in terms of building a consistent knowledge base" (Desimone, 2009, p. 184). An institutional policy should incorporate and construct those professional learning approaches that "strengthen the discussion, open up the debates, and enrich the array of possibilities for action" (Little, 1990, p. 148). This was also suggested through the findings of case study research by Parisot (1997) in which, after interviewing the teachers, the institutional policy was revised to take into account their perspectives. Thus, to strengthen the professional learning of teachers and the

quality of teaching, institutions should first establish coherence of their policies with the enhancement of teaching quality and the incorporation of teachers' perspectives (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012). This step would not only harness teacher learning but would also advance teacher agency (Calvert, 2016). To strengthen the coherence of policies, it is important to identify the processes in the institutional policy that converge with or diverge from the teachers' beliefs and knowledge. The present study has undertaken to do this in the case of professional learning of ESL teachers through peer observation.

2.2.5 Professional learning of ESL teachers

Since my study focuses on the professional learning of tertiary level language teachers through peer observation and reflection, it is important to recognise the factors that affect language teachers professionally. Over the years, professional learning of ESL teachers has been termed as a complex process (Avalos, 2011) as compared to other teachers. This is because in an ESL classroom, English is the outcome as well as the medium of instruction. Therefore, there is much emphasis on ESL teachers paying attention to not only the content, but also the delivery of the lesson and teaching methodologies. Language teachers are the agents of change (Pennington, & Richards, 2016), and their professional learning requires integration of psychological, social, emotional, cognitive, and methodological factors (Guan & Huang, 2013; Roberts, 2016).

The field of ESL teaching encourages all sorts of top-down and bottom-up professional learning activities mentioned in the section 2.2.3 (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Morgan, Absalom, & Scrimgeour, 2014; Richards & Farrell, 2005). However, it has been claimed that ESL teachers should be open and proactive to evaluate their own teaching skills to get a richer understanding of their profession (Edge, 2002). As said by Guan and Huang (2013, p. 2112), ESL teachers' professional learning emerges from "a process of refreshing and reshaping" teachers' existing cognition (see Section 2.4 for more detail on teacher cognition). In this process, the classroom is considered an influential site for teachers to inquire into their own practices (Borg, 2015b). In addition, Richards (2002) highlighted that reflective practices (discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.5) make ESL teachers mirror the different problems they encounter and the ways in

which they tackle them. This practice further helps them in drawing upon their experiences, beliefs and theories of teaching. Therefore, professional learning activities should raise ESL teachers' awareness of the relationship between their beliefs and experiences of language learning and teaching. This way teachers would be given the chance to question their own views of language teaching and then may link it with their teaching practices (Nicholas, Starks, & Macdonald, 2011). Hence, the present study focuses on raising and investigating tertiary ESL teachers' awareness about their professional needs through peer observation. This present study supports that teachers should be given the chance to reflect on their performances to make pertinent links and meanings between their embraced beliefs and their actual language teaching practices. Consequently, their beliefs may change for the better.

2.2.6 Professional learning of teachers in Pakistan

Dayoub and Bashiruddin (2012) claim that the government of Pakistan has made a conscious effort to improve the quality of teaching by developing and setting specific standards of education and teacher learning, but there is little evidence of the implementation of any of the standards. The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (2014) has encouraged Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes and emphasises the quality of teacher education and ways to enhance professional learning in teachers. However, Chaudary (2011) claims that professional learning hardly exists in Pakistan and this "initiative remained drastically under-resourced, imposed rather than professionally owned, and lacked intellectual rigor and professional relevance" (p. 633).

In addition, limited research is available on professional learning in Pakistan and on-going research is mainly focused on the primary and secondary schools (Centre of Economic Research in Pakistan, 2013) rather than the tertiary level. This gap was confirmed during the review of professional learning studies. It was impossible to locate any empirical study on the professional learning of ESL university lecturers in Pakistan. However, there are a number of studies of schoolteachers in Pakistan (e.g. Ali, 2014; Dayoub & Bashiruddin, 2012; Hashmi, 2011; Ikram, 2015; Karim, 2011). The limited number of empirical studies has focused on the impact of the prevailing practices of professional learning on

educational institutes in Pakistan (Chaudary, 2011; Hashmi, 2011; Ikram, 2015; Shamim, 2011) and exploration of the means of professional learning at the individual level (Dayoub & Bashiruddin, 2012) and at a collective level (Aslam, 2011; Huma & Pirzada, 2013). A few studies have focused on practices of professional learning, which include CPD programmes (Ali, 2014; Faiz ul Hassan, Khan, & Ahmed, 2015) and academic degrees to help teachers develop professionally (Halai, 2006; Retallick & Mithani, 2003).

The important point that has been unfolded from these studies is that Pakistani teacher participants mostly believe in self-reflection and professional learning, and they have shown eagerness to grow (Chaudary, 2011; Dayoub & Bashiruddin, 2012). However, this is subject to the provision of congenial and supportive professional learning opportunities, as explained in the narrative accounts of two novice Pakistani teachers (Majocha, Costa, Mpetta, Ara, Whalen, & Fernandes, 2017). It has been suggested that heads of schools could endorse a common and shared school vision to promote professional learning opportunities (Salfi, 2011). If teachers are given the ownership to develop themselves through their preferred means, the monopoly of the expert-driven exercises could be avoided (Kasi, 2010), and this could be a possible effective approach. Overall, these studies show that there are convergences and divergences among teachers about their beliefs on professional learning and the actual practices carried out in their respective educational institutes. Their own understanding of the idea of the professional learning influences their attitudes towards participating and being a part of the practices of professional learning. Hence, there is a literature gap regarding this matter in the context of Pakistan that still needs to be researched in depth. To make sure that teachers actually experience the benefits of the professional learning programmes, it is important to study the effectiveness of these programmes on the quality of teaching and to investigate the preferred practices of teachers that are effective in their respective cases to foster professional growth. Furthermore, all of the studies discussed above are predominantly dependent on interviews or questionnaires, which are limited so far as they present a partial picture of the impact of these CPD programmes on the professional growth of teachers.

In short, Pakistan is an under-explored context, and little has been researched in relation to professional learning of university level ESL teachers. This present study applies a more in-depth analysis and a multi-method approach to provide a holistic picture about the lecturers' cognition and practices in peer observation in their specific context, which could be extended to relatable settings. The next section presents the phenomenon of peer observation of teaching globally.

2.3 Peer observation of teaching

Peer observation is commonly considered to be a useful means of assessing teachers for the purpose of professional learning (Bell, 2012). This section first explains the conceptual understandings of peer observation, which includes three models of peer observation and their characteristics, and key factors that revolve around each model. Second, regardless of what model is followed, there are various factors that have been identified as crucial for effective peer observations. Themes that have emerged from the review of the relevant empirical studies on peer observation are explained in the following order: implementation and procedures, formative approach to peer observation, role of feedback, reflective practice, and effects on participants' emotions. Then some reported concerns on power influences and cultural implications are examined. At the end, this section identifies research spaces that have surfaced from this review of selected publications.

2.3.1 Conceptual understandings of peer observation

In essence, peer observation of teaching refers to a situation where a teacher is observed by a colleague in a classroom to gain an understanding of teaching and learning (Richards & Farrell, 2005). However, there are various complexities that affect the situation in delivering, organising and executing peer observation effectively. Broadly, there are various ways in which the practice of peer observation can be embedded across an educational institute. A number of factors influence and determine the purpose, outcome and process of this exercise, and these concepts are discussed in this section. Gosling (2002, 2005, 2014), who is highly influential in this field, has suggested three peer observation models for teaching: *evaluative*, *developmental*, and *collaborative*. Their characteristics summarised from Gosling's work are tabulated below.

Table 2.1: Three models of peer observation

Characteristics	Evaluative	Developmental	Collaborative
Participants	Senior staff members observe teaching staff	Expert teachers or educational developers observe other teachers	Peers and colleagues observe each other
Objectives	Identify performance level	Demonstrate competency and improve teachers' teaching practices and skills	Improve teaching through collegial conversation and mutual reflection
Outcome	Promotion, increment, quality assurance, appraisal	Constructive feedback to suggest plans to implement and improve teaching and learning	Discussion and stimulation to improve teaching and learning
Difference in status between the two parities	Hierarchy in power	Hierarchy in expertise	Usually equal
Process	Could be judgemental- often non reciprocal	Constructive – often non reciprocal	Non-judgmental – usually Reciprocal
Beneficiaries	Institution	Teachers who are observed	Teachers who observe and are observed

In the light of the theoretical concepts about assessment discussed in section 2.1, the evaluative model of peer observation classified by Gosling appears to be somewhat summative in nature. It may be a one-off observation, usually conducted by a person who holds a position of authority to evaluate the competence of teachers (Gosling, 2002). According to Barnard (1998) it is appropriate for organisers to invigilate the classroom teaching to maintain a standard of education, but they should record accurate information being sensitive to the “background, knowledge, attitudes and skills” (p. 49) of the teachers they wish to observe. On the contrary, Cosh (1999) criticises a model of peer observation that is evaluative in nature and is carried out merely as an appraisal activity and states that peer observation that is usually conducted for evaluative

purposes is threatening for teachers and jeopardises a supportive teaching environment. Therefore, she argues that evaluative peer observation should only be applied if teachers agree to be observed for the purpose of teacher appraisal. Otherwise, this judgmental act may affect the self-esteem of the teachers regarding their potential and capabilities (Cosh, 1999; Gosling, 2014). Peel (2005), through her own experience of peer observation as a new lecturer, also claimed that due to its evaluative nature, this is not a suitable practice for the professional growth of teachers. O’Leary (2016) gives a detailed account about how such classroom inspections in the UK are effective to collect information about teachers’ knowledge and skills and other data about the classroom but fail to improve teaching practices. Hence, an evaluative model of peer observation seems to be useful for accountability and quality assurance purposes but may not necessarily promote any professional learning in teachers who are observed.

The developmental and collaborative models, on the contrary, appear to be formative in nature as both models focus on improvement and constructive feedback (Cosh, 1998; Sachs & Parsell, 2014). However, to increase the trustworthiness of formative approaches to teachers’ assessment, it is important to carry out the practice often, at least more than once a semester (Brent & Felder, 2004; Paulsen, 2002). A developmental model involves a more experienced mentor or educational developer observing less experienced or novice teachers to help develop their teaching practices. The educator developer plays a vital role in monitoring and ensuring the process is effective and positive (Bell, 2001). In comparison, the collaborative model involves two colleagues of a similar level who work together to enhance each other’s teaching practices (Gosling, 2002, 2014). Gosling (2014) has termed the collaborative (or peer-review) model as “Professional Learning through Collaborative Peer-Supported Review” (p. 19) and describes it as the most suitable approach for teachers due to its reciprocity of learning and parity of power relations between the two parties. According to him, in this model, teachers tend to work in a non-threatening atmosphere built on mutual trust and support, which gives them an opportunity to share their professional experiences of teaching in classrooms. It also plays an important role in fostering a collegial environment that is more conducive to learning as compared to the developmental or evaluative models of peer observation.

The three models of peer observation in Table 2.1 also indicate that the evaluative and developmental models have a more managerial approach instigated by administration, whereas the collaborative peer observation process seems more collegial and enacted by individual teachers. A collaborative model is generally reciprocal; it gives teachers the freedom to self-select their observer, which gives them a feeling of ownership in the process. Also, it is found to boost their confidence level and foster a more accepting attitude towards negative feedback (Gosling, 2014). Nevertheless, while the characteristics of these three models in Table 2.1 make each model appear conceptually distinct, in practice they may seem less well defined or even merge.

This section has provided an overview of the conceptual landscape of peer observation that is largely divided into three main models. Next, the relevant empirical studies of peer observation are reviewed for the purpose of explaining how these concepts have been explored in real settings.

2.3.2 Implementation and procedures of peer observation

Regarding the procedures of peer observation, empirical studies show that usually three stages of peer observation are implemented: pre-observation, observation, and post-observation (Ahmed, Nordin, Shah, & Channa, 2018; McGrath & Monsen, 2015; Webster, 2002; Kohut, Burnap, & Yon, 2007). In the pre-observation stage both the observer/s and the observee meet to set a purpose for the observation. In the second stage, the observer observes the lesson and collects the information relevant to the discussion made in stage one. In the third stage, post-observation, the observer delivers the feedback by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson (Kohut et al., 2007; McGrath & Monsen, 2015).

Nevertheless, there has also been debate on whether the three stages of the peer observation are sufficient. According to Bell (2001), Day (2013), Eri (2014), and Sullivan, Buckle, Nicky, and Atkinson (2012), peer observation is more beneficial for participants if guided to implement a fourth stage: critical self-reflection. In three of these studies (Bell, 2001; Day, 2013; Sullivan et al., 2012), the observer and the observee were asked to write and submit a report to an educational developer, which included their experiences of peer observation, and their perceived strong and weak areas of the teaching practice. In the other study (Eri,

2014) reflection was enabled through a follow-up meeting between the observers and observee to discuss and clarify feedback received during the post-observation stage. The importance of reflection in peer observation is reviewed in more detail in Section 2.3.5. In addition, a fifth stage - implementation - has been recommended in order to transform the lens of reflection into future practices (Eri, 2014; Grainger, Bridgstock, Houston, & Drew, 2015). See Appendix 1 in which details and summary of the empirical studies reviewed in Section 2.3 are tabulated.

2.3.3 A formative approach to peer observation

Empirical studies have repeatedly endorsed Cosh's (1998) claim that formatively inclined peer observation of teaching is an effective tool for professional learning. Teachers in peer observation have been found to develop professionally in collaborative models (Hendry & Oliver, 2012; Kenny, Mitchell, Chroinin, Vaughan & Murtagh, 2014; Overland, Levander, Black, & Evans, 2017; Psalla, 2013), in developmental models (Crabtree, Scott, & Kuo, 2016; Sullivan et al., 2012; Yiend, Weller, & Kinchin, 2014) and also in evaluative models (Kohut et al., 2007; Msila, 2014).

Kohut et al. (2007) and Msila (2014) conducted studies to explore formative benefits in an evaluative model in a USA university context and a South African school, respectively. Kohut et al. (2007) used surveys to elicit perceptions of observers and observees, and Msila (2014) employed interviews with the observed teachers. Although in both studies the process was "unavoidably summative in nature" (Kohut et al., 2007, p.23), as peer observation was either stated to be conducted to make reappointment, tenure, and promotion decisions (Kohut et al., 2007), or was carried out by hierarchical members (Msila, 2014), the results in both studies showed that participants acknowledged the process as a valid tool to assess teachers formatively. These two studies are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, as the nature of peer observation is similar to what took place at the research site.

The developmental model was implemented and evaluated in two studies in USA and UK university contexts respectively (Crabtree & Scott, 2016; Sullivan et al., 2012). Observed teachers in both studies highly valued the feedback they received

from the observers. They perceived this kind of peer observation to be non-threatening and a developing exercise that focused on enhancing their confidence and improving their teaching skills (Sullivan et al., 2012). It offered several opportunities to highlight the observed teachers' strengths and gave them some suggestions about ways to improve teaching quality. Although it was a non-reciprocal process, such systematic and constructive peer observation was recognised to have considerable potential to facilitate professional growth in both studies.

A collaborative model of peer observation was applied in four studies, across three tertiary contexts in Australia, Ireland, and US respectively (Hendry & Oliver, 2012; Kenny et al., 2014; Overland et al., 2017) and in one Greek secondary school context (Psalla, 2013). These peer-to-peer observations of teaching were reciprocal, and constituted useful and feasible means for teacher development. With the frequent visits, observers and observees were provided with a richer understanding of teaching and were able to collaboratively devise more effective solutions to change practices and improve their classes (Psalla, 2013). It was found that in collaborative models, observers' and observees' autonomy and the predetermined focus were the two main factors that substantially increased participants' self-efficacy and their professional learning (Overland et al., 2017). Furthermore, gaining professional learning from feedback and observational learning in peer observation was also explored in a study by Hendry and Oliver (2012). It was found that academic teachers believed they learnt more by watching others teach, and therefore, observational learning was perceived as a more useful process than merely receiving feedback to improve their teaching practices and try new teaching strategies in class (Hendry & Oliver, 2012).

Although collaborative and developmental are both formatively inclined models of peer observation, the developmental approach has more potential in terms of maximising the benefits of peer observation. This was found in a comparative study by Yiend et al. (2014) in which the potential levels of collaborative and developmental models were explored. Results showed that the developmental model was more successful as compared to the collaborative model; it yielded more critical and constructive feedback and gave teachers the opportunity to

evaluate their teaching practices and eventually improve them. Therefore, the involvement of expert educational developers could be of crucial importance, which suggests “a hybrid observation model combining linear and hierarchical discourse of teaching” is ideal (Yiend et al., 2014, p. 465). In a collaborative model, the observer or observee, or even both in some cases, may lack analytical and observational skills and therefore may be unable to provide all the necessary information or suggest new strategies. To counter this likely argument of the “blind leading the blind” (Cates & Monk-Tutor, 2010) in a collaborative model, an external observer in the form of an educational expert could be added to a collaborative model, as will be discussed below. This would strengthen the validity of the feedback and conclusions made in the process of peer observation as per Kenny et al.’s (2014) study. However, this does not mean that a collaborative model is a faulty one, as two or more novice teachers could still engage in beneficial reflective activities of peer observation as found in a number of studies (see Bell & Mladenovic, 2015; Donnelly, 2007; Hendry & Oliver, 2012; Psalla, 2013). The point is that in some cases formative peer observation needs to be a combination of developmental as well as collaborative models, so teachers get the opportunity to critically reflect on real life teaching experiences, and consequently bring changes in their practices. Nevertheless, professional learning through peer observation, whether collaborative, developmental or evaluative, depends on the provision of feedback.

2.3.4 Role of feedback

Feedback has been revealed to play a fundamental role in the professional learning of observed teachers in collaborative (Barnard, Croft, Cuffe, Bandara & Rowntree, 2011; Donnelly, 2007; Psalla, 2013), developmental (Byrne, Brown, & Challen, 2010; Shortland 2010; Yiend et al., 2014) and evaluative (Msila, 2014) models of peer observation. To discuss the practice of teaching for any of the models (collaborative, developmental or evaluative), effective and constructive feedback should be goal-directed, specific, detailed and corrective, and comprise an appropriate combination of positive and negative comments (Thurlings, Vermeulen, Kreijns, Bastiaens, & Stijnen, 2012). However, giving constructive feedback is a “demanding skill” (Cosh, 1999, p. 24), and the pattern of feedback and interactions between the two parties is a complex process (Thurlings et al.,

2012). Feedback is mostly shared between the observer and observed teacher, and it could be in “dialogue or written” form (Cosh, 1999, p. 25) and is usually given in the post-observation stage.

Empirical studies indicate that observers often record feedback in the form of written field notes during the observation, which they then convey to observees face-to-face in the post-observation meetings (Barnard et al., 2011; Blackmore, 2005; Byrne et al., 2010; Shortland, 2010; Yiend et al., 2014). In some cases, oral feedback delivered in meetings is summarised in a written form to provide a record of the practice (Snydman, Chandler, Rencic, & Sung, 2013). Checklists are also used (Hendry, 2015) to set an outline for the observers and guide them when gauging the performance of the teachers (Shortland, 2010). However, in following the guidelines of such checklists, usually only limited information is recorded, which can be a hindrance in suggesting what is actually beneficial for the observed teacher (Gosling, 2014). Also, checklist and its foci should be agreed by observers and observees before the observation (Shortland, 2010).

The collaborative approach of delivering feedback in peer-to-peer observation may help observed teachers develop their pedagogic confidence about themselves by recognising their strengths and identifying areas of improvement (Barnard et al., 2011; Donnelly, 2007; Psalla, 2013). Such an increase in teachers’ awareness about their teaching practices promoted their critical thinking and professional growth (Psalla, 2013). However, to ensure that feedback helps teachers improve from it, a follow-up to teachers’ reflection should be done (Psalla, 2013). It was also found that the effectiveness of feedback lay in the fact that it was delivered in a cordial and respectful manner between two equal peers, and its elements were non-judgmental and non-evaluative, and entirely constructive (Barnard et al., 2011). In addition, it was revealed that feedback becomes meaningful to the observed teachers when the focus in post-observation meeting is the same as the foci decided in the pre-observation meeting (Barnard et al., 2011). This makes peer observation a coherent exercise.

As noted by Gosling (2002, 2014), the developmental model usually involves an educational developer who facilitates the whole practice of peer observation and then feedback is communicated in the post-observation meeting. It has been found

that the role of the educational expert not only helps in identifying areas of weakness and strength in the constructive feedback, but it also prompts plans to implement and evaluate changes in practice (Yiend et al., 2014). The constructive feedback received from the observer promoted on-going professional learning by addressing and focusing on matters such as course delivery and student engagement (Shortland 2010). However, this continual development was achieved by frequent peer observations, which enabled the observer and the observed teacher to build a relationship of trust and deepen the level of collegiality. In this way, feedback became a means of sharing views (Shortland 2010).

Overall, empirical studies have reported feedback as the key aspect in peer observations, but it is a complicated process. A number of factors play a role in determining the usefulness of feedback, such as the relationship between the observer and observee, the observation's criteria, and the delivery and content of the feedback. Having said that, if the observation is to serve a useful purpose, feedback should be carefully conveyed. The information gathered and the feedback received from observation should be clarified through discussion and conversation in order to understand what has been observed. As Gaies (1991) claimed, "What we see, when we observe teachers and learners in action, is not the mechanical application of methods and techniques, but rather a reflection of how teachers have interpreted those things" (p. 14).

2.3.5 Reflective practice in peer observation

As emphasised by Peel (2005), critical reflective engagement is important in peer observation to help teachers to critically consider their practices and beliefs. Hence, reflective practice in peer observation is pivotal; it enables "the development of metacognitive ability and/or appropriate conceptions of teaching and learning" (Sach & Parsell, 2014, p. 7). Farrell (2015) defines reflective practice as "a cognitive process accompanied by a set of attitudes in which teachers systematically collect data about their practice" (p. 123). Such a reflective approach has the potential to lead to professional learning as teachers take responsibility for their actions, identify areas of improvement, and uptake accordingly (Farrell, 2013, 2017).

Many studies have concurred with Peel and Farrell that reflective practice for participants of peer observation is important. For example, it was found that if teachers are not facilitated towards reflection in peer observation, teachers' professional learning is limited (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2005). A number of other studies have promoted reflection as a necessary stage in developmental peer observations (Bell, 2001; Chamberlain, D'Artrey, & Rowe, 2011; Sullivan et al., 2012), and collaborative peer observations (Bell & Mladenovic, 2015; Crabtree et al., 2016; Day, 2013; Donnelly, 2007; Kenny et al., 2014). In two studies reflective practice was instigated in participants by their participation in a case research (Dos Santos, 2016b; Msila, 2014). The reflective practice in the present study is similar to that of the two latter studies (Dos Santos, 2016b; Msila, 2014).

Teachers have largely appreciated the stage of reflection, as it enables them to reflect on their teaching beliefs and practices and notice even the minor things in a classroom (Day, 2013). It can open the doors to collaborative pedagogical discourse and facilitate improvement in learning by critically evaluating and reflecting current practices (Bell, 2001). In a way, it gives some control to observed teachers over the entire process in terms who, why and what will be observed, which helps them to evaluate their teaching practices throughout the process and make connections between their teaching practices and feedback (Donnelly, 2007; Farrell, 2011).

One study, which is particularly important to the present study, is Msila's (2014). In this 2014 study, observations were conducted by the principals, which suggests that it was an evaluative practice. However, the principals' aim was to act as mentors. To realise this aspect, reflective practice played a crucial role. The researcher facilitated reflective practice by encouraging teachers to contemplate and talk about the practice. This articulation of their experience broke down isolation and allowed teachers to inspect and reflect on their own practices and beliefs (Msila, 2014). This 2014 study resonates with the present study, as it used the idea of empowering teachers and building their understanding about peer observation through their participation in the research project. This is discussed more in Chapter 5.

The review of the empirical studies in this section show that after engaging in any model of peer observation process, it should be considered essential for teachers to become “reflective practitioners” (Farrell, 2015, 2017; Schon, 1983) to make use of the information gathered from feedback or observational learning.

2.3.6 Emotions in peer observation

Some studies have reported that peer observation has the potential to cause emotional issues in observed teachers as well as observers. For example, observed teachers have reported feeling anxious, nervous, and self-conscious prior to participating in peer observation (Carroll & O’Loughlin, 2014; Hendry & Oliver, 2012; Swinglehurst, Russell, & Greenhalgh, 2008), even though a collaborative model of peer observation was implemented. This was partly because observed teachers in one study were novices and had little knowledge of what was going to happen (Carroll & O’Loughlin, 2014). In the other two studies, the observed teachers thought they were going to be judged and evaluated by the observer (Hendry & Oliver, 2012; Swinglehurst et al., 2008). In Carroll and O’Loughlin’s (2014), and Hendry and Oliver’s (2012) research, observed teachers’ negative feelings soon dissipated during the observation as overall the environment was collegial and respectful and there was good rapport between the observer and observed teachers. However, in Swinglehurst et al.’s (2008) study, peer observation provoked so much anxiety that its potential proved to be considerably reduced. Some terms used by observees were “intrusive, judgmental, nerve-wracking, stressful, threatening, and nightmare” (Swinglehurst et al., 2008, p. 386). Similar feelings were expressed by observed teachers in two other studies (Edgington, 2017; Sandt, 2012), in which peer observations were based on a managerial approach. Thus, negative emotions were a result of perceived power relations (this issue is reviewed further in section 2.3.7), lack of space for pedagogical discourse, insufficient knowledge about the criteria and outcomes of peer observation, and little space for teacher autonomy (Edgington, 2017). Observed teachers reported peer observation as “nerve-wrecking”, which affected their practices and caused a “shift in body language” and the “tone of voice” during observations, and to qualify as good teachers, teachers have claimed to “put up a performance” (Sandt, 2012, p. 360). This shows when teachers know that they are going to be observed, it is likely that they put on a model lesson to

avoid any criticism (Cosh, 1999), which as a result would present an unrealistic picture of their usual teaching practices, leading to a meaningless act of peer observation. In addition, observers have also expressed reluctance to deliver negative aspects of a lesson in the feedback session, as it may result in lowering observee's confidence and jeopardising their mutual relationship (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2005).

It has been suggested that negative emotions can be mitigated through making teachers aware of the process and its principles (Carroll & O'Loughlin, 2014), by building a relationship of trust between observer and observee (Psalla, 2013), and by openly discussing apprehensions in the pre-observation meeting (Pattison, Sherwood, Lumsden, Gale, & Markides, 2012). While it may be common to feel somewhat self-conscious before observation, reducing the impact of power relations and mutual understanding between the two parties with regard to the purpose of the observation can help participants to feel more comfortable and confident.

2.3.7 Power relationships

In a managerial approach to peer observation, inherent power relationships within the observation situation are often present (Edgington, 2017). Findings of empirical studies show perceived power relationships in peer observation can lead to many issues in observed teachers' minds. Power relations could influence observed teachers' understandings about the purpose, process and outcomes of peer observation if these principles are not carefully and explicitly articulated to them. For example, due to the difference in status between the observer and observee, observees wondered about peer observation as a development process or an evaluative exercise (Chamberlain et al., 2011). Teachers complied with peer observation as an institutional requirement rather than engaging with it as a professional learning tool, and hence Chamberlain et al. (2011) have termed peer observation "a decoupled process." This shows that power relations mislead observed teachers into believing that peer observation is a legitimate exercise for quality assurance purposes and not teacher development purposes, even if the purpose to implement it is the latter one (Swinglehurst et al., 2008). This contradiction between professional learning and performance evaluation caused

by power relations was also evident in the findings of other studies (Sandt, 2012; Wingrove, Hammersley-Fletcher, Clarke, & Chester, 2017). Lastly, in such peer observations, often observed teachers' time availability and autonomy are not considered. For example, the issue of time was found to be a major obstacle in the progression of a managerial approach to peer observation in an English language teaching context in Hong Kong (Dos Santos, 2016a). It was hard for teachers to integrate the observation process in their busy schedules.

In this case, educational leadership and the heads of educational institutes could play a major role in alleviating the negative impact of power relations, which would consequently lead to implementing peer observation programmes and policies in an effective manner (Bell & Cooper, 2013; Bell & Thomson, 2016; Wingrove et al., 2017). They could try to make efforts in bringing clarity about the purpose and outcomes of peer observation through providing some guidance to the observed teachers (Chamberlain et al., 2011; Wingrove et al., 2017). This could be furnished through running preparatory workshops for the observer and observees to debrief each and every principle and procedure of peer observation (Bell & Cooper, 2013), or through training the observers to conduct and participate in the practice of peer observation in a clear and structured manner as suggested by Cosh (1999).

2.3.8 Cultural implications

To interpret the findings of empirical studies of peer observation, contextual evaluation is important, as some features of peer observation may be directly linked to the cultural context of the institute or even the country. These cultural factors could influence teachers' perceptions. For example, peer observation was perceived differently because of cultural differences in two studies (Walker & Forbes, 2017; Zepeda, Parylo, & Ilgan, 2013). In a comparative quantitative study, while peer observation was widely practiced and accepted in American schools, in Turkish schools it was rarely applied (Zepeda et al., 2013). Therefore, Turkish teachers showed a lack of understanding of the meaning and the importance of peer observation, and there were substantial differences in the beliefs of American and Turkish teachers about applying peer observation and its benefits to teachers (Zepeda et al., 2013). In the other study (Walker & Forbes,

2017), the benefits of receiving a complete outsider's perspective were appreciated, but the external observers' differences in perceptions were also witnessed. The difference in perception existed due to the difference between New Zealand and British informal and formal cultures being reflected in a classroom setting (Walker & Forbes, 2017). The findings of these two studies imply that cultural competence is important to understand the classroom context, content, teaching patterns and styles.

Culture may also be reflected in the institutional policies and implementation of peer observation. This consequently influences teachers' understanding and experiences of peer observation, as it occurred in a study carried out in a South African university context (Kilfoil, 2014). Peer observation is commonly used in South Africa for quality assurance purposes and the same was portrayed in the university's policy. As a result, teachers perceived the practice of peer observation as an auditing tool that seemed to be embedded in the institute's culture. This study is discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

A number of studies have analysed teachers' reactions towards the collaborative model of peer observation in universities in the USA, Ireland, and Australia, and in schools in Greece, USA, Turkey, and Cyprus. Some studies have reported on the developmental model in universities in UK and Australia. However, only a few studies have investigated an evaluative model of peer observation in the context of South Africa and USA. No published study on peer observation in the context of Pakistan has been found. Generally, in Pakistani educational institutes, the culture of assessing teachers has a summative approach. A formative approach to assessment in order to improve teaching quality is a rare phenomenon, especially in the public sector (Khan, Khan, Hussain, & Shaheen, 2017). However, the present study focuses on the professional learning of language teachers through peer observation in a well-renowned private university of Pakistan (ALI) and is expected to add value to the current body of literature by sharing its approach to assessing teachers for the purpose of professional learning. Possibly, the public sector may also benefit from the private university's expertise, and quality of peer observation in Pakistan might be improved in general.

To summarise the review of studies on peer observation in this Section 2.3, the following research spaces have been identified:

- Uncertainty is present over the stages of peer observation and whether there should be three, four or five (pre-observation, observation, post-observation, reflection, implementation).
- Some studies (Kohut et al., 2007; Msila, 2014) have shown that peer observation could appear evaluative but still includes formative elements. This aspect needs more investigation to understand the complexity of formative and summative approaches to peer observation. Furthermore, there is a need to explore teachers' perceptions behind this confusion.
- The convergences and divergences in teacher cognition and actual practices of peer observation are under-researched in the studies I have read to date.
- The process and structure of feedback need investigation to address the extent to which the evaluations and interpretations of observers and observees converge or diverge.
- The follow-up reflection needs to be understood more clearly to know how teachers develop and learn professionally from this process.
- Studies have found that peer observation can cause negative emotions, but the ways in which these emotions affect teachers' cognition and practice are still underexplored.
- It has been impossible to locate any published study regarding peer observation in a university context in Pakistan.

Teacher cognition is likely to play a central role in teachers' professional learning and development; therefore, it is necessary to explore the concept of teacher cognition, to which attention will now turn.

2.4 Teacher cognition and practices

This section reviews the concept of teacher cognition and theories of teacher cognition. It illuminates the relationship between teachers' cognition and practices, and then reviews the extent to which teachers' emotion and cognition correspond with their beliefs and practices. It then focuses on language teacher

cognition studies in relation to peer observation and points to some research gaps that this study occupies.

2.4.1 Concept of teacher cognition

Teachers are active thinkers and their decision-making about instructional practices is influenced by various personal and contextual factors. Educational research has recognised the impact of teacher cognition on teachers' professional lives, and this has generated a substantial body of research that has been reviewed and critiqued by Borg (2003, 2006, 2015a). According to Borg (2003), teacher cognition is “the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think” (p. 81). Teacher cognition research also takes into account how teachers' thinking, beliefs and knowledge affects their behaviour in special relation to what happens in the classroom (Prodromou, 2009). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, teacher cognition is defined as “tacit, systematic and dynamic” (Borg, 2006, p. 272), and is also perceived as a mental activity that is labelled by a number of terms such as “*knowledge... beliefs, attitudes, conceptions, theories, assumptions, principles, thinking and decision making*” (Borg, 2006, p. 272, italics in original).

2.4.2 Language teacher cognition

Woods (1996) is one of the first researchers to study in-depth (his was the first book-length treatment of the topic) the background of language teachers' knowledge and sources of their beliefs to understand the process of teachers' decision-making during classroom events. He emphasised that teachers' daily pedagogical experiences played a major role in shaping teachers' education. He also claimed that teacher education programmes traditionally focus on theory and often fail to educate teachers about classroom events – “the product of the teaching decisions” (p. 22). However, it has been claimed that the educational process closely guides language teachers to adopt teaching strategies and cope with daily language teaching challenges, which in return shape language learners' learning environments and achievements (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Xu, 2012). Since teacher education programmes play an essential role in developing language teachers' cognitive abilities, it was suggested that educational programmes should raise the awareness of teachers to make them understand the nature of their

“personalised theories” (Burns, 1992). Enabling teachers to critically reflect would help them see how beliefs interplay with their decision-making and hence inform their practices. This experiential process may create spaces for language teachers’ own professional growth and learning, as they identify and revise their beliefs. It also directs attention to understanding teachers’ cognitive development through the wider concept of experiential learning.

Theoretical and empirical studies on teacher cognition have recognised that language teachers’ behaviour and practices are highly influenced by contextual factors (Borg, 2003, 2006; Dunkin & Barnes, 1986; Freeman, 1996b; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). Teachers’ prior knowledge, schemata and experiences are formed through operating in their specific institutional contexts that interconnect and shape their beliefs, which become their “theories for practice” (Burns, 1996, p. 175). Therefore, to understand language teachers’ learning, it is important to study how individuals interact with the context. Barnard and Burns (2012), Borg (2003, 2006) and Freeman (2001) assert that language teachers’ own past experiences of language learning shape their cognition about the language learning process, forming the initial basis of their understanding of language teaching which then guides their teaching practices. Besides, professional learning activities, regardless of whether they are for experienced or novice teachers, are believed to have an impact on language teachers’ cognitive abilities (Barnard & Burns, 2012). Hence, language teacher cognition is a “situated, dynamic, mediated, and inherently complex” matter (Burns, Freeman & Edwards, 2015, p. 597). This present research focuses on language teachers’ cognition about professional learning practices. By embracing the complexity of “teachers’ inner lives” (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015, p. 436) in the context of their practice, it will help to identify “ecologies of practice” (Burns et al., 2015, p. 596) and to understand language teachers’ cognitive processes and development.

2.4.3 Language teachers’ cognition and practices

The nub of language teacher cognition comprises knowledge and beliefs (Borg, 2006). To elaborate the concept of beliefs, Pajares (1992) said that beliefs are moulded by experience, events and opportunities that arise across a teacher’s life. Beliefs are an aspect of a person’s entity and tend to form naturally. Teachers may

be unaware of their beliefs and if asked might not be able to express them explicitly (Kagan, 1992). Beliefs are also said not to be in an individual's control and are considered to be more influential in forming teachers' behaviour and attitudes towards a specific task as compared to knowledge (Pajares, 1992). Shavelson and Stern (1981) stated that when teachers do not have knowledge about something, they rely on their beliefs to guide them in the classroom. However, the relationship between teachers' background knowledge and beliefs is hard to determine (Woods, 1996).

Now the question that arises here is how teachers' practices are linked with their cognition. According to a thorough review by Borg (2006) during the period 1990 to 2000, changes in behaviour do not entail change in cognition and vice versa. An interesting example by Cosh (1999) can be stated here to define the relationship between behaviour and cognition of teachers in relation to peer observation. It is quite likely, when teachers know that they are going to be observed and their teaching performance is going to be evaluated by a senior staff member, they put on a 'model lesson' to avoid criticism. This example displays a change in teachers' behaviour without any change in cognition (Borg, 2006). However, if any change takes place in teacher cognition, studies should attempt to capture and understand the change, its process, and any factors that influenced the change (Borg, 2006; Fang, 1996; Nespor, 1987). The present study precisely focuses on this matter by investigating how teachers' prior knowledge, and professional and personal experiences affect their decision-making, and how knowledge and beliefs influence teachers' practices.

2.4.4 Emotion and cognition

This section discusses the importance of emotions in teaching and their relation to teacher cognition. It has been asserted that there is an "underestimation of the complexity of teaching" and teaching is often perceived as a rational activity, while the emotional complexity of teaching is frequently overlooked (Schutz & Zembylas, 2009, p. 10). Schutz, Hong, Cross, and Osbon (2006) explicitly define emotions as:

socially constructed, personally enacted ways of being that emerge from conscious and/or unconscious judgments regarding perceived

successes at attaining goals or maintaining standards or beliefs during transactions as part of social-historical contexts (p. 344, italics in original).

Denzin (2009) states that emotions are sensed and felt as “lived performances” by teachers and students during all the activities that take place in the learning and working environment and they, as “moral agents, enact the felt emotions” (p. v).

As mentioned in Section 2.4.1, language teacher cognition has been defined as “what language teachers think, know, believe, and do” (Borg, 2003, p. 81; however, in this synthesis, teachers’ emotions and feelings are noticeably absent, although they are major constituents in teacher cognition research. Therefore, emotion in this present study is understood as an adjacent phenomenon in teacher cognition research, because “emotion, cognition, and activity continuously interact and influence each other, on both conscious and unconscious levels, as teachers plan, enact, and reflect on their teaching” (Golombek & Doran, 2014, p. 105). The interrelationship between cognition and emotion is complex yet crucial (Nagamine, Fujieda, & Iida, 2018). This point has also been touched on by Borg (2012), who suggests that researchers should cover both cognitive and emotional aspects, to conceptualise and understand the broad image of teacher cognition.

There has been a noticeable upturn in the number of researchers investigating the role played by teachers’ emotions generally (Borg, 2012, 2015a; Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Sutton and Wheatley (2003) review the literature related to teachers’ emotions and assert that teachers’ negative and positive emotions influence their cognitive development. However, more insight on the issues of teachers’ emotion is needed to know about its effect on their teaching. The failure to integrate the role of emotion as an intrinsic component in the process of learning has limited our comprehension about the development of teachers’ cognition (Ashton & Gregoire-Gill, 2003). Therefore, addressing the element of emotion is a valuable part of educational research, as it helps to yield insight on how emotions influence teacher cognition and practices. Consequently, it has been suggested that teachers’ professional learning activities should acknowledge the importance of emotions in teachers, and help teachers understand the relevance between their emotional wellbeing and their professional practices (Schutz et al., 2006). For example, in an empirical study by Golombek and Doran (2014), it was

found that a novice language teacher was affected emotionally as she reflected on her teaching practices in a written journal. Due to the lack of teaching experience, facing teaching for the first time, the language teacher found herself in a vulnerable position, which affected her cognition and practices. Therefore, it can be said that emotion is an operative component in the cognitive development of language teachers, which suggests that professional learning activities should acknowledge teachers' emotions to support the activity in a positive way.

Hence, this study addresses emotional and cognitive factors related to peer observation, as this may help in understanding the reasons for any differences in the ESL teachers' espoused theories and theories in action.

2.4.5 Teacher cognition and peer observation

To the best of my knowledge only six studies have been carried out on teacher cognition specifically in relation to peer observation. A summary of these studies is tabulated below and then discussed afterwards.

Table 2.2: Empirical studies on teacher cognition and peer observation

Author/s	Context	Sample	Method	Findings
Ahmed, Nordin, Shah, & Channa (2018)	Saudi Arabian university	13 EFL teachers for questionnaires and 5 for interviews	Questionnaires and interviews	Peer observation is a useful tool for EFL lecturers' professional learning if implemented systematically.
Donnelly (2007)	Higher education, Ireland	3 participants from the programme	Interviews and document collection.	Participants developed confidence about themselves by recognising their strengths and identifying areas of improvement.
Msila (2014)	School in South Africa	3 principals and 15 teachers	Interviews and observations of teaching	Observations made by the principals were found to be a suitable practice to develop teachers professionally.
Karagiorgi (2012)	A primary school in Cyprus	7 teachers	Action research using interviews	Teachers felt compelled to conduct an observation without understanding its purpose. As a result, no benefits of peer observation

to teachers' learning were found.

Kohut, Burnap, & Yon (2007)	University of North Carolina	80 untenured faculty and 143 tenured faculty	Survey data was used	Both, observers and observed teachers found an evaluative model of peer observation beneficial for teachers' learning
Zepeda, Parylo, & Ilgan (2013)	Turkey and US schools	491 teachers	Post-positivist paradigm using surveys	Substantial differences in the beliefs of American and Turkish teachers about applying peer coaching and its benefits to teachers.

The main focus of these studies was teachers' beliefs on the impacts of peer observation in their professional lives, although the discrepancy between beliefs and practice was not addressed in any of the six studies. There is a need to explore the extent to and the ways in which observation practices converge with or diverge from teachers' beliefs. In the subsequent paragraphs, these six studies are reviewed collectively to comment on the practical, contextual, and methodological gaps in this small body of research.

Firstly, these six studies show that research needs to address the different elements that interact with the teachers' cognition and how they consequently change their beliefs and practices. It is also important to gauge the significant and insignificant elements in this process. The researchers focused on language teachers' awareness, perceptions and beliefs related to peer observation. However, the relationship between actual practice and their current beliefs are still underexplored in these six studies. The present study addresses this.

Secondly, these studies either employed interviews (Ahmed et al., 2018; Donnelly, 2007; Karagiorgi, 2012; Msila, 2014), or surveys (Kohut et al., 2007; Zepeda et al., 2013), which are insufficient measures to address the complexity of teacher cognition research. It has been suggested by Barnard and Burns (2012) and Borg (2012) that using a multi-method approach to compare and contrast data can provide a thick description of the context in teacher cognition studies.

Therefore, this study adopts a multi-method approach to provide a comprehensive and a complete picture of the researched phenomenon.

Thirdly, as noted before in the review of teacher cognition literature, diverse terms are used to describe cognition. These terms are perceived differently and given a particular definition in these six teacher cognition studies, causing inconsistency and confusion. Hence, to lessen this confusion, this present study uses the term ‘cognition’ to encompass all the activities related to teachers’ minds stated by Borg (2006) in section 2.4.1.

Fourthly, the aspect of participants’ emotions was not covered in depth in any of these studies. Only Ahmed et al. (2018) and Msila (2014) said that observed teachers reported experiencing nervousness and feeling uncomfortable, but the details of when and why they felt like this were missing in the study. Ahmed et al. (2018) briefly mentioned that observed teachers felt nervous because they perceived peer observation as an evaluative tool. Observed teachers’ and observers’ philosophical and psychosocial experiences in performance-oriented approaches to observations have been examined extensively by a recent study (Edgington, 2017) in England’s further education sector. However, this 2017 study does not as such address the interrelation between emotion and cognition during the observations.

In summary of Section 2.4, language teacher cognition is complicated, necessitating a judicious approach to address the relation or non-relation of the many influential elements, such as pedagogical, contextual and social, to teacher cognition. Also, the element of emotion is under-researched in teacher cognition studies, and the interaction between cognition and emotion and their impact on teacher practices needs more attention. Furthermore, the limited number of teacher cognition studies in relation to peer observation do not investigate the discrepancy between the teachers’ cognition and practices in peer observation and are mainly reliant on interviews and questionnaires. Lastly, no studies have yet been conducted on teacher cognition in relation to peer observation as a means of professional learning in a Pakistani context. This study addresses these four key issues.

2.5 Experiential learning: The perspective of learning from reflecting on experience

The review of empirical studies in the previous sections on assessment, professional learning, peer observation, and teacher cognition suggest that few studies have connected lecturers' cognition about peer observation to Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), apart from Donnelly (2007) and Peel (2005). On the one hand, Peel's (2005) personal account of her teacher training shows that following Kolb's (1984) experiential learning allowed her to critically reflect on her experiences of peer observation, and this process answered her questions and assumptions about the usefulness of peer observation. On the other hand, in Donnelly's (2007) study, the Peer Observation of Teaching Scheme had Kolb's Experiential Learning cycle as a focused intention. Both studies suggest that peer observation should be used as a critical reflective device to understand the interplay between belief and practices (Peel, 2005) and to create teacher knowledge through transformation of experiences (Donnelly, 2007). Both studies fulfilled the aim of the Experiential Learning cycle that was to create a model for teachers, to empower them and help them gain mastery over their learning through trusting in their experiences (Kolb, 2015). However, these two studies started their research with a focus of the framework of ELT, but it is important to note that the present study applied grounded analysis of the findings which led to the establishment of a sound theoretical development by using and adapting to ELT. In this section, ELT is reviewed briefly as part of the literature review but is more fully discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to the findings of the present study.

ELT has been widely recognised as a useful framework for educational improvement. Experiential learning is a theory that has been drawn from the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Jean Piaget, William James, Lev Vygotsky, Carl Jung, and Carl Rogers that gave experience the central role in an individual's learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The foundation of ELT (Kolb, 1984) is based on the following six propositions that are based on the work of these scholars:

- (i) The best way to conceive of learning is as a process – an on-going spiral of rebuilding life events.

- (ii) The best way to facilitate learning is by drawing out an individual's cognition about a particular phenomenon, so cognition can be evaluated and incorporated with fresher ideas and concepts.
- (iii) Conflicts, uncertainties, disagreements, and unawareness are resolved by going back and forth between reflection and action, feelings and thinking.
- (iv) Adapting and being dynamic are actually learning. Learning involves cohesive operating.
- (v) Learning results from the direct interaction between an individual and their environment. New experiences provide more opportunities and possibilities, which are assimilated into the next experiences.
- (vi) Learning is constructing and reconstructing knowledge with no pre-decided ideas; learning is flexible.

(Kolb & Kolb, 2005)

These propositions show that ELT is about the relationship between individuals and their real-life experiences and reflective processes. However, this perspective of experiential learning has been critiqued as an “excessively cognitive, individual phenomenon” (Seaman, 2008, p. 3), as it does not consider external factors such as the social and cultural context of learning and mental processes (Holman, Pavlica, & Thorpe, 1997; Kayes, 2002; Seaman, 2008; Vince, 1998).

Nevertheless, over the years, ELT has been updated to provide a “dynamic, holistic model of the process of learning” (Kolb & Kolb, 2009a, p. 43) that merges experience, perception, cognition, and behaviour (McCarthy, 2010, p.132). The learning space indeed exists in the “experience of a learner” but learning is formed by “objective factors such as the physical setting and time available for learning and by subjective factors such as learning preferences and expectations” (Kolb & Kolb, 2012, p. 1210).

Kolb (1984, 2015) claims that experiential learning is cyclical and occurs through a combination of grasping (i.e. absorbing information) and transforming (i.e. inferring and testing the information) experiences. Experiential learning is described as a four-stage learning cycle (see Figure 2.1). In this cycle, there are two dialectically related modes of grasping experience – concrete experience and abstract conceptualisation, and two dialectically related modes of transforming

experience – reflective observation and active experimentation (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) as shown in Figure 2.1.

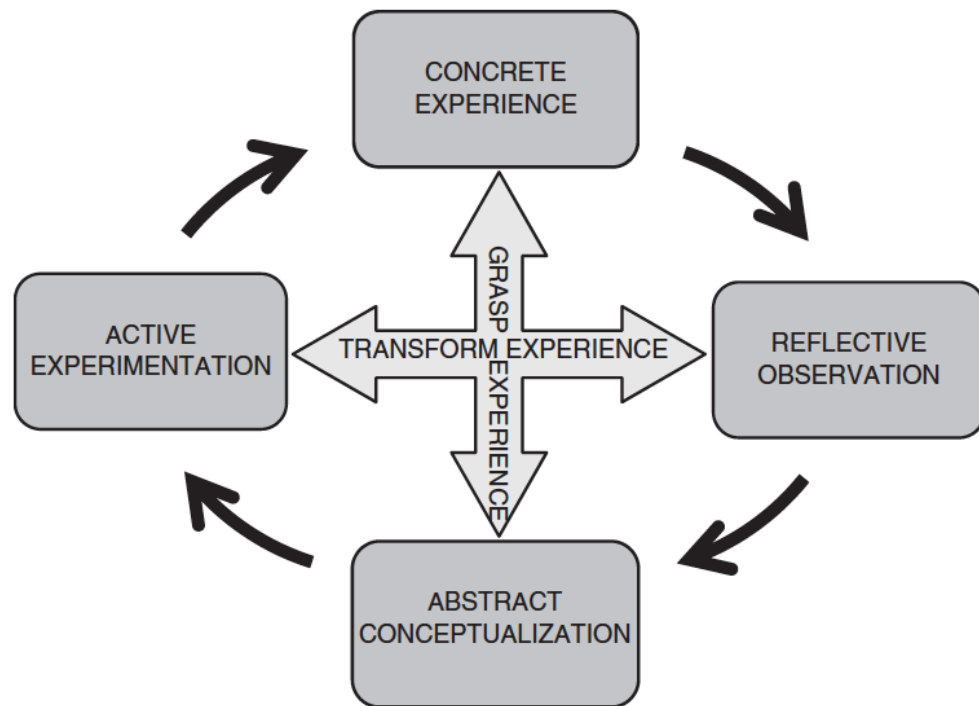


Figure 2.1 Experiential learning theory cycle

(Kolb & Kolb, 2009b) Reprinted with permission

Figure 2.1 shows “The core of Kolb’s four-stage model is a simple description of a learning cycle that shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences” (Healey & Jenkins, 2000, p. 186). The four stages of the experiential learning cycle are described as follows:

- Concrete experience (CE): This is the primary source of learning and promotes adapting openly and thinking from a broader perspective about action. The learner experiences an authentic situation which is the basis for reflection. However, each learner may interpret the experience differently.
- Reflective observation (RO): Learners learn from articulating the different facets of the experience. They reflect in depth and critically evaluate the experience. This critical thinking and reflection start the process of transforming the experience by addressing the pre-symbolic impact.

- Abstract conceptualisation (AC): This stage is about making connection and relating the RO and CE to a concept to fully comprehend the situation and problem. It is basically going through the past experience and making a conceptual understanding – in a way, distilling perceptions into demonstrated knowledge. The schema is built, and cognition is enhanced.
- Active experimentation (AE): Learners plan to experiment and test their knowledge for an upcoming experience in a real context. They sharpen skills to go into a new experience and see what they have learnt. The underlying transformational process of understanding the experience is hoped to put into action.

(Kolb, 2015; Kolb & Kolb, 2005, 2009a, 2009b)

The learning cycle may start, or a learner may emerge in it at any stage; however, the stages run in a sequence (Akella, 2010). The stages have been ordered and identified as “learner experiences, reflects, thinks, and then acts again” (Akella, 2010, p. 101), or simplified as “wanting, doing, feedback and digesting” (Race, 1993, p. 41) or as “do, observe, think, plan” by Jenkins (1998, p. 431). From the figure, it is clear that it is the concrete experience that provides opportunities for observation, reflection, reaction, and then possible modification of old ideas and testing of new ideas (Sato & Laughlin, 2018). Nevertheless, the aspect of reflection in this ELT cycle is central, as it enables the learner to internalise the experience through conceptualising it, and by attempting to make connections between personal knowledge and social knowledge (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2012; Wilson & Burket, 1989). This then may enhance the learner’s existing information and formulates it into new knowledge. The idea is fundamentally that of learning from reflecting on experience, and the whole learning development is “critically reflexive of the individual’s experience and actions” (Akella, 2010, p. 101).

In addition, the presence of the experience and reflection are not enough to enhance learning. The meaningful interaction between experience and the individual’s reflection need to be facilitated (Fowler, 2008). Hence, the role of facilitator in terms of an experiential educator holds much significance. However,

an educator relying on only one role - that of a facilitator - has been critiqued (Kolb & Kolb, 2013); multiple roles of an educator are suggested to play “in relationship to the learners and the object of the learning endeavour” (Kolb, Kolb, Passarelli & Sharma 2014, p. 219). They propose that educators vary their roles from a facilitator, to a subject matter expert, to an evaluator, to a coach to help learners move around the cycle and facilitate the transition from one learning stage to another.

This Section 2.5 has explained the concept and background of Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory, its six foundational principles, its four stages, and the role of an educator and reported a limited number of empirical studies on peer observation that have applied these concepts. How these three concepts of ELT are adapted and modified in the light of the findings of the present study are discussed in Chapter 5.

2.6 Summary of the Chapter

Assessment in education can be conducted through adopting two main approaches: formative and summative. The formative assessment of teachers involves professional learning and summative involves an evaluative element. This study centres on ESL teachers at the tertiary level and supports the claim that ESL teachers need professional assistance and support to become competent teachers. Therefore, assessment of ESL teachers through peer observation should be carried out in such a way that instigates teachers’ professional learning.

Through the review of literature on empirical studies of peer observation, teacher cognition and professional learning in Pakistan, the following gaps have been identified which are occupied by the present study.

Firstly, it has been impossible to locate any published study regarding peer observation and teacher cognition in a tertiary level Pakistani context. Secondly, the few studies that have been conducted at the school level in Pakistan reveal that there are convergences and divergences among teachers about their beliefs on professional learning and the practices carried out in their respective educational institutes. Research is required to examine teachers’ cognition in order to design and implement professional learning strategies that are intended to build on and

challenge teachers' existing cognition and vice versa. Thirdly, according to the review of peer observation studies, it is not clear whether a so-called evaluative model of peer observation is merely a practice to make decisions for promotion and contract renewal, or if it also provides teachers with feedback to reflect on their teaching. Fourthly, there is a need to explore and understand the construct of such "peer" observation in terms of *who* is involved, *why* observation activities are undertaken, and *how* they are conducted. Fifthly, the current literature clearly indicates the need for further research to identify the extent to and ways in which teachers' cognition align with practices of peer observation, as the studies published to date have shown limited results. Lastly, research on teacher cognition is mainly carried out at the general level; the origin of teachers' cognition, and how emotional and contextual factors affect teacher cognition and practices, are still underexplored in peer observation. In totality, the notion of peer observation needs to be more holistically explored, ideally from the points of view of the institute, observers and observed teachers, with consideration for how these converge or diverge. Cultural implications also need to be kept in mind as they are reflected in institutional policies and practices and potentially in the minds of practitioners.

To address these gaps, this study focuses on the cognition and practices of ESL lecturers on the assessment of teachers through peer observation in a private university in Pakistan. It explores the notion of reflective practice endorsed in empirical studies on peer observation; however, it also proposes a protocol for systematic and stimulating reflective practice in peer observation. In this way, it considers the extent to which participation in apparently summative peer observation of teaching can contribute to the development of critical reflection and enhancement of the observer's and observee's practices. A multi-method approach was employed to collect data in order to more comprehensively explore cognitive and emotional factors experienced by Pakistani ESL teachers in peer observation.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How were peer observation and feedback understood, interpreted and enacted at the research site?

2. What were the structural, emotional, and cognitive factors that influenced the lecturers' perceptions of the practice of peer observation?
3. In what ways did the institutional perspective and the lecturer participants' cognition align with their practices of peer observation?
4. In what ways did the lecturer participants' cognition develop with respect to experiential learning and reflection?
5. How do the findings of the present study extend understandings of the praxis of teacher assessment through peer observation?

How these questions were addressed is discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to facilitate the inquiry into the lecturer participants' cognition about, and the institutional practices of, peer observation as a form of assessment and a tool of professional learning. Any study of teacher cognition is complex due to the multifarious and multifaceted nature of this construct. Research requires an open-ended approach and a combination of different data collection procedures, analyses and interpretations, which this study has synthesised. This chapter is divided into nine sections, which are introduced briefly in the following paragraph.

This study takes interpretive inquiry as its paradigm, which is presented in Section 3.1, and the relevance of applying a case study approach is explained in Section 3.2. In order to comprehensively address the research questions stated at the end of Chapter 2, qualitative data collection instruments were utilised, as discussed in Section 3.3. This is followed by Section 3.4 that outlines the importance of using a multi-method approach to collect data, and its sub-sections explain each data collection procedure used for the research. Section 3.5 describes the data collection procedures used, outlining the participant group and their recruitment, and the process of using data collection instruments in situ. Data analysis procedures are described in Section 3.6. Section 3.7 explains the ethical concerns that were identified before and during the data collection, and Section 3.8 reports the quality considerations and trustworthiness of the research. Finally, Section 3.9 presents a summary of the key points presented in this chapter.

To explore the research questions, various methods of data collection were implemented with six ESL lecturers in the research site over a period of nine months (August 2016- April 2017). Questionnaires, focus group discussions, auditing of post-observation meetings, stimulated recall sessions and interviews were carried out during field research. Narrative frames were sent out after a three-month interval following the completion of field research. Since the post-observation meetings were between the convener of the programme and a lecturer, the auditing of the post-observation meetings involved the convener as well. The convener and the representative for the HSS on the Quality Assurance Committee

(hereafter QA member) also participated in a one-to-one interview. Pertinent documents were collected throughout the data collection period which, together with the interview data from the research site's senior staff (the convener and the QA member), helped to establish an official point of view about peer observation.

3.1 Interpretive Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm accounts for a research approach that has been used for several decades in the field of social sciences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Unlike the positivist paradigm, which usually includes statistical analysis of quantitative data collected according to prior hypotheses to generalise as to whether hypotheses are universally applicable (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Creswell, 2005; Croker, 2009; Kaplan & Duchon, 1988; Morgan, 2007; Richards, 2009a), this study followed an interpretive approach wherein each individual was believed to have a unique perception and interpretation of reality. In this case, meaning and understanding have been derived from a particular social context (Bryman, 2004; Check & Schutt, 2012; Duff, 2008; Kaplan & Duchon, 1988; Richards, 2009a), and are considered to be multifaceted and non-generalisable (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Croker, 2009).

The fieldwork associated with an interpretive paradigm involves intensive and relatively long-term participation in the field setting, and requires detailed and descriptive explanations (Erickson, 1986). Accordingly, field research in the present study was conducted over six months, involving a number of data collection instruments to gather thick and explanatory data. This research project fits the interpretive paradigm for the values presented above, and because it supports the claim that social “reality is not universal but person-, context-, and time-bound” (Croker, 2009, p. 6) and focuses on the understanding of a “subjective world of human experience” (p. 21). In other words, this study dealt with direct experiences of people in a specific context that was reflected through the eyes of the participants (Cohen et al., 2011). This study adopts the view that there is no universal truth to be uncovered in social interactions such as educational activities (Cohen et al., 2011; Duff, 2008; Hood, 2009), and that teachers' practices are influenced by their cognition.

The main aims of this interpretive study of teacher cognition were to gain a clear understanding of the ESL lecturers' assumptions, beliefs, and knowledge about peer observation; to examine the current practices of peer observation in the context of study; and to provide detailed discussion of convergences or divergences between the lecturers' cognition and the current practices in the context. Therefore, the study is based on a relativist ontology, wherein reality is individually constructed and differs from individual to individual (Crotty, 1998; Goldkuhl, 2012), and the relations between these various individual constructs make the phenomenon understandable as a whole. Also, the epistemology of this study is subjective, meaning that the researched knowledge is based on the researcher's interpretations of the individual lecturers' beliefs, thoughts and emotions, and therefore the researched knowledge is a process of understanding through processes of interpretation (Scotland, 2012).

3.2 Case Study

This research constitutes a case study, defined as “a bounded system comprising of an individual, institution, or entity and the site and context in which social action takes place, the boundaries of which are determined by the scope of the researcher's interests” (Hood, 2009, p. 69). This research explores a particular social construct in a particular temporal and physical setting (Bryman, 2004; Duff, 2008; Hood, 2009): the exploration of lecturers' cognition about, and the practice of, peer observation in a private university in Pakistan. The inherent “boundedness” of case studies is that they operate with a restricted focus, facilitating detailed, in-depth understandings of what is studied (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). Moreover, case studies provide “a unique example of real people in real situations” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 253) to help researchers and readers understand the phenomenon through practical application rather than by presenting abstract theories. They are known to provide rich and holistic accounts of the phenomenon as they are anchored in real life situations which enable them to play a major role in expanding and advancing the field's knowledge (Merriam, 1988, 1998).

Case studies have been divided into three broad types by Stake (2005): multiple, instrumental and intrinsic. Multiple case studies involve “a number of cases

[which] may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (pp. 445-446); instrumental case studies seek to provide insight into a particular phenomenon to establish a general understanding of the research question; and intrinsic case studies are conducted when the researcher does not want to make a general understanding and is interested in one particular case. The research reported here is primarily an intrinsic case study, which sought to illuminate the phenomenon of peer observation amongst a group of ESL teachers in a specific educational setting. A variety of research instruments were used to investigate the experiences, cognition and practices of the participants about the given phenomenon in its natural setting (Duff, 2008; Nassaji, 2015; Richards, 2009a). From this understanding and close examination of one particular case, it may also be considered an instrumental case study, because it established a more general understanding of the process of peer observation as a means of assessment and a tool of professional learning.

The limited number of empirical studies on this topic conducted in Pakistan suggest that research is required in order to propose effective professional learning strategies that can improve the quality of teaching and overcome inconsistencies in education quality (Azam & Khurram, 2009). This case study provides a thick description, a rich interpretation, and a “better understanding” (Hood, 2009, p. 67) of the proposed phenomenon in its natural setting (Check & Schutt, 2012), which may be relatable to other, similar settings. This case study also attempted a complex analysis of the complicated phenomenon and system (Weyers, Strydom, & Huisamen, 2008) to form the foundation of a conceptual basis for teacher assessment through peer observation and theoretical development by applying and adapting to ELT, which may help in generating new ideas and theories (Merriam, 1988, 1998).

3.3 Qualitative Data in Interpretive Research

This study was conducted to establish an “accurate portrayal of the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices” (Johnson, K. E., 1992, p. 84) to contribute to a more holistic depiction of teachers’ cognition about and their practices in peer observation. However, to achieve this aim, it was imperative to first understand the “complexity and dynamic nature of the particular entity, and

to discover systematic connections among experiences, behaviours and relevant features of the context” (Johnson, D. M., 1992, p. 84). Therefore, to construct an in-depth understanding, the majority of the data that were collected were qualitative, including focus group summaries, field notes of post-observation meetings, transcripts of stimulated recall sessions, summaries of interviews and written narratives.

The collection of qualitative data in research covers a wide range of techniques and methods, such as interviews, observations, focus group discussions and biographies; however, simply applying such methods does not make one a qualitative researcher. To be a qualitative researcher, one endeavours to understand the participants’ issues and experiences (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011), and to make sense of the interpreted phenomena in terms of the meanings participants bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Hence, qualitative researchers focus on how social experience is created and given meaning, as opposed to quantitative researchers, who emphasise the measurement and causal relationships between variables (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).

In summary, qualitative interpretive research has an open-ended approach (Howe, 2001) and enquires into the problems and practices of everyday life that can be complex and sometimes obscure (Silverman, 2013). The main characteristics of qualitative research are: a) it is fluid and flexible, and data emerge through the process of investigation; b) the primary data are in verbal form; c) it is grounded within a natural setting; d) it is concerned with the perspectives of the participant(s), and e) usually entails a small sample size (Creswell, 2013; Dörnyei, 2007). With such principles mentioned above and for an in-depth and detailed analysis of the research problem (Check & Schutt, 2012; Kagan, 1990), this study applied a qualitative case study approach, which involved applying interpretive data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). However, at the initial stage of the research, a questionnaire (a procedure often associated with a quantitative approach) was used to gather basic demographic data and to identify key constructs of the issue under study, which informed the subsequent qualitative research procedures (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009).

3.4 Multi-method Approach

In an interpretive paradigm, the practices and beliefs of the participants about the studied phenomenon may be perceived by the world in different ways; therefore, it has been suggested that researchers should examine the issue from as many varied methodological perspectives as possible (Cohen et al., 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Using different methods can improve the researcher's understanding of the context, and this way it is less likely for researchers to be misled when drawing conclusions (Scott & Garner, 2013). Barnard and Burns (2012), and Borg (2012) also suggest using a multi-method approach to collect data in teacher cognition studies because it helps to mitigate limitations that are inherent to teacher cognition studies that rely on a single or mixed-method. Hence, this study followed a methodological triangulation (Weyers, Strydom & Huisamen, 2008) in that several approaches to data collection were used; particular procedures were selected to suit contextual demands, opportunities and constraints. Furthermore, the limitations of one procedure are often the strengths of another and, by conjoining procedures via triangulation, "the researcher can utilise the strengths of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies" (Denzin, 1989, p. 244).

To sum up, the multi-method approach used promoted triangulation (Bell, 2010). This enabled comprehensiveness and completeness, identified inconsistencies to overlook bias, and sought to enhance trustworthiness in the research (Weyers et al., 2008). This study involved a unique combination of questionnaire, focus group discussions, auditing of post-observation meetings, stimulated recall sessions, semi-structured interviews, document collection and analysis, and written narrative frames. The following sub-sections explain each instrument and acknowledge their respective benefits and drawbacks.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are commonly used in language teacher cognition studies because they are often regarded as an economical way to collect large amounts of data (Borg, 2006). The questionnaire used in this study was an important and useful tool for participant recruitment as it provided the potential lecturer participants a

general sense of the scope of the research. After completing the questionnaire, the lecturers who elected to participate further left their expressions of interest separately on a piece of paper. The questionnaires in the present study also provided preliminary data, which comprised lecturers' bio-data and a snapshot of their current attitudes towards, and reported practices of, peer observation. These snapshots facilitated the identification of key focal points that guided the following focus group discussions. The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) entailed a variety of closed ended questions and also provided opportunities for open response comments (Brown, 2009, Cohen et al., 2007, 2011). The questionnaire was piloted (see Appendix 3 for further detail) to ensure categories were appropriate and extensive (Cohen et al., 2007, 2011), that the wording was unambiguous, and that the instrument complemented the next steps of the qualitative research (Brown, 2009).

Nevertheless, this method, even with its advantages, is considered to be an inadequate measure when the researcher's interest lies in the real classroom practices than self-reports of those practices. Hence, it is often used as a supplement to various qualitative research instruments (Borg, 2006) as it was used in this study.

3.4.2 Focus group discussions

Focus groups can be conducted at any stage of the data collection, but they may be particularly useful at the early stage of the research when little is known about the phenomenon of interest (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). Consequently, two focus groups were conducted with the six lecturers as the first qualitative data collection procedure to gain broad and open views of the proposed topic. Focus group discussion in this research helped: to investigate the lecturers' shared and broad understandings of professional learning; to explore their co-constructed views on possible ways to assess teachers, to develop peer observation as a tool of professional learning; and to elicit their experiences of peer observation.

Focus group discussions are usually moderated by the researcher through a set of questions or prompts which help in identifying the principal issues and meanings related to the proposed topic (Check & Schutt, 2012; Stokes & Bergin, 2006). The

main intent of the focus group is to promote self-disclosure among participants, that is, to elicit what people really think and feel (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Hence, in focus group discussions the researcher takes “a peripheral, rather than a centre-stage role” (Parker & Tritter, 2006, p. 26), as the inter-relational dynamics of the participants are of crucial importance compared to the relationship between the researcher and participants. It has been recommended that participants in a focus group discussion should share certain common characteristics, such as age or occupation, to come to a common ground and discuss pertinent issues (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Hence, the participants of this study were all ESL lecturers teaching the same course and experiencing the same kind of peer observation.

In addition, focus group discussions facilitate the exploration of respondents’ co-constructed views and opinions (Gladman & Freeman, 2012; Li & Barnard, 2009), which are unlikely to be elicited in a one-to-one interview. Li and Barnard (2009) state that, in a structured or semi-structured interview, researchers need to address their agenda efficiently which may lead them to exert excessive control over the procedure and content of the interview and even the interactive relationship with the interviewee.

It is clear that the positive aspects of conducting focus group discussions are convincing; however, I recognise the limitations of focus group discussions and I sought to overcome them in the collection of data. Firstly, transcribing focus groups can be more complicated than interviews because, with several speakers talking, it is difficult to distinguish who is saying what (Bryman, 2004). This may cause problems in validating the transcript with the speaker/s. I addressed this potential limitation by conducting two focus groups with three participants in each, so it was not difficult to identify the speakers. Secondly, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity in focus groups among participants can potentially impair the discussions (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013). It is reasonable that these two important principles of human research ethics cannot be guaranteed in focus group discussions. To mitigate these effects and reduce concerns with regards to privacy and confidentiality, the participants were advised that they could refrain from commenting on any issue, or withdraw at any stage of the project without giving any explanation. This was made clear in the consent forms

(see Appendix 4). The participants were also requested via the consent form to keep the content of the focus group discussion confidential within the group.

3.4.3 Auditing the post-observation meetings

As reviewed in Chapter 2, peer observation of teachers typically involves three stages: pre-observation meeting, observation, and post-observation meeting (McGrath & Mosen, 2015; Webster, 2002; Kohut et al., 2007). Ostensibly, the peer observation at the research site was evaluative in nature. To avoid adding any possible tension and discomfort to the observed lecturers, I decided not to attend the observed lessons. Although I had planned to audio record the pre- and post-observation meetings, it was not possible as the convener requested not to be recorded. Also, when I arrived at the research site in August 2016, I was informed that pre-observation communication was usually carried out through an exchange of emails between the observer and the observed lecturer in which they would decide on the lesson to be evaluated. Although the participants reported the gist of the content of these emails, it was not possible to capture any details of the pre-observation meeting, because they did not take place face-to-face in a formalised manner. I attended the post-observation meetings, which gave me the opportunity to look directly at what was taking place in situ (Cohen et al., 2011) between the observer and the observed lecturer. In this case, aspects such as non-verbal behaviour, attitudinal tones, and the emotional atmosphere of the post-observation meeting could also be noted. However, it has been argued that the researcher may disturb the natural setting and intrude on the private space of the participants (Cohen et al., 2007, 2011). Therefore, I sat in a corner of the room, in an inconspicuous spot, to minimise any distraction or disturbance that could be caused by my physical presence (Bell, 2010).

3.4.4 Stimulated recall sessions

Stimulated recall is a form of retrospective report used to elicit learners' "thought processes involved in carrying out a task or activity" (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 1). In stimulated recall, the participants of the research can verbalise their thought processes through recall using a support or stimulus (Ericsson & Simon, 1980; Gass & Mackey, 2000). This retrospective verbal communication was an effective

practice to elicit lecturers' feelings and views about peer observation in the present study.

The field notes made during the auditing of the post-observation meetings formed the basis for conducting a stimulated recall session with each lecturer participant. Some of the exact words said by the convener and the lecturers, as well as examples of body language, were recorded and repeated or mimed during the recall session in order to elicit and stimulate the lecturers' cognition about the post-observation meeting. Since the points discussed between the convener and the lecturers during the post-observation meetings were linked to what had happened during the observation stage, some aspects of the observation stage were also noted. See Appendix 5 for a sample of stimulated recall prompts used with L1. This is an important feature of the present study as it shows the innovative ways in which the simulated recall session was adapted according to the contextual circumstances.

In addition, it has been recommended that stimulated recall should take place as soon as possible after the event under analysis, so the participants' ability to recall is not impaired and the precise thoughts in participants' minds are still fresh (Borg, 2006; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Therefore, shortly (within two to three hours) after the post-observation meetings, I met each observed lecturer separately to stimulate their recall of what was discussed and how they felt about the feedback delivered to them during the post-observation meeting. The short gap between the peer observation practice and the stimulated recall allowed the participants the time to reflect on the peer observation practice and also gave me time to organise the prompts for the stimulated recall session (Phipps & Borg, 2009). It was not possible to have the accuracy of these prompts endorsed by the participants because of the limited time between the two procedures. However, as none of the lecturers questioned any prompts raised during the stimulated recall session, it was reasonable to assume that they had no objections to the content obtained and perceived from the post-observation meetings.

3.4.5 Semi-structured interviews

Cohen et al. (2007) state that an interview is “a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, nonverbal, spoken and heard” (p. 349). In contrast to fully structured interviews, which are a form of oral questionnaire, in semi-structured interviews the researcher uses focal points or questions to guide the interview while investigating the research phenomenon (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin, & Lowden, 2013). This allows a certain amount of freedom for the interaction to move in different directions and can help the interviewer to probe for additional information (Borg, 2006; Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2005; Richards, 2009b). I used semi-structured interviews in the present study to reconstruct the context (Duff, 2008), to validate the data (R. Burgess, 1985) collected from the stimulated recall session and focus group discussions, and to facilitate a richer interpretation of the participants’ expressed opinions and views on peer observation.

In the interviews, the observed lecturers were asked about their beliefs and feelings, and the practices taking place in their institute to explore convergences or divergences between their cognition and the practice of peer observation conducted in the research site. The interviews also explored the participants’ views of the roles of formative constructive feedback and learning from observations, and the professional learning activities that were made available to them.

In addition to interviews with the lecturer participants, the observer (the convener) was interviewed to elicit his understandings of and approaches to conducting peer observation in an effective way, and an interview with the QA member was also conducted. The latter was not part of my original plan and was spontaneously decided during an informal encounter with the QA member as the opportunity presented itself. His input added to the perspectives of the lecturer participants.

Interviewing well requires good social skills and flexibility on part of the interviewer (Hennink et al., 2011) to engage with the other person’s perspective (Patton, 2002); therefore, to improve my technique, I conducted pilot interviews, as recommended by Dörnyei (2007), with my colleagues and other researchers in

my New Zealand faculty (see Appendix 3). Sharing the same language and education culture as the participants also helped me to facilitate more open and responsive interviews and to probe deeper into the research phenomenon (Shah, 2004).

However, there are some drawbacks associated with conducting interviews in research. They are time consuming and arranging a mutually convenient time and place between the interviewer and interviewee can be difficult. Also, the power balance between interviewer and interviewee can hamper honest responses (Li & Barnard, 2009). To counter potential problems in the present study, a congenial relationship was maintained with the participants and interviews were arranged during the participants' office hours.

3.4.6 Collecting pertinent documents

Qualitative research often involves systematically examining pertinent documents to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In the context of this research, the examination of documents enhanced my understanding of the vision and the policy of the institute. Documents can be a valuable source of information for a better understanding of an institute's educational system and background (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2005). Reviewing documents also assisted me to verify data gained from other sources (Denzin, 1970), and helped me trace convergences and divergences between the participants' cognition, and institutional point of view that was expressed in the documents (Bowen, 2009).

I had planned to obtain documents relevant to the central topics of this research from the Head of the Department (HoD) and the convener. In the information letter, I requested any documents relevant to the practice of peer observation at ALI. However, the HoD and the convener merely provided me with unrelated material (for example, published studies on various English language teaching topics), rather than documents related to the university. Therefore, I had to locate useful documents myself. I was able to obtain the newsletter of the respective (Humanities and Social Sciences, HSS) School; the Appointment, Promotion & Tenure (APT) policy of the university; and the meeting minutes of the Quality

Assurance Committee (December 2016). The HSS Newsletter and APT policy were circulated annually through email to the entire faculty at the university to notify them about the updated information and policies, but the minutes of the meeting was a document retrieved from the QA member on special request.

In each of these documents, assessment of lecturers through peer observation was mentioned briefly. The HSS Newsletter was an official PDF document comprising four pages, compiled by the Dean of the HSS School. It shared the major highlights and developments of the school with some related coloured images and illustrations. This newsletter also incorporated contributions made to the teaching and learning of the lecturers at the HSS School by their representative on the QAC. The APT policy was a 42-page PDF document, developed by the QAC and applied institution wide. It was an official document that outlined the policies and procedures governing appointment, promotion, and tenure decisions at ALI. Teachers had access to this document and the HSS newsletter. The minutes of the meeting was a two-page hard copy of the document that was kept for records by the QAC. It was a summary of the major items discussed in the last meeting of the year between the members of the QAC. The meeting took place on the 5th of December 2016 from 3.30-5.30 p.m. in the Dean's room, and representatives of each school provided an overview about the methods used to ensure quality of teaching in their respective school.

3.4.7 Narrative frames

Narratives can provide textual information that is valuable in the sense that they are a reflection and recollection of the participants' experience (Pavlenko, 2007). However, to facilitate the participants' writing and critical reflection, a frame is suggested to provide guidance on the direction of content to the respondents (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008; Pavlenko, 2007). Hence, a frame was sent to lecturers to provide them with a "skeleton to scaffold writing" (Warwick & Maloch, 2003, p. 59). The narrative frames enabled lecturers to share their experiences and considered the lecturers' practices in a particular time, and context (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008).

The narrative frames were sent three months after completion of field research. A template with sixteen sentence starters was given to the lecturer participants to

prompt them to reflect on and retell the story of their experience of peer observation (see Appendix 6) after this interval. The sentence starters were devised from the preliminary analysis of the data collected up to this point. To avoid the sentence starters acting as constraints of the participants' thinking, the narrative frames were strategically planned to be the final data collection procedure. This meant that the starters were devised to address gaps that the previous data collection tools had not covered. The completed narrative frames briefly reported the participants' understandings of the process of peer observation, the purpose of the peer observation, its benefits and drawbacks, the results of the practice and their emotions during each stage of peer observation. The narrative frames facilitated triangulation between data collected from the stimulated recall sessions and semi-structured interviews.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted according to the research design and within the interpretive paradigm. The field research was conducted over a period of five months from August 2016 to December 2016. During the field research, preliminary analysis was done for each data collection instrument and data were constantly compared and contrasted to inform subsequent data collection procedures. This section explains two main points: participants and their recruitment and formally collecting data in situ.

3.5.1 Participants and their recruitment

This research focused on ESL lecturers' professional learning. Therefore, participants were recruited from the English Stream of the Humanities and Social Sciences School at the private university, ALI. This study utilised a purposive sampling technique by applying specific participant recruitment criteria (Check & Schutt, 2012; Creswell, 2005). Purposive sampling is a "non-probability" technique (Mutch, 2013, p. 50) widely used in qualitative research "for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest" (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015, p. 533).

After gaining permission from the Dean and the HoD, I accessed potential lecturer participants by attending the beginning-of-semester staff meeting, which was conducted by the convener of the English Stream (see Appendix 7 for more detail). Information letters (see Appendix 8) were distributed during the staff meeting to inform potential lecturer participants about University of Waikato regulations regarding confidentiality and anonymity in research. As suggested by Erickson (1986), and Powney and Watts (1987), the potential participants were also given details about each data collection procedure.

Participants involved in the different stages of this case study comprised:

- The Representative of the HSS School on the Quality Assurance Committee. He is a member of the QAC and represented the HSS School. He holds the title of Associate Professor and, apart from this administrative role, he also taught various courses.
- The convener of the English Stream. He is an Associate Professor of English and taught a range of undergraduate courses. He is also the observer in the practice of peer observation and observed all lecturers in his stream once a semester.
- A cohort of ten ESL lecturers who completed the questionnaire, which helped to develop a broader and a more general view of language lecturers within the institution regarding observations and professional learning. Lecturers' bio-data (see Table 4.1) were also gained through this questionnaire, which were later followed up in an interview.
- Six lecturer participants who elected to participate in all the data collection procedures from the larger cohort. They were relatively newly hired lecturers and all lecturers except one held the title of Teaching Fellow. The small number provided the opportunity for me to examine the “complexity of the interrelationships between these different stakeholders” (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001, para. 8), not only with one another, but also with the varying contexts within which the practice of peer observation was situated.

3.5.2 Collecting data in situ

Before applying the data collection procedures in the field, each instrument was piloted to ensure the feasibility of the design and to confirm that questions, prompts and focal points were logical and meaningful. Practising confirmed that it was possible to collect data adhering strictly to the ethics approval granted by the Human Research Ethics (HRE) Committee at the University of Waikato. It also raised awareness of any methodological issues, so I prepared myself well before starting the data collection procedures. Explanation of how each instrument was practised and piloted is presented in Appendix 3.

A data collection timeline is tabulated and provided in Appendix 7, and the process of using each instrument in situ is explained in the following paragraphs.

Questionnaire: The questionnaire was distributed at a special meeting following the regular beginning-of-semester staff meeting. By the follow-on attendance of the lecturers at the special meeting, I assumed that they were willing to complete the questionnaire. (This point was mentioned in the information letters, which were distributed at the regular beginning-of-semester staff meeting. Only three lecturers attended the special meeting and many lecturers who were not able to attend communicated via email to request a later meeting. For this matter, I had to conduct follow-up individual meetings with those lecturers. In the special meeting and follow-up meetings, the research was discussed in more detail, and the questionnaire was administered. It took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and the lecturers who wished to participate further in the research left an expression of interest by providing their names and contact details. After conducting the special meeting and the follow-up individual meetings, I received ten completed questionnaires from the 15 issued. Six lecturers expressed interest in participating in the rest of the project.

Focus group discussions: After the special meeting, I obtained the informed consent of the six lecturer participants individually. These lecturers were invited for a focus group discussion via email. Two focus group discussions were conducted, each involving three lecturers. The discussions were audio recorded with a digital recorder and ran for approximately 45 minutes each, depending on

the participants' engagement and interest in the topic. A volunteer lecturer participant was designated to facilitate the discussion by going through each focal point (see Appendix 9) one by one. This allowed the participants to speak freely and develop the potential for a broad overview of the research topic. I was physically present during the focus group discussions but did not participate until required. For example, Focus Group A drifted from the topic, so I intervened to steer the participants' attention back to the topic.

Auditing post-observation meetings: As mentioned in Section 3.4.3, my original plan was to audio record the post-observation meetings, but while designing the research plans, I had anticipated that the participants could find the recording intrusive and withhold consent for the recording of post-observation meetings. The convener disagreed to be audio recorded, although he was supportive of the idea that I could attend the post-observation meetings and make field notes. Subsequently, I adjusted this point in the information letters for the lecturers as well as the convener, as I intended to be physically present in the post-observation meetings. Six post-observation meetings were audited. These took place at the convener's office. The post-observation meetings were face-to-face meetings between each observed lecturer and the observer. I sat in an unobtrusive spot, the corner of the room, throughout the meeting and recorded key points on a writing pad. The positioning is illustrated below in Figure 3.1.

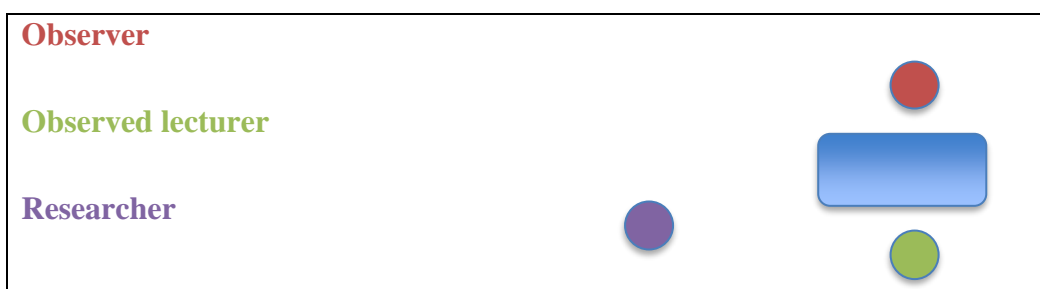


Figure 3.1: Seating positions of the post-observation meetings

While auditing, to minimise any feelings of discomfort for the participants, I mostly avoided eye contact with them. However, as illustrated above, the seating was such that the observer could see my behaviour and I could see his. Most meetings lasted approximately 15 minutes.

Stimulated recall sessions: All six stimulated recall sessions were conducted in my office within 24 hours after the post-observation meeting. The sessions were

audio recorded with a digital recorder. The sessions were scheduled according to the lecturer participants' availability at a place convenient to them. Each session lasted approximately 20-25 minutes. Carrying out stimulated recall sessions were more like conversations over a cup of coffee and were conducted in a relaxed and cordial manner.

Interviews: The interviews did not follow any particular order and were held according to the convenience and availability of the participants. Each interview took approximately 25-30 minutes (see Appendix 10 for sample questions). Eight interviews were conducted: six with the lecturer participants, one with the convener, and one with the QA member. All interviews were audio recorded except for the convener due to his unwillingness to be recorded. I was content with the quality of data gathered from the interviews with the lecturers and the convener. However, when I interviewed the QA member formally (which was a follow-up to an informal encounter with him as stated in Section 3.4.5), I noticed that the information gained from him in the informal meeting (not used in my data) was more insightful as compared to the formal interview meeting. Once the audio recorder was switched on, he seemed to be careful in his choice of words. Hence, the information shared during the earlier informal meeting and this interview was somewhat different.

All the aforementioned oral data collection procedures were conducted in English. To be sensitive to linguistic ethical issues (Duff, 2008) code switching to Urdu was anticipated; however, all participants chose to use English for the entirety of the data collection.

Narrative frames: After I had returned to New Zealand, the narrative frames were emailed as a Word document to the six lecturer participants at the beginning of March 2017. All completed narratives were returned via email by mid-April 2017. Although I presumed the lecturer participants would have participated in further peer observation activities by this time, this was not the case. Nonetheless, the frames provided opportunities for them to reflect on their previous experience of peer observation after a lapse of time. The six lecturers completed the narratives individually in English, and the length of the completed narratives ranged from one page to a little over one page (see Appendix 6 for a sample).

Research journal as an organisational tool: During the data collection and analysis, brief notes were made sporadically in a research journal, which were later developed to a fuller text. Keeping a research journal is considered to be fundamental in qualitative research to make the researcher's "experiences, opinions, thoughts, and feelings visible and an acknowledged part of the research design, data generation, analysis, and interpretation process" (Ortlipp, 2008, p. 703). The research journal in this study was primarily used as a data analysis organisational tool. It was maintained to record my formal data collection and analysis experiences, thoughts, feelings and opinions. In using the journal, I followed guidelines suggested by Ortlipp (2008), who made the point that research journals are a "way of creating transparency in the research process, and [...] can have concrete effects on the research design" (p. 696). The journal provided a trail of the research, showing the on-going changes and modifications to data collection procedures and analysis. This journal was retained in a Word document (see Appendix 11 for a sample). It was an effective means to reflect on my experiences, and guided the preparation of key sections of this thesis, most importantly Section 3.5.2: Collecting data in situ, and the following Section 3.6.

3.6 The Forms of Data Analysis

Data analysis is the "process of systematically searching and arranging the data collected" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p.159) in order to discover useful and important information embedded in the data. Following grounded theory of data analysis, the raw data were first coded, which was a systematic process of combing the data for ideas and categories. Similar passages of text were marked with a code label so that they could be retrieved at a later stage for further comparison and analysis (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). After coding, the data were subjected to a process of grounded analysis (i.e. constant comparison and contrast) from which categories and themes emerged (Charmaz, 2006; Cohen et al., 2011). The data from various research instruments were then interpreted for triangulation and cross-analysed to draw the key findings of the present study (Khan & van Wynsberghe, 2008).

3.6.1 Using a grounded approach

The main feature of the grounded approach is to generate theory from data inductively and to draw conclusions through constant comparisons between data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The data analysis in this study took a grounded theory approach as initial coding was done inductively (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Charmaz (2006, 2014, 2015) grounded theorists should apply a coding process which involves: initial open coding, focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical sampling. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) claim that a more practical approach should be taken to interpret different aspects of the research. They suggest a six-step guide: “Familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). This study mainly followed the six steps of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), which provide “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). This was a more suitable approach for my purposes than the process suggested by Charmaz (2006).

3.6.2 Familiarising with, transcribing and organising data

To familiarise myself with the data collected, all audio recorded data were promptly transformed into summaries in Word files. Since all of the collected data were in English, most of the words used in the summaries were records of actual words used by the participants. Another reason to make summaries before producing full transcriptions of oral data was because they were conveniently managed and written during the busy field research time. I completed each summary at the soonest availability after conducting the data collection procedure, so that it could be sent to the respective participants to check for accuracy. Participants were invited to provide corrections and additions if they wished. No corrections or additions were made, and participants usually confirmed the content of the summary informally. Such checking by participants added to the validity and reliability of the research (Dörnyei, 2007).

In addition, during my field research, to organise my audio and Word files, I set up a project in a software programme (Bazeley, 2007) *NVivo11* entitled: My

Research. I created a folder, which included three, second-level folders: focus groups, stimulated recall, and interviews. I then imported all the audio recordings and put them in their respective folders, and then made six third-level folders for the six lecturer participants. I followed the same format for storing the Word files.

After I finished my field research, when I returned to New Zealand, I refined and developed my summaries further by listening to each audio recording again and then added any points that I had not noted earlier (as recommended by Sutton & Austin, 2015). The stimulated recall sessions were fully transcribed and the summaries of the focus group discussions and interviews were further expanded with some transcriptions of key episodes pertinent to my research questions. The field notes made during the post-observation meetings were tabulated when organising this data (see an example in Appendix 12). Revisiting the data revealed new insights and key points, and acquainted me with my data more fully.

3.6.3 Initial Coding

I read through the data several times to get a general sense of the content and identify the key points. Analysis commenced with initial coding of each interview, which generated a tentative series of categories (Miles & Huberman, 1984) that guided the on-going process. More codes were created by going through each focus group discussion and stimulated recall session, which made searching the data easier. This also enabled me to make comparisons and to identify patterns that required further investigation (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). As each summary of the interview or the focus group, and transcription of the stimulated recall session, was reviewed, the main broad codes were generated from the prompts, questions and points asked during the respective data collection procedures. For example, if the question asked in the interview was “What are your general beliefs about peer observation of teaching?”, then responses were organised under the main code of “Lecturers’ beliefs.” This coding process was done for each instrument.

To organise and analyse the data effectively, I tabulated each summary and transcription using Microsoft Word. Tabulation was done with two columns, the left side comprising the main code and the right side comprising the relevant data.

The data were reviewed again and, after reading each point on the right side of the columns, multiple sub-codes were added in the left side of the column. To keep track of the corresponding information, the sub-codes were highlighted with the same colour. This process was extended and further developed towards reviewing themes, and provided a means to refer back to the raw audio-data to reconfirm the exact words of the participant when it came to summaries of focus groups and interviews. See Figure 3.2 as an example below:

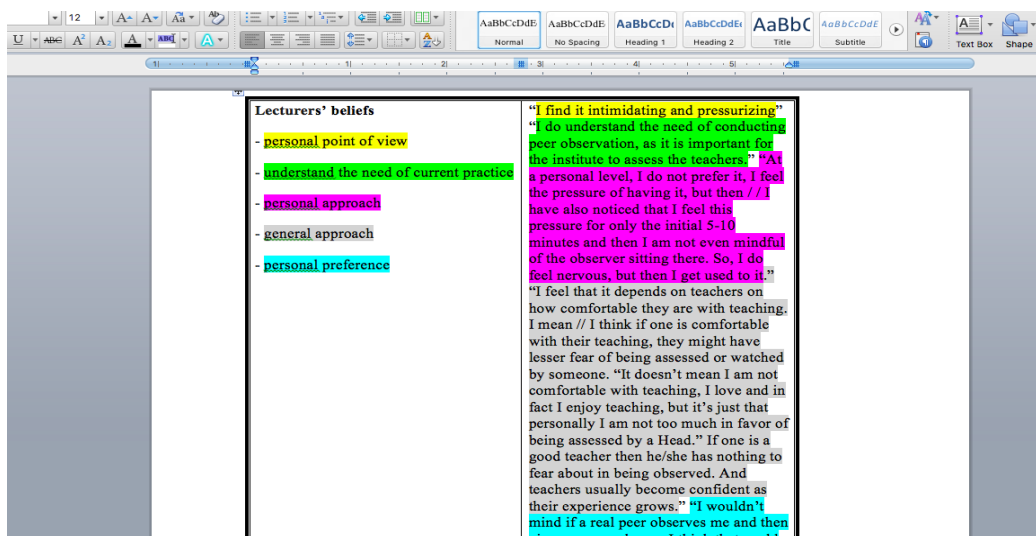


Figure 3.2: Sample of colour coding

This process of colour coding data instrument-by-instrument enabled me to understand the research phenomenon in the research context and helped me search for common themes.

3.6.4 Reviewing and naming themes

This step involved reviewing initial codes instrument-by-instrument, comparing them to find repeated codes, and then formalising repeated codes into themes. Themes were created according to the key findings that emerged from the data analysis and responded to the research questions. Below is the methodological approach I followed to name themes and create Chapter 4: Findings.

First, I reviewed the coded data and then formed themes for the reoccurring codes, as suggested by Holton (2010). Meanwhile, I observed the relationships between codes and sub-codes across the various participants. I endeavoured to comprehend the research phenomenon more fully through the lens of each participant's perspective within each instrument. Through this approach, the development of

the lecturers' thoughts over the data collection phase became evident. Second, mind maps were made in NVivo11 (see Figure 3.3 as an example below) to visualise relationships between the themes and define them cogently to form the contents of Chapter 4: Findings. Third, data were collated via a copy-and-paste technique; each relevant item of data was copied and pasted under its corresponding theme. This collation was first implemented instrument-by-instrument (progressing from focus group discussions to stimulated recall sessions, interviews and then narrative frames) and then the dataset was reassembled as a whole to establish coherence. Through this process, I was able to collect chunks of data belonging to each theme. I used extracts from the participants' transcripts to illustrate themes and the sources of my own interpretation (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Finally, the research findings were synthesised to draft the first report of the findings (Sutton & Austin, 2015), which was then further refined to form Chapter 4.

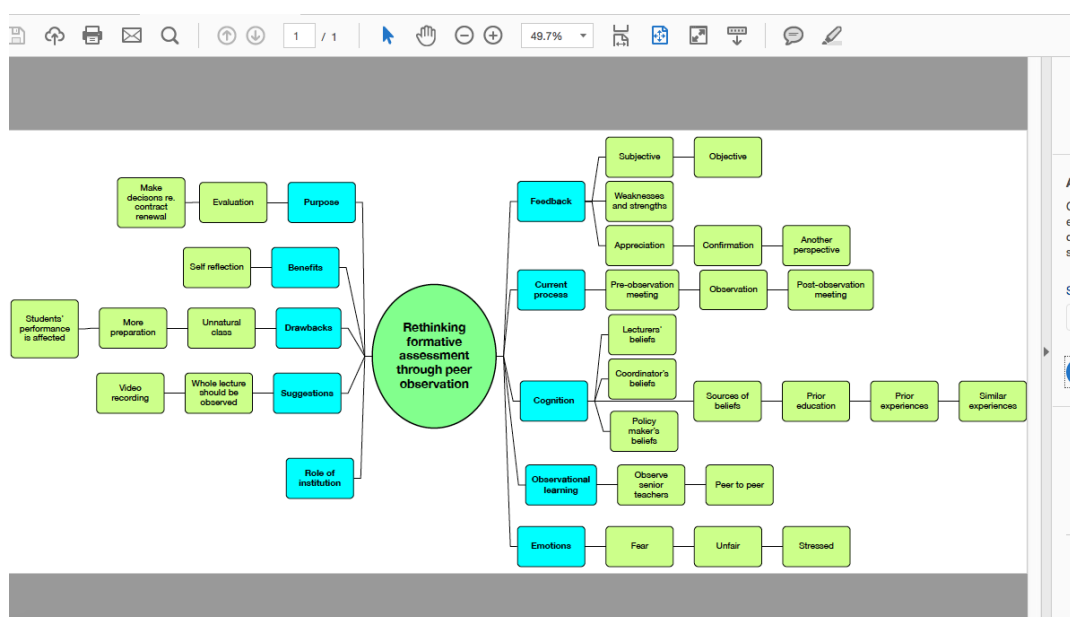


Figure 3.3: Sample of a mind map

This analysis of the data and subsequent interpretation of the findings (discussed in Chapter 4) led to the grounded explanation, which has contributed to the theoretical development of this thesis by using and adapting Kolb's ELT.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

As this research involved human participants, the research process was reviewed by the University of Waikato's HRE Committee. Approval was sought to proceed

with this research, which adhered strictly to the University of Waikato's Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities (2008). This review and permission from the HRE Committee was important, as it helped in providing protection for human subjects and their rights (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; University of Waikato, 2008). The following are the ethical considerations which were accommodated within this research.

3.7.1 Access to participants and their well-being

Firstly, access to the institute and the participants was obtained by seeking permission from the Dean and HoD of the HSS. I was acquainted with the research site (see Section 3.7.3), which had some advantages; for example, it made access to the relevant school relatively easy (Gall et al., 2007). In this study the HoD and the Dean had the authority to allow me to access the ESL lecturers by taking part in the regular beginning-of-semester staff meeting in August 2016.

Secondly, to avoid the possibility of the HoD or the convener exerting their influence to oblige staff to participate in this research, I conducted the special meeting without their involvement. Although exerting such influence was deemed unlikely, it was important to be careful in contacting the potential participants (Powney & Watts, 1987).

Thirdly, it was ethically important to make every effort to avoid identification of the institute and the participants. I understood that my thesis would be available globally in electronic form in the University of Waikato Research Commons Database, so the participants were informed about this point accordingly through the consent form. Nevertheless, to ensure anonymity, they and the institute were given pseudonyms as suggested by R. Burgess (1985) and H. Burgess (1985).

Lastly, as this study focuses on supporting peer observation for professional learning via critical inquiry, some critique of the current practices of peer observation within the institute was anticipated. However, the intention of the research is to contribute to development of peer observation practice, and I do not foresee it causing any potential harm to the participants or the institute from being globally accessible.

3.7.2 Confidentiality of the participants' discourse

There was sensitivity attached to this project as the convener (the observer) held a position of authority. Presumably, these evaluative peer observations, conducted by the convener, were used by management to assess the competence of lecturers and to inform promotion recommendations. Hence, the lecturers would not want any data obtained from them to be disclosed to the management, as it may include some negative aspects about the practices of peer observation at the school.

Therefore, the participants were advised through information letters and formal consent forms about efforts to maintain their confidentiality and anonymity in this research. Confidentiality was addressed by assuring that their private information would not be disclosed.

3.7.3 Position of the researcher

While I carried out data collection procedures, I was also engaged with part-time teaching in the research site. In the present study, I was aware that I had a new additional role, which is that of an independent researcher. This position of being the researcher as well as the “insider” had many benefits, as this enhanced my ability to contextualise and analyse situations regarding the topic (Griffiths, 1985). Also, upholding this dual role helped in facilitating an enhanced rapport and communication with the participants (Mercer, 2007; Hockey, 1993). Further detail of ethical issues for this study are discussed in Sarfraz (Forthcoming).

3.8 Trustworthiness

As this study employed a qualitative interpretive design, the trustworthiness of the qualitative data in the research design needed to be considered (Silverman, 2013). Trustworthiness of qualitative research is concerned with its credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this section, each criterion to gain trustworthiness of qualitative data is described, accompanied by discussion of how each criterion was accommodated in this study.

Credibility derives from the researcher's thick description of the participants' experiences and interpretations of reality, and the extent to which participants

agree with the interpretations of the researcher (Patton, 2002, 2015; Toma, 2011). Transferability is achieved when the case can be related to other similar settings (Toma, 2011). Dependability aims to verify that the findings of a study are consistent with the raw data collected. Lastly, confirmability is realised by interpreting the data in an unbiased way so that the reader and other researchers can judge the plausibility of the interpretations (Toma, 2011). These four criteria affirm the importance of adhering to an appropriate set of standards to achieve valid data and its interpretation (Gall et al., 2007).

To strengthen the dimension of credibility, the data collection tools were piloted and practised to ensure they were appropriate and valid. Moreover, data were gathered through multiple methods, which helped to seek more clarity about the research phenomenon. Triangulation of the data through the multi-method approach further ensured internal validity of the data gathered. Trust and rapport were built with the participants to encourage them to share their honest points of view (Erickson, 1986; Mercer, 2007; Hockey, 1993). Building an approachable rapport and conducting collegial conversations also helped to reduce the social distance between myself and the participants (Howe, 2001; R. Burgess, 1985).

The in-depth account of the research context and the understanding of individual participants' journeys in shaping their cognition about peer observation supported the aspect of transferability. This detailed and holistic description will certainly enable readers to fully comprehend the phenomenon, which then may help them to relate the findings of this study to other similar settings.

After data collection, frequent debriefing sessions were carried out about my anonymised data and findings with my thesis supervisors and discussions with fellow PhD students. Dependability was achieved through these efforts, as they mitigated my interpretations from being biased, and enabled me to widen my vision by adding their perspectives (Shenton, 2004). In addition, thoroughly describing the research process allows prospective researchers and other readers to understand how I have conceptualised the study from collecting data to interpreting findings and drawing conclusions. This further strengthened the aspect of dependability in this research.

That I, as the researcher, was simultaneously an insider as well as an outsider was of concern in realising confirmability. My dual role had the potential to “influence the whole research process – site selection, method of sampling, documentary analysis, observation techniques and the way meaning is constructed from the field data” (Hockey, 1993, p. 200). Likewise, Griffiths (1998) has claimed that an insider produces different knowledge from an outsider, although she does not exactly elaborate her meaning in terms of how and why. In general, it has been advised that the researcher must be honest during the data collection procedures and should report about all the incidents and instances to gain trustworthiness in research (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Confirmability was sought by recognising the subjectivity of my role. I established my status as an international researcher in the research field and maintained awareness and sensitivity to factors attached to being an outsider as well as an insider. As I was also teaching part-time in the school, I was familiar with the culture and the institute, and became acquainted with my participants before starting data collection procedures (Shenton, 2004). Nevertheless, as the researcher, I have been truthful in reporting all the data, presented in the following chapters. I was aware and conscious of playing the two roles, and pertinent issues and concerns were considered and discussed with my supervisors to avoid bias. I also maintained a research journal, as mentioned in Section 3.5.2, to reflect on the research process and so all collected data were supplemented by my reflexive notes (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). These steps aided the confirmability of this study.

Lastly, the review by the University of Waikato’s HRE Committee contributed to the trustworthiness of this research. The Committee reviewed my research process and confirmed its design; I sustained respectful interactions with my participants, and I used adequate measures to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The ethical review was an important aspect and added to the trustworthiness and validity of this present research. Via these measures, the study was conducted “competently and ethically” (Rallis & Rossman, 2009, p. 264) and every effort was made to ensure trustworthiness. However, I have also acknowledged the limitations of this study in terms of any dilemmas, challenges, and uncertainties (see Section 6.2).

3.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented a description of the study's research methodology. It explained the data collection methods and means of analysis used to explore the phenomenon of peer observation for ESL lecturers in a Pakistani higher education context. The research takes the form of a case study within the interpretive paradigm, using a predominantly qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. In this chapter, the benefits of the multi-method approach used for the study were presented, followed by discussion of the data collection methods. Recruitment of, and access to, participants, and the formal procedures by which the data were collected were also presented. Data analysis using a grounded approach was described. Lastly, ethical considerations of this study were outlined, and the trustworthiness of the research was addressed via the accommodation of four main elements: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The findings and interpretations from the data analysis are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings and Interpretations

This chapter reports the outcomes of the data-gathering phase and draws attention to the key findings, which are further discussed in Chapter 5. The broad focus of this research project is to explore the phenomenon of teacher assessment through peer observation in a private university (ALI) in Pakistan. This chapter explores the institutional view of peer observation as well as the lecturers' cognition about peer observation as a tool for assessing teachers' performance and a means of professional learning. It also describes the reported practice of peer observation and reveals the actual practice of peer feedback sessions following observed classes at ALI. It then presents significant features associated with peer observation, such as the role of feedback and lecturers' emotions.

In brief, the findings displayed diversity in the points of view gained from the QA member and convener and the lecturers' initial and subsequent cognition, and the reported practice of peer observation at ALI. Data also showed that the lecturers' involvement in this research project prompted them to reflect on many factors related to this practice, suggesting that their understandings about peer observation were extended as a result of their participation. It was evident that lecturers' initial assumptions, derived from their prior experiences, revealed generally negative aspects about peer observation, which they understandably projected onto their upcoming experience of peer observation at ALI. However, the lecturers' participation in, and stimulated reflection on, peer observation via this study enhanced and extended their cognition about evaluative peer observation. This reflective practice also helped them identify and recognise positive emotions arising from participation in peer observation.

To understand the participants' cognition and practices, it was important to glean knowledge of their academic qualifications, prior teaching experiences, and their working titles at ALI at the time of data collection. This information was gained through the questionnaire and interviews (as shown in Table 4.1 below).

Table 4.1: Participants' bio-data

Participant	Highest qualification	Title	Time taught at the tertiary level	Time taught at ALI	Gender
QA Member	PhD	Associate Professor	Over 25 years	13 years	M
Convener	PhD	Associate Professor	Over 15 years	11 years	M
L1	MA	Adjunct faculty	2 years	Second semester	M
L2	MA	Teaching fellow	1 year	Second semester	F
L3	MPhil	Teaching fellow	1 year	Second semester	F
L4	MA	Teaching fellow	4 months	First semester	F
L5	MA	Teaching fellow	4 months	First semester	F
L6	MA	Teaching fellow	4 months	First semester	F

The focus of this study has been addressed by following the five subsidiary questions stated in Section 2.6 and repeated below:

1. How were peer observation and feedback understood, interpreted, and enacted at the research site?
2. What were the structural, emotional, and cognitive factors that influenced the lecturers' perceptions of the practice of peer observation?
3. In what ways did the institutional perspective and the lecturer participants' cognition align with their practices of peer observation?
4. In what ways did the lecturer participants' cognition develop with respect to experiential learning and reflection?
5. How do the findings of the present study extend understandings of the praxis of teacher assessment through peer observation?

These research questions are addressed in this chapter through interpretation, critical commentary, and the inclusion of illustrative excerpts of the data collected. The chapter is organised into three sections, which are presented in the following sequence: the institutional perception of peer observation, lecturers' cognition about peer observation, and the emotional impact of peer observation.

All the data collected from the institute and the participants were in English and were transcribed verbatim. The following transcript conventions are used to present the data:

Table 4.2: Transcript conventions

M. I	Interview with the Representative of HSS School on the Quality Assurance Committee (the QA member)
C. I	Interview with Convener of the English Stream (the observer)
L1. FG	Lecturer 1 in Focus group
L1.SR	Stimulated recall session with Lecturer 1
L1. I	Interview with Lecturer 1
L1.NF	Narrative frame of Lecturer 1
[...]	Part of quotation omitted
{...}	Activity associated with the speech
/, //, ///	Pause (length of seconds)
Bold	Emphasis given by speaker
< >	Interpretive comment

4.1 The institutional perception of peer observation

At ALI, practices related to lecturers' professional learning, appraisal, and accountability came within the purview of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) of the university. The Chair of the Committee worked in collaboration with other members including one representative from each school. The

committee met bi-monthly to discuss and share the best practices of various schools of ALI in relation to quality assurance. An important responsibility of this committee was to plan and introduce quality assurance processes, such as peer observation, and then review the implementation of these processes according to their effectiveness. However, representatives of each school had some authority to implement different practices within their respective schools. This section explores the formally articulated institutional point of view about peer observation that was being practised in the English Stream in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) at ALI. The information was obtained from three different source types: the formal and informal documents that present the policy and practice of peer observation at the School of HSS and overall at ALI; an interview with the School's QA member; and an interview with the convener of the English Stream, who conducted the observations in lecturers' classes. These three sources exhibited ambiguity in the assessment of teachers through peer observation with contradictions in information found within and between these sources. Data from interviews with lecturers (observees) of the same stream have also been used to supplement some of the points made by the convener.

4.1.1 Official and unofficial documents

This section develops an interpretation of peer observation based on three documents located at the School of HSS at ALI: HSS Newsletter 2016; Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) Policy 2016; and the meeting minutes from the members of the QAC (December 2016).

Limited information was found in the aforementioned documents about peer observation. Further, the documents showed institutionally endorsed understandings of peer observation to be somewhat conflicting. While the HSS Newsletter and minutes of the meeting suggested that the school placed a strong emphasis on teaching and its enhancement through formative peer observation practice, the APT policy stated that it was summative and conducted for teachers' appraisal. The following two excerpts illustrate this contradiction:

HSS has been strengthened through a system of peer review where faculty sit in each other's courses and share their experiences. (HSS Newsletter, 2016, p. 2)

University reviews will carefully evaluate a candidate's <lecturer's> record of excellence in teaching, using both peer reviews and student evaluations. (APT policy, 2016 p. 7)

In addition, the APT policy pointed out that peer observation was carried out to assess a “faculty member’s teaching ability” to decide whether the reviewed lecturers should be considered for further “appointment,” or any “promotion” (p. 3). On the contrary, the HSS Newsletter and the minutes of the meeting directed attention to a kind of peer observation that was done mainly for the purpose of lecturers’ professional learning. The records in the minutes of the meeting read that the HSS School conducted “Formative Peer Review of Teaching [...] where colleagues provided each other with feedback on teaching strengths and weaknesses” (p. 1). These two documents indicate that this peer observation of teaching was perhaps conducted through a collegial approach and offered an opportunity to colleagues in the school to provide each other with useful feedback to improve their teaching skills. In addition, the use of the term “colleagues” in the minutes of the meeting also suggests that this activity of peer observation involved two equal peers; however, the APT policy (2016) suggests the opposite, as shown in the excerpt below:

The appointment and promotion procedures at <ALI> are designed to privilege the knowledge and judgment of senior scholars within the candidate’s <lecturer’s> field, with the understanding that scholars are uniquely positioned to evaluate the quality of colleagues’ work within their field. (p. 3)

From the above quotation it can be inferred that, from the institutional perspective, assessment of lecturers at ALI was implemented through a top-down approach. Lecturers’ participation seemed to be obligatory and involved judgement and evaluation of lecturers by senior staff members.

As presented, it is difficult to interpret what kind of peer observation the institute was endorsing. Table 4.3 below presents a summary of the interpretations made from the formal and informal documents about the phenomenon of peer observation at ALI.

Table 4.3: Overview of peer observation in the documents

Document	Interpretations about peer observation
APT policy	Summative- used to evaluate lecturers to make decisions about their future prospects at ALI.
HSS Newsletter	Formative- share experiences of teaching
Minutes of the meeting	Formative- provide colleagues with constructive feedback

4.1.2 Member of Quality Assurance Committee

The QA member was interviewed, and the data revealed that he valued highly the potential of formative peer observation. Three main points were highlighted in his interview: the status of policy-making about peer observation at ALI, the approach to implementing peer observation, and the criteria and objectives of peer observation.

The data provided by the QA member revealed that the members of QAC were in the process of reviewing and evaluating the current practices of peer observation at each school with a view to formalising one practice across all the schools at ALI. He commented, “The process yet has to become formalised // perhaps in a handbook for teachers and in the institute’s Teaching and Learning policy” (M. I). However, further information on a potential QAC Teaching and Learning policy and its contents was not yet available. With respect to current peer observation practices at the HSS, the QA member claimed that it was more of an indicative practice that entailed “dos and don’ts sort of a thing” (M. I) and was mainly done on an ad hoc basis across the different streams of the HSS School. He added, “this practice might differ from school to school or department to department” (M. I). For example, in the Anthropology stream, which also comes under the HSS School, the majority of the lecturers held Assistant or Associate Professor positions and practised peer observation voluntarily among each other. These professors had little difference in professional status and they had the choice to participate or not. This suggests that in this stream it was a collaborative effort. By contrast, in the English Stream, the convener of the stream observed lecturers

that were mostly at Teaching Fellow or Adjunct faculty position, which suggests a hierarchical approach. However, the QA member expressed willingness to accommodate lecturers' preferences as to the kind of peer observation they would find effective or beneficial. He said, "it is not necessary for the coordinator <convener> to observe classes, and we appreciate colleagues to observe each other too if they find it useful and helpful" (M. I). Nevertheless, from the above information, it is clear that peer observation was conducted in different ways within the HSS School.

In addition, the QA member categorised peer observation within the English Stream as a bottom-up exercise. As he explained:

It is bottom-up [...] Well // we have new faculty // some of them don't have teaching experiences, and they want feedback from the expert // Since we had requests from teachers to be reviewed from an expert, we came up with this idea of peer observation. (M. I)

According to this statement, the request came from the lecturers. He explained that, based on the lecturers' request, he employed the convener as the observer in this exercise, who was "extremely experienced," and "an expert" in his field, to review "newly hired and other recently hired" lecturers (M. I). He further justified this approach by stating that the feedback from the peer observations was not reported to any staff at a senior level. He commented, "The feedback remains confidential between the observer and the teacher who is observed, and the idea is to note what generally takes place in the class [...] So [...] there is no paper trail or anything like this" (M. I).

Regarding the main criteria and objective of this exercise, the QA member mentioned in his interview that aspects related to "teaching styles, such as, lecturers speaking in a particular way, their movement and behaviour, delivery of the lesson, and their tone of voice are observed." This information was then sent to the respective lecturers by the convener through "informal feedback." The principal purpose to do so was to help lecturers "improve their teaching practices and communication skills in class" (M. I). The QA member's intention was to enable the faculty to learn and develop professionally. Some of the key words he used were "**foster, enable, facilitate, and help** but **not to impose** anything on teachers" (M. I). These comments show that the practice focused on lecturers'

development and aimed at improving the quality of teaching. The convener guided the lecturers to “deal with classroom experiences”, advised them to avoid “disparity between lessons”, and encouraged them to maintain a “balance in the teaching style” (M. I) during the feedback sessions. The QA member mentioned that students’ course evaluations were also used to maintain quality teaching, but that they were usually taken with “a pinch of salt,” as students’ judgment could be biased. As he commented, “Not everything that is noted is right in the students’ course evaluations [...] personal animosity and friendship also reflects in the comments” (M. I).

According to the data provided by the QA member, there was no rigid or formal policy of peer observation that was being followed. The QA member portrayed himself as open-minded about suggesting the policy about peer observation in the future. However, he did not have the authority to make a formal policy on his own, as this could only be developed in collaboration with other members of the QAC and with approval from the Chair of QAC. In general, the prospective plan seemed to be to revise and formally apply the policy of peer observation across ALI with a formative approach and with the purpose of improving lecturers’ learning. The interpretations of the QA member about peer observation have been summarised in the table below.

Table 4.4: Summary of interpretations of the QA member

Approach	Bottom-up
Criteria	Teaching methodology and style
Focus	The observation of lecturers’ general comportment and teaching styles
Objectives	Ensure quality of teaching and enhance lecturers’ learning
Policy	In the process of formalising an institution wide policy

4.1.3 Convener of the English Stream

The role of the convener in this process of peer observation was ambiguous, as he was not just the observer but also the main expediter of the process in the English

Stream. He was also a lecturer and taught in the same programme as the lecturer participants. Nevertheless, he was often referred to as an authority figure and addressed formally with titles such as Sir and Doctor by the lecturers, because of his multifaceted role, his status and his position as one of the key persons on the hiring panel. He had been appointed as the observer to review lecturers in the English Stream by the QA member of the HSS School two years prior to data collection. The convener had subsequently conducted observations in lecturers' classes and then provided respective lecturers with pertinent feedback. The four main points that were extracted from his data are: the principles and procedures of peer observation that define the meaning of "peer" in the activity, and the criteria, objectives, and process of peer observation.

The convener could not reasonably be considered the lecturers' professional equal. He held the title of Assistant Professor, while the lecturers were appointed as Teaching Fellows or Adjunct Faculty. Despite this, the convener defined himself as the lecturers' peer, stating that, "We all belong to same group and department, and we all teach the same course" (C. I). Nevertheless, the lecturers did not perceive him in the same way (see Section 4.2.3.4).

Unlike the QA member, the convener's criteria for observation emphasised lecturers' content knowledge over teaching styles and practices. He said, "Knowledge and mastery of the subject matter are paramount" (C. I); however, matters like "tone of voice, where the teacher should position, delivery of the lesson or how things are presented" held less significance (C. I). He assessed lecturers on the basis of their "eloquence" in transmitting the content and giving "adequate explanation to students' questions." By way of justification, he explained that if lecturers had full competence in regard to the content they were delivering in the lecture, then the "students' interests" would automatically be "engaged" and so the "passion and enthusiasm" in the class would be fostered (C. I).

In regard to the objectives of peer observation, the convener emphasised students' learning over lecturers' learning. He claimed, "I want to ensure that students have the best learning experiences" (C. I). To ensure this, he provided lecturers with feedback in order to call their "attention to certain features that need to be

enhanced, rectified and even continued.” However, he acknowledged the learning of lecturers to be a concurrent objective, stating that, “teachers absolutely and certainly learn from this practice” (C. I).

In addition, he revealed that the results of peer observation did not feed into decisions about a lecturer’s on-going appointment; rather, “student course evaluation or their feedback usually determines more effectively about a lecturer’s contract renewal” or termination (C. I). This comment reveals conflict between the convener’s and QA member’s perceptions in this regard, as shown in the previous section.

Moreover, neither the documents nor the QA member articulated any information about procedures or stages of peer observation. It appeared that the convener had adjusted to the role of the observer and carried out the procedure in line with previous experiences in university education:

I have US academic background, as I did my Bachelors, Masters, and PhD from the US, so I am very much familiar with their ways of conducting this practice [...] I went through so many observations when I was hired for different positions in the universities back then and those experiences are somewhat being incorporated [...] I would call this hand-holding. (C. I)

In the light of his previous experiences, he conducted the following three-step procedure of peer observation at ALI: “I first inform the relevant teacher via email that I would like to sit in one of their classes, second, I go and observe, and third is I give feedback at my and the observed teacher’s soonest availability.” The execution of the third stage, the post-observation meeting, was indicated to be a positive meeting that was “structured, starting with good points, then usually recommendations and suggestions” (C. I).

Table 4.5 is a summary of the interpretations of the convener about peer observation at ALI.

Table 4.5: Summary of convener’s interpretations

Criteria	Knowledge of the content
Objective	Provide students with best learning experiences

A peer is ...	Someone who teaches the same course
Process	Three stages: pre-observation meeting, observation, and post-observation meeting

In summary, substantial diversity was noted in the interpretations about peer observation deriving from the three different organisational points of view examined in this section: the documents, the QA member, and the convener. Overall, however, the institution and individuals involved were in the process of learning about and implementing peer observation for predominantly formative purposes.

4.1.4 Process of peer observation

The three stages of peer observation mentioned in Table 4.5 were confirmed and elaborated by the lecturers during their interviews. The interview data from all six lecturers confirmed that the first step in peer observation was a pre-observation stage conducted through an exchange of emails or an informal and unplanned meeting. Principally, the pre-observation meeting at ALI was “an informal way of informing” (L1. I) the lecturers that they would be observed. The correspondences were done “casually face-to-face and then reiterated in the email as a reminder” (L6. I). Furthermore, “Some other back and forth emails” (L5. I) might also be sent to coordinate a mutually convenient date and time for the observation. Some of the lecturers, however, indicated that they had the liberty to choose a session when they would want to be observed.

The second stage involved the convener attending the scheduled class to observe the lecturer. He sat quietly during the observed lecture and observed half of the lecture. L1 explained, “I remember him making notes while observing me.” Three lecturers, L2, L3, and L4, claimed that the convener only observed “half of the class” (L2. I). Since the lectures usually ran for 120 minutes with a ten-minute break in the middle, it appears that the observer usually observed lecturers for only 50 minutes.

The third stage was the post-observation meeting. From auditing the post-observation meetings at ALI, it was noted that they generally ran for 15–20 minutes (except L6’s meeting, which lasted 40 minutes) and took place in the

convener's office. The post-observation meetings took place on the same day as the observation in the case of L1 and L3, a day after in the case of L2 and L5, and a few days after in the case of L4 and L6. There was no uniformity in terms of scheduling the post-observation meetings, as they were organised according to the convener's and lecturers' availability. Overall, it was claimed that the post-observation meeting was "not an overly formalised meeting" (L4. I). This aspect of informality corresponded to the convenor's reflections: "I try to maintain the degree of informality to keep teachers at ease with this practice" (C. D).

4.1.5 Summary

The institutional interpretations about peer observation at ALI, presented so far, are difficult to grasp as the relevant people in management had contradictory perceptions. The QA member and the convener considered peer observation to be a formative process. While both focused on learning, the former promoted lecturers' learning rather than lecturers' evaluation, while the latter emphasised students' learning. In addition, no implicit or explicit principles or process were laid out by any institutional policy or the QAC, and the three-stage process of peer observation (pre-observation meeting, observation and post-observation meeting) was devised by the convener. He was not given guidelines to follow by the QA member or the QAC. Generally, the data suggest that relevant decision-makers at ALI were in a state of progression to develop a policy in regard to peer observation.

Attention now turns to the interpretations of lecturers who were involved in this practice of peer observation as observees. These interpretations include: the aims, criteria, benefits and drawbacks of peer observation, the role, content and delivery of feedback, and the notion of 'peer' observation.

4.2 Lecturers' cognition about peer observation

Initial data obtained from focus group discussions revealed that lecturers held assumptions about peer observation from their previous experiences at ALI or at different institutions. However, later data obtained from stimulated recall sessions, interviews and narrative frames revealed development in the lecturers'

cognition over the course of the study. To demonstrate this development in lecturers' cognition, data are presented and interpreted in a chronological order from focus group discussions, stimulated recall sessions, interviews to narrative frames.

4.2.1 Initial assumptions from prior experiences

The data in this section have been extracted from the focus group discussions. Table 4.6 below gives an overview of the relevant experiences discussed by lecturer participants in the two focus group discussions.

Table 4.6: Experiences of peer observation

Lecturer	Focus group	Outcomes	Experience/s of peer observation
L1	B	Mainly negative	- One experience of being observed by the convener at ALI
L2	A	Neutral	- One experience of being observed by the convener at ALI
L3	B	Mainly positive	- One experience of being observed by the convener at ALI
L4	B	Nor positive nor negative	- Prior experience of being observed by the senior coordinator in a private high school
L5	A	Mainly positive	- Prior experience of being observed in a private school by the principal
L6	A	Mainly negative	- Prior experience of being observed in a private primary school by the principal

In focus group A, L2 explained her experience of being observed by the convener at ALI the previous semester. The explanation was prefaced by the assertion that, at ALI, the convener assessed lecturers through observing only “part of the lecture” (L2. FG) which depicted lecturers' partial performance:

I feel a teacher's teaching capability is limited to that particular session that is observed which is not even really reflective of their teaching ways {stutters a little} patterns that they have during the entire semester. (L2. FG)

L5 and L6, who had not yet been observed at ALI, concurred with L2's statement. They further argued that the main issue of observing "one part of a lecture" (L5. FG) was that sometimes one part is engaging and animated and the other part is not, so the observer's impression of their teaching would depend on the part of the lecture they observed. Also, at ALI, each lecturer taught two sections of the English course, so L5 and L6 drew attention to a possibility that out of the two sections one could be more interactive than the other. The following extracts by L5 and L6 illustrate this point.

Extract #1

01 L6: Sometimes half of the lecture the students are fairly interactive and in the other half they are absolutely duds so this is quite arbitrary...

02 L5: ...and the teaching pattern and style differs from section to section, as one section is not like the other.

(L5, L6. FG)

Therefore, these two variables can play a role towards an "unfair" (L6. FG) practice to assess teaching performance. On the contrary, L5 explained her prior experience of being observed by the principal of a school as positive. Two main aspects of this experience were appreciated by L5: receiving a "written two-page document" prior to the post-observation meeting that provided detailed feedback concerning both strengths and aspects for further development, and "congenial" delivery of oral feedback during the post-observation meeting. She said:

I myself did not realise my strengths as a teacher until they were highlighted // the observer also gave great and useful suggestions [...] and the feedback session was like a discussion and was carried out in a very professional way that I did not feel being critiqued.
(L5. FG)

In response to this experience exemplified by L5, L2 referred to her previous experience of peer observation at ALI, and she praised the convener for highlighting the "positive and negative sides" of her teaching during the post-observation meeting. Moreover, the feedback given by the convener to L2 facilitated self-reflection on her teaching; as she said, "I tried thinking from the students' perspective to what a lecturer should do in a lecture" (L2. FG).

To support this discussion on past experiences of peer observation, L6 mentioned her previous experience of peer observation in a primary school where she was observed unexpectedly by the principal. She critiqued such unscheduled observation practices by pointing out two issues: teachers should be primed beforehand about any observation, and that it is important for a teacher “to know on what lines would she would be assessed” (L6. FG). Furthermore, in L6’s point of view, surprise observations can be biased. To avoid partiality, she suggested:

An external observer’s feedback, not necessarily a university professor, but a friend, or someone, who has been fairly active in designing similar courses, could be more helpful in providing with useful feedback. This could be an effective way to assess a teacher, but this again depends on the institution’s policy and consent as the institution might object of whom you are bringing into the class.
(L6. FG)

As suggested by L6, an outside observer might notice more than an insider and provide a fairer means of assessing teachers. However, L2 disagreed with L6 here and raised the point of seeking the institute’s permission before inviting an external reviewer. She claimed, “maybe the institute might object to bringing someone from the outside” (L2. FG).

In Focus Group B, L1 and L3 also discussed their first experiences of being observed by the convener at ALI, as both had undergone the process the previous semester (2016). L3 had mostly a positive view, that peer observation helped her to become “a better and a more confident teacher” (L3. FG). However, L1 articulated feeling uncomfortable with having previously been observed by the convener. He criticised this kind of observation as, in his view, lecturers are not actually being themselves during the observed lesson, which results in the observer observing an unnatural class. He also pointed to the element of threat attached to this kind of peer observation and its outcomes:

Extract #2

01 L1: ...when we are half way through a semester, we kind of develop a rapport with our students because we greet students, pass jokes, and also have general discussions, which I surely would not do if there was {stumbles and says} were a peer <peer in this instance refers to the convener> observing my class.

02 L3: {interrupted} yea this a problematic factor

03 L4: and yea, teachers could feel like this {murmurs in a low voice}.

04 L1: ...So yea I find this peer observation fairly intimidating and I am not sure if it is really useful as I might not be my own self during the observed lesson.

(L1, L3, L4. FG)

The above extract shows that L1 doubted the authenticity of this practice, as the observed class may not be a real picture of the actual teaching style. Although L3 indicated her first experience of peer observation at ALI as encouraging because she received “positive feedback”, at this stage in the discussion she agreed with L1 in that the class was not “usual” or entirely natural.

In summary, L1, L3, and L4, in referring to their prior experiences, were not in favour of peer observation to assess teachers. The following extract shows this:

Extract #3

01 L3: Teacher’s ultimate goal is to make students understand and want to get their message across the students, so teachers should be evaluated by the students rather than their peers. **Students’ feedback is very helpful and a better means to inform a teacher about her areas of improvement** {says it assertively in loud clear speech}

02 L1: ...well, I personally despise being observed by Heads. I find the process of peer observation fairly intimidating.

03 L4: {says while nodding} ...hmm /// yea and when you know that you will be observed, you prepare your lesson much more than a usual lecture. It becomes more formulae.

(L1, L3, L4. FG)

In the focus group L1, L3 and L4 made several suggestions to overcome the anxiety and drawbacks linked to peer observation. They suggested that peer observation “should be done unannounced” and multiple times in a semester to “avoid the artifice level that prevails in the regular peer review practice” (L1. FG). It should be carried out by “someone who has the same professional status” (L4. FG); lectures should be observed “mid semester” (L3. FG); and finally, that peer observation could be done through a “video recorder to overcome the physical presence of the observer” (L3. FG). The latter was proposed as an “unobtrusive

way” (L3. FG) to observe teachers and it was recommended that the relevant observer could watch the video and give feedback to the observed teacher later. It was agreed among the participants that, if you compare the presence of a person to that of a video camera, a teacher is likely to forget that they are being observed through a video recorder.

In summary, all the lecturers’ prior experiences of peer observation had been conducted by an authoritative person. Suggestions were made by all the lecturers to make this kind of summative peer observation more formative. Overall, for L3, and L5, their previous experiences of being observed seem to be more positive than negative, and their extracts reveal that they felt encouraged by the practice. Nevertheless, both still had some points to critique. On the other side, L1 expressed primarily concrete negative points of view, and L2 seemed to have neutral views. Also, as regards, L4 and L6, it is difficult to identify whether their past experience of being observed was positive or negative, as they did not highlight any concretely positive aspects. Furthermore, these evaluative peer observations stimulated emotional responses in the lecturers, which are presented more fully in Section 4.3.

4.2.2 Progression in understanding

The previous section has displayed lecturers’ initial understandings of peer observation in light of their previous experiences. However, later communication during the stimulated recall sessions conducted shortly after the peer observation sessions enabled a more systematic and focused professional discourse balancing both criticism and appreciation of the process. The following are the main themes uncovered from the six stimulated recall sessions.

4.2.2.1 Criticism of peer observation

The lecturers initially associated peer observation at ALI with evaluation and feeling that they were challenged in observed lectures to prove themselves as competent and capable lecturers. The stimulated recall data show that lecturers largely criticised the current practices of peer observation at ALI and emphasised the following perceived flaws: 1) adverse effects on students’ performance; and 2)

impact of power relationship on lecturers' cognition. These flaws are presented and supported by relevant evidence in the following sub-sections.

1) Adverse effects on students' performance

It was argued that not only lecturers but also students became self-conscious of being observed, which consequently affected their behaviour in the observed lecture. It was reported that, during the observed lesson, students turned "serious," (L2. SR) "straight forward," (L1. SR) and "pretty conscious," (L5. SR); when lectures were not observed, they interacted and participated more actively. It was noted that "some students were kind of hesitant {says reluctantly} to say something" (L3. SR); indeed, the extent of students' participation was questioned by the convener during the post-observation meeting with L3. Due to the difference in professional status, it seemed that she was reluctant to defend herself and was hesitant to say what she felt or thought about the students' low participation level. L3 stated that, to avoid an "awkward" situation, she did not say anything about this particular issue to the convener in the post-observation meeting, but she claimed in the stimulated recall session, "they were not participating as much as they regularly do, because of **his** <observer's> presence" (L3. SR).

Likewise, L2 claimed that she was "disappointed" with her students' performance. She had not expected that the observation would affect their behaviour so adversely. In her opinion, the overall lecture fell short of her expectations. She emphasised that a full lecture should be observed and the observer should not come in the middle of the class as he did in her case. This interruption "might have played a role to affect students' performances in a negative way," said L2. However, she received unexpected positive feedback from the convener in the post-observation meeting regarding students' active participation in the lecture, although student participation was not as active as it usually was. It was likely that the convener knew very little about the usual classes and had "nothing else to compare" (L2. SR) the observed lecture with.

Some misinterpretation also arose between L1 and the convener during the post-observation meeting. As observed in the auditing of the post-observation meeting, the convener asked L1 to justify the comment he made to his students when

teaching rhetorical devices. L1 had said to his students, “like I use sarcasm with you too.” However, L1 reflected that he was unable to explain himself in the post-observation meeting. During the recall session, he said:

For example, students give me some tardy work, or they are very late in class and they are often absent so I would just make a sarcastic comment on them being so frequently absent. So basically, I was teaching the students rhetorical devices so one of them was sarcasm, and I said, like I use sarcasm with you too. So and then he was like why? So I think he didn’t like why I use sarcasm with my students. He expects me to be reporting or something. I did want to explain that it’s like light sarcasm {laughing}. And it depends on the relationship that I have built with my students. I have provided them with enough space, friendly environment in the sense that they take my sarcasm in a friendly way. (L1. SR)

Here, the observer picked up on one statement made by L1 during the observed class, leading to misapprehension of L1’s approach to teaching. The convener lacked knowledge about the context, as he had only observed one lesson, and had little understanding of L1’s usual teaching style.

To overcome these shortcomings, L1 and L2 suggested in the stimulated recall session that multiple observations in a semester should be made to establish a more detailed picture of a teacher’s teaching. Also, informing students beforehand about an observer coming to class could be a useful strategy to prevent negative effects on students’ performance, as L5 claimed to have mentioned to her students earlier about the convener coming to their class for an observation.

2) Power relationship

The data highlighted lecturers’ different perceptions about the power relationship between themselves and the convener. The power relationship was consistent with the fact that the convener was an authority figure. To different extents, most of the lecturers perceived the power differential between the two parties.

Upon watching the post-observation meetings between the convener and the lecturers, especially L1, and the dialogue later with him, I perceived that L1 felt strongly about this power relationship. He stated, “I felt like going back to school and visiting the principal’s office. And I would just do, **Yes Sir!**” (L1. SR). The fact that the observer was his “Head” and he was “Adjunct”, for which his

“contract is renewed every semester” (L1. SR), seemed to be the main factors triggering the “intimidating” (L1, FG. SR. I. NF) element for him in this peer observation. In addition, the seating arrangement during the post-observation meeting played a role in his perception, as shown below:

His domination was quite obvious from the very fact that I was sitting in his office, and he was in his chair and the position that he had and I was sitting opposite to him, showed the job and the work that he was doing. Like he is giving me feedback and he had just observed me, so it was very much there. I am not surprised that it was reflected or translated into his feedback also. (L1. SR)

This impression of a power relationship was also indicated by L5, as she classified the post-observation meeting as “continuing a teacher-student thing.” She also mentioned that she would learn different aspects from someone who she would consider her equal. The factor of trust was also underlined here. Her words were:

I feel that his judgment is more important to me in some ways, but I perhaps would not reveal like really vulnerable parts of my class to him, or you know in a way I would with someone of my equal professional status. Yea, so even though I feel that there are certain kinds of discussion that I can't be comfortable having with him or in a different style with him. (L5. SR)

The power relationship was also recognised by L4 in the sense that it prevented her from saying something that she wanted to say in the post-observation meeting. The following example provides evidence of this difficulty.

I wanted to explain to him that what had actually happened and how he is right on that. Even I had thought that I have messed it up, so I wanted to tell him that you are right and your critique is so well taken, but then I thought I shouldn't interrupt him, stay quiet [...]
It's always kind of awkward with <the convener>. (L4. SR)

L1 and L5 had similar encounters as reflected in their extracts below.

When he was talking about answering students' question in detail, I wanted to say, ok, I do answer students' questions properly, but I was a bit more conscious of the fact that he was there, observing the class. (L1. SR)

When he said that a couple of students who were really speaking up in my class and those students wouldn't even utter a word in his class. Here I wanted to talk about other students who do not

respond like this, given that it was a discussion. So I wanted to ask that what to do about those students or perhaps how he could probably suggest ways in which they could, but he wouldn't give me a chance. (L5. SR)

It is evident from these extracts that there were instances when they wanted to clarify, endorse or seek advice on certain points, but did not do so because of the difference of roles. This aspect was summarised by L4: "this kind of peer observation gets intimidating because of the power relationship because in an essence he is my boss." For this reason, she admitted to preparing her lesson more carefully than usual, which she would not have done if the observer had not been her line manager. She said, "I carefully thought about each stage of the lesson, in fact, I might be hypocritical here, but I practised the lesson with the other section first and then tweaked it to make it a perfect one" (L4. SR). Besides, L6 expressed her difficulty in perceiving the convener as her "colleague, definitely not equal," or like a "professor-student relationship."

However, L6 and L2 overall expressed their relationship with the convener as "comfortable" (L2. SR, L6. SR), and they did not state anything that would portray the power difference between them and the convener. In fact, on receiving very positive feedback, L2 perceived the convener as a kind mediator. She said:

I knew he would start with praising even if something had gone wrong, so he would basically start with good points and even deliver the negative points in a sugar coated manner, like next time you could do this or you know something like that. (L2. SR)

This shows that the convener had a positive disposition and maintained a helpful attitude towards the lecturers. However, apart from L2 and L6, the other four lecturers showed strong evidence of their perceived asymmetrical power relationships with the convener. The impact of this power relationship was also to some extent reflected on their emotions and eventually in their teaching practices during the observed lesson, as discussed in Section 4.3.2.1.

4.2.2.2 Appreciations of peer observation

So far, lecturers' emerging beliefs about the shortcomings of the current practice of peer observation at ALI have been presented. Now, lecturers' appreciations

about peer observation will be presented. Three main points were appreciated by the lecturers about the current process of peer observation at ALI: the convener's professional conduct, the alignment of lecturers' self-evaluation with the convener's evaluations, and the effective structure of feedback delivered in the post-observation meetings.

1) Convener's professional conduct

Although most of the lecturers perceived the impact of asymmetrical power relationships during the post-observation meetings, L3, L4, and L5 also appreciated the convener's professional conduct during the observation. It was mentioned that that he refrained from making "eye contact" (L3, L5. SR) with the lecturer during the observed lesson, which resulted in lecturers feeling more comfortable. According to L4, the convener's behaviour during the observation was very suitable in that he "attracted no attention to himself [...] is really, really amazing of him [...] as the way he conducted himself" (L4. SR). It was also reported that the convener's demeanour to behave like "one of the students" (L3. SR) and making "notes silently" (L5. SR) made the observed lecturer feel at more ease. L5, however, suggested that the observer should be more participative in the class, as she described an example from her observed lecture:

At one point actually {says while laughing}, there was one point when I was writing a word on the board and I thought I didn't spell it correctly and I asked the students, this is how you spell this word? And they were like ah / no / maybe. And then I looked at <the convener> and asked is this how you spell this word? And he like just shook his head and went back to his notes to pretend that I am not here or something {continues laughing}. (L5. SR)

L3, L4, and L5 in general claimed that the convener conducted himself well and he blended well into the class. The other three lecturers' data does not show any point related to the convener's conduct during the observed lessons.

2) Self-evaluation versus peer-evaluation

In anticipation of receiving their feedback, the lecturers naturally reflected on their lesson carefully and made self-evaluations. For all six lecturers, most of the feedback given by the convener corresponded with their own appraisal of their classes. The following paragraphs outline the extent to which the lecturers' self-evaluation matched the convener's evaluation.

Usually before going inside the convener's office for the post-observation meeting, the lecturer and I would wait outside his office until he would call us to come inside. On two such occasions, with L1 and L4, we had the opportunity to discuss some points that they anticipated would be mentioned in their feedback. In both the cases, the feedback matched their respective self-evaluations. During the stimulated recall session L1 said, while laughing:

They were almost exactly the same! See, I told you he will mention that why were you sitting during most of your class. Yea, so I was expecting it all. I knew it all.

L4 agreed that what the convener suggested to her in the post-observation meeting was accurate.

He is right that there were a couple of moments where I should have paused and intervened and I didn't and [...] I am glad that he picked that up. (L4. SR)

Moreover, L3 also reported that the observer's feedback and her self-evaluation of her own lecture "matched." Before the meeting, she was confident that she would receive "positive feedback." Although, L2 was disappointed with her students' performance during the observed lecture, as mentioned earlier, she still received positive feedback.

The convener raised some questions of concern in the post-observation meeting with L3, L5, and L6; however, this inquiry was taken positively by each of them as shown in the following extracts:

He pointed out that I need to answer the students' questions in more detail. Sometimes, we don't realise that we do things in hastily, although umm // I thought I answered the questions well, but maybe yea I should think about it. (L3. SR)

I think his criticism was valid on students coming late to class. He, **himself** as a teacher is very particular about starting the class on time. (L5. SR)

I was aware of using a **bloody** easy text, so at the back of my mind I did have this you know / that he might say that you could have a better grasp on the content / but then again the content was so darn easy {laughing}! (L6. SR)

The above extracts show that these three lecturers were expecting these concerns to be raised in their feedback sessions, again confirming that their self-evaluations accorded with the convener's evaluations. Overall, it is apparent for all six lecturers that most of the feedback given by the convener matched with their self-evaluations of their lessons.

3) Structure of the feedback

The structure of the feedback was highly appreciated by the lecturers. The six lecturers described the feedback as not “critical” (L1. SR), “not controversial” (L2. SR), “helpful and useful” (L3. SR), “positive” (L4. SR), “structural” (L5), and “encouraging” (L6. SR). As reported by all lecturers and noted in the post-observation meetings, the feedback followed a basic structure, beginning with positive feedback, then moving to suggestions and then to questions. This structure was received positively by the lecturers, as illustrated in the below excerpts:

The feedback was very structural, like starting from the positive feedback to suggestions and then so on. (L5. SR)

I think the way he did it was positive, like you know he started with positive, then critique and then questions and suggestions to learn from [...] which is perfect. (L4. SR)

As far as the critique is concerned, it was generally conveyed in a positive way, as specified by L1 and L2 below:

He was not being very censorious or that sort of a thing. He was mostly suggesting and that was a good point. And for the negative points he was mostly suggesting and he had toned them down // mitigated them. (L1. SR)

He would basically start with good points and even deliver the negative points in a sugar coated manner like // next time you could do this / or / you know / something like that. He always says something like that maybe next time you could do something different. (L2. SR)

Following the post-observation meetings, the lecturers began to appreciate some positive points. While lecturers communicated what they approved or disapproved of, and what they learnt about peer observation, some uncertainties were also raised during the stimulated recall session, which are reported next.

4.2.2.3 *Uncertainties about peer observation*

Some uncertainties were also found in lecturers' stimulated recall data. Specifically, they variously described the feedback session as interactive and a monologue, and they discussed whether the criteria focused on content or teaching methodology. These uncertainties show that lecturers at ALI were not informed about anything regarding peer observation prior to the observation session.

1) Feedback delivery: Monologue or dialogue?

The observed data from attending the post-observation meetings show that for L1, L4, and L5, the feedback session was predominantly a “monologue” (L4. SR), whereas for the other three it was an “interactive” (L3. SR) session, more of a “discussion” (L2. SR). The lecturers generally showed that they were unsure as to whether the feedback session was supposed to be a two-way conversation or a monologue. According to L2, it was “an interactive meeting {laughing} and [...] I thought it was a discussion (L2. SR). However, for L1 and L5, it was indeed a monologue as reflected in their extract below:

I was trying to make it an interactive session {laughing} [...] it was more like a lecture [...] He wanted to finish perhaps, because he was going on and on [...] it was more like, **just sit here, and listen.** (L1. SR)

I did kind of want it to be more of a conversation, which was not the case [...] I felt that today's task is maybe simply recounting what had happened and not having a discussion about it. So, I imagine that was the task for him to be. (L5. SR)

2) Feedback focus: Teaching content or teaching methodology?

The convenor's feedback predominantly focused on teaching content and the literary texts used. However, L3, L5, and L6 expected at least part of the feedback to focus on their “teaching methodology” (L5. SR) or “style of teaching” (L6. SR); for example, delivering the lesson, posing questions, or the structure of the lecture. L3, L5, and L6 showed disappointment that the feedback focused mainly on the content taught. According to these three lecturers, there were a few points that could be improved or some “kind of weaknesses” (L6. SR) that could be highlighted pertaining to their teaching style. On the contrary, L4 expressed her satisfaction in receiving feedback in relation to how she “connected and delivered

the critique theory to the actual text” (SR). However, when the convener posed the question of the kinds of reading that L6 had been using, L6 reflected:

I was not expecting it at all // he was probably trying to reassure or it was some sort of quality control {says hesitantly} [...] Like to make sure I am on the right track and using appropriate material for this level. (L6. SR)

The data also indicated that lecturers were unaware of the central objective of conducting this exercise; it was not clear if it was to promote learning or to assure quality of teaching. Although L1, L2, and L4 did not mention their anticipated thoughts about the criteria of the peer observation, it is apparent from L3’s, L5’s, and L6’s data that the lecturers had no idea of the criteria on which they were to be examined.

In summary, during the focus groups and stimulated recall, the lecturers mostly articulated the flaws and the negative ramifications of this practice, while maximum possible benefits were not identified yet. Also, focus groups showed lecturers’ assumptions and generalisations, and stimulated recall showed lecturers’ reflections on mainly the interactions during the practice of peer observation. However, lecturers’ further reflection through interviews after a few weeks of their experience of peer observation at ALI enabled their meta-thinking about many more aspects of peer observation, which are presented next.

4.2.3 Beliefs on reflection

The further reflection through participation in interviews prompted the lecturers to consider peer observation in more depth. This enabled them to reflect and comprehend details about the current process of peer observation more conceptually and comprehensibly in terms of its objectives, role of feedback, and benefits and drawbacks.

4.2.3.1 Objectives of peer observation

Regarding the objectives of peer observation during the focus groups and stimulated recall, the lecturers mainly speculated whether the purpose of observation was intended to be evaluation and quality control, or to facilitate professional learning. However, the interviews led to their developed and

extended understanding, which helped them to make firmer conclusions about the objectives of peer observation. According to the interview data of L1 and L4, the main purpose behind carrying out this practice of peer observation was to evaluate their competency. As claimed, “The institute just wanted to make sure that they have made the right choice by hiring you” (L1. I). These two lecturers claimed that the evaluation made through peer observation aided the observer to determine outcomes for their contract termination or renewal and for this matter the convener carried out this practice “in the middle of the semester,” so he could provide the lecturer with a “three month notice in case he did not wish to renew the contract” (L4. I). Furthermore, interview data also indicated that it was a means to assure quality of teaching across the school: “it is like a way of double-checking a number of things” (L6.1). Here L6 seemed to believe that this was a part of quality control at the basic level to make sure that the “ethos that an institute has is somewhat being adhered to” (L6. I).

However, L2, L3, and L5 believed that this practice was also done to initiate some sort of professional learning in lecturers. They claimed that this peer observation was done not only to “evaluate” but also to “improve” (L3. I) teachers’ practices by “suggesting” (L2. I) to them effective ideas to progress the overall quality of education and teaching standards in the school. As exemplified by L3, “if they find some common mistakes they would modify the whole system in reference to those mistakes.” L5’s perspective seemed to coincide with L3’s, as she also said that the primary objective of this peer observation was to “guide” lecturers with “ideas and suggestions according to their style of teaching.”

The above-mentioned points entail a double-sided picture of lecturers’ beliefs about the objectives of peer observation at ALI. On the one hand, some perceived it as an activity through which lecturers were judged in order to inform decisions about their reappointment. On the other hand, others perceived it as a means to improve their practices. Overall, lecturers’ beliefs diverged in regard to the objectives of this practice.

Interview data show that, for L2 and L3, their beliefs about the objectives of the peer observation had shifted from their first time of being observed to their second time. These two lecturers indicated that they initially thought it was done for

evaluation, to feed into decisions like giving a lecturer “the teaching fellow position” (L3.I). However, after their second experience of peer observation they claimed it was mainly done to suggest areas of improvement. Suggestions were conveyed in such a manner that they did not sound like an enforcement:

Now I feel, it is not to judge me; it is to help me [. . .] Now, with the type of recommendations that he has made in the feedback session I feel he is very flexible. He does not impose anything on you; he gives you the option of adopting. It is just // like an advisement session. (L2. I)

4.2.3.2 Role of feedback

From the interview data, it was evident that feedback played a “major” (L1. I), “pivotal” (L5. I) and “important” (L3. I) role in the post-observation meeting. Data show that feedback was a) a source of appreciation; b) a way to advise lecturers about effective teaching ideas; and c) a useful way of informing lecturers about their teaching strengths and weaknesses.

Various lecturers confirmed these views of the feedback. For example, L1 reflected, “I am happy that <the convener> at least appreciated the things that he liked about me.” Although, in the focus group regarding his first observation at ALI, L1 described the role of feedback as a confirmation to continue to teach at ALI or not, he said, “My first feedback was more like an **approval** for me that ok, you have been accepted” (L1. FG). This shows that, at least partly, L1’s perceptions changed after the first experience, as did those of L2 and L3 as shown in Section 4.2.3.1.

Lecturers also indicated substantial learning from the feedback given to them and reported their intentions to modify their teaching accordingly, as shown below:

I think I have learnt quite a few things from <the convener> and I will be incorporating them in my teaching in the future. (L3. I)

Feedback was a good way to let me know how I was doing and the suggestions at the end made me learn new ideas. (L5. I)

Feedback was also a means of confirmation to lecturers to whether they were on the right track of teaching or not. As L4 said in her interview:

It was a good way to know the other person's judgment about my teaching [...] It was good to confirm what I was doing is right or wrong.

Although this practice was mandatory, it seemed that the lecturers gained considerable benefits from the feedback provided by the convener. Furthermore, they were able to determine how they made use of the suggestions given by the observer in their feedback session. As said by L2 in her interview:

It is sort of an advisement and recommendation session, and good thing is, nothing is imposed, and teachers are given the option of adopting those recommendations into their teaching.

In general, feedback was taken as a positive and important factor of peer observation. It was considered a “reinforcement of confidence and encouragement” (L6. I). The above data show that feedback indeed played a fundamental role in this observation, as it does in formative assessment generally.

4.2.3.3 Benefits and drawbacks of peer observation

The lecturers' reflections on peer observation at ALI during their interviews incorporated their perceptions about the benefits and drawbacks related to this practice. A few common benefits were restated by the lecturers from the focus group discussion or stimulated recall session, while new benefits were also identified.

As mentioned previously, L2, L4, and L5 maintained that the current practice of peer observation was an effective means to make lecturers aware of their capabilities, as they themselves might not be the best judge of their own performances. It was therefore, “helpful” (L2. I) for lecturers to know about their “good and bad sides” (L4. I). It was also said to be “useful” (L5. I), as it assisted lecturers to develop themselves further and better negotiate their future teaching. It is clear that the practice of peer observation at ALI was a worthy practice in L2's, L4's, and L5's opinion, as it informed them about their “strengths and weaknesses” (L2. I). The following excerpt summarises these benefits:

It has helped me measure my own teaching skills [...] The observation brought my attention to things that were working and

happening in class, out of some, which I did not even know, were happening, or were important. (L5. I)

In addition, according to L3 and L4, the peer observation facilitated their learning. While L3 learned from the feedback received from the convener, L4 realised that noticeable learning occurred through the “extra preparation” of her lecture. The following extract confirms how L4 underwent a process of self-realisation in this peer observation.

By putting a little bit more effort and polishing the edges, I could see that it makes a huge difference for the students’ learning and the teacher’s teaching [...] the extra preparation made me realise how important it is for me to be this much prepared, and to refine my class, I just spend an extra hour. (L4. I)

Moreover, as said in Section 4.2.3.2, feedback was “beneficial” (L3. I), as such reflection by an observer enhanced lecturers’ learning. It enabled them to improve their practices by taking on board the observer’s suggestions and feedback. Apart from benefits associated with professional learning as presented above, it was also reported by L1 that this kind of peer observation might initiate benefits associated with career progression; for example, “permanent contract or increment or even promotions” (L1. I).

The above data illustrate benefits described by five of the participants. These lecturers established that peer observation at ALI had the potential to help them improve their practices, initiate professional learning, and play a role in career progression. However, no benefits about the current practice of peer observation were stated by L6.

Conversely, a number of drawbacks of the current practice of peer observation were also articulated by the six lecturers, which are elaborated below.

As discussed by the lecturers earlier, in this kind of apparently evaluative peer observation, the observer did not witness a usual lesson. This was highlighted by L1, L2, L4, L5, and L6, in their respective focus group discussion. However, except L1, this point was not repeated in their interviews. L1, nevertheless, still argued that lecturers tended to prepare more than usual and observed lecturers were fairly mindful of their verbal as well as physical attitude, and in this essence

this kind of peer observation became “more formulae” (L1. I). He classified this kind of peer observation as an “assessment” in which lecturers were inclined to think they had to “prove” (L1. I) themselves.

The lecture that is observed is basically orchestrated and there is some sort of artificiality attached to it as compared to other lectures. Lecturers do not perform or interact with their students the way they normally do which proves that the artificiality prevails in the lecture that is observed. They are quite self-conscious of what they do in class. (L1. I)

Also, the way peer observation affected students’ behaviour in the observed lecture was reiterated by L2 and L3. It was argued that the “direct, physical presence” (L3. I) of the observer caused the lecturers as well as the students to behave unnaturally. The students became “extra cautious and conscious” (L2. I). Suggestions such as observing the lecture “from the very beginning and not interrupting mid-sentence” (L2. I) and use of a “video recorder to record lessons” (L3. I) were made again in the interviews.

Based on the above stated advantages and disadvantages of peer observation at ALI, it was becoming clearer that, while some drawbacks certainly prevailed, there were quite a few positive outcomes from which lecturers benefited. Lecturers’ (re)thinking about peer observation at ALI had started to acknowledge a few positive sides of this kind of peer observation (professional learning, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, reflection on teaching, learning through extra preparation, thinking more broadly, contract renewal), which they did not initially consider and appreciate (see Section 4.2.1). Only L6 did not claim any benefits achieved from this peer observation because she said that she was not content with the ephemeral feedback she received from the convener in the post-observation meeting.

4.2.3.4 An alternative approach to peer observation

Although in the previous sections, data show that lecturers had understood the kind of peer observation at ALI and recognised its constructive elements, the very newly hired lecturers, L4, L5, and L6, also put forward the idea of an alternative peer observation conducted by their equal peers. In their views, “peer” observation should be an activity that is conducted between two equal colleagues

rather than by the convener. L4 claimed in her interview that peer observation potentially should be a “practice” involving “two peers”, as this would be “super constructive.”

Lecturers even doubted the construct of “peer” observation at ALI. The following extracts by three lecturers provide more detail for this explanation.

I wonder that whether this practice that involves a head observing a teacher should actually be classified as peer observation, as in my understanding, it is to be done between two equal peers with same professional status and teaching the same course. (L4. I)

From the term **peer** observation, it seems that as opposed to your boss it seems like it is a colleague, who teaches the same things as you would come, observe you, and give you feedback. (L5. I)

My understanding was more like that it is a process that involves colleagues or friends. (L6. I)

This understanding of peer observation was also endorsed by L1, who had been observed previously at ALI. He also suggested in his interview that a “reciprocal” observation made between two “real” or “equal” peers can be “very helpful” (L1. I). “Reciproc[ity]” (L5. I) was also emphasised by L5, and in her view two equal colleagues have a better mutual understanding which enables more effective communication in the post-observation meeting. Such peer observation was perceived as an activity only done for “learning and not for any kind of evaluation” (L3. I).

Hence, it can be said that the majority of the lecturers did not perceive the convener as their peer, and therefore argued over using the term “peer” observation for the practice of observations made at ALI. Lecturers saw the convener as their senior or line manager or head and certainly not a peer or equal colleague. The question of who was the “peer” in peer observation was not clear in the given context. It is apparent that there is complexity in regard to understanding the term “peer” in peer observation. Nevertheless, through reflections, lecturers became somewhat more receptive towards the non-reciprocal process of peer observation at ALI.

Table 4.7: Summary of lecturers' interpretations

Lecturers	Objectives of PO at ALI	Alternative PO
L1	Quality control	A reciprocal process between two equal peers
L2	Evaluate and initiate professional learning	A reciprocal process between two equal peers
L3	Evaluate and initiate professional learning	A reciprocal process between two equal peers
L4	Quality control	A reciprocal process between two equal peers
L5	Quality control and professional learning	A reciprocal process between two equal peers
L6	Quality control	A reciprocal process between two equal peers

Table 4.7 summarises lecturers' interpretations of the objectives of peer observation at ALI towards the end of data collection, and beliefs in relation to an alternative approach to peer observation in general.

4.2.4 Experiential knowledge

Lecturers' subsequent beliefs were shared via narrative frames that were sent by email after a gap of three months. This gap between the field research and gathering data digitally gave lecturers the opportunity to return and reflect on their experience of peer observation after a lapse of time. The data from the narrative frames show that their knowledge had developed, and some of their uncertainties seem to have been resolved. This section shows that the whole process of providing the experience of critical reflection to the six lecturers had indeed enriched their knowledge, which suggests that a degree of experiential learning occurred.

The data retrieved from the six narrative frames (see Appendix 4 for an example) in relation to lecturers' experiential learning have been summarised in the table below and commented on afterwards.

Table 4.8: Lecturers' experiential knowledge

Lecturer	Principles & purpose	Benefits	Drawbacks	Suggestions
L1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessed teacher's teaching methodology - Improves teaching methods - Ascertain quality standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of strengths and areas to improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-way communication - Threatening feeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Happening frequently and not by the head - Crafting the feedback more discussion oriented
L2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pointed out weaknesses - Provides feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved teaching style. - Means to comment on teaching methods and content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students getting conscious during the observed class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doing it at pre-decided times during the semester
L3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good source of feedback - To view performance of teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided a detailed reflection of your teaching performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to observer's physical presence, class was little unnatural and forced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of video recording
L4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengths and weaknesses are pointed out by an outside perspective. - To aware teachers of their strengths and weaknesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reassurance of being on the right path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anxiety inducing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should be carried out in a more organised way
L5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Useful to gain an outsider's perspective on your teaching - Received feedback from colleagues who are familiar with your experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learned about my strengths as an instructor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having it multiple times and reciprocal - Feedback should be more conversational and constructive.
L6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For validation and improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback that can be useful in terms of self-evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing third-party to observe lessons - Should be conducted unannounced - Written feedback should be given

Predominantly, lecturers shared recommendations and positive beliefs in terms of the principles and purposes of this practice. From the interpreted data in Table 4.8, it is apparent that lecturers considered that peer observation at ALI had potential to be a significant means to assess lecturers' "teaching methodology," and "teaching capabilities" (L1. NF). The lecturers indicated that the observer viewed lecturers' performance and provided them with feedback about the observed lecture, which proved to be a useful tool in creating awareness amongst lecturers about their strengths and areas of weakness. However, only L6 highlighted it as a "non-rigorous group-building exercise," which confirms she was still not completely convinced by the way peer observation was executed at ALI. This has been illustrated in section 4.2.2.1.

A number of professional benefits of this exercise were identified by the lecturers as illustrated in Table 4.8. The primary benefit was attained from receiving constructive feedback during the post-observation meeting, which led to lecturers' professional learning. As a result, lecturers felt "motivated" (L1, L3. NF) and "confident" (L3, L5. NF), which helped them to overcome the apprehensive factor associated with evaluative peer observations. Lecturers also claimed to have changed their teaching style according to the feedback received, for example, incorporating "more literary texts" (L4. NF) in their lessons. They also began to appreciate their strengths, for example, L5 realised her own capacity to foster the "enthusiasm and active participation" (NF) of her students, which she had not realised before.

On the contrary, a few drawbacks (e.g. adverse effects on students' behaviour, non-reciprocal process, observed lesson being an unusual class) were linked with peer observation conducted at ALI and have been listed in Table 4.8. These drawbacks concurred with their beliefs on reflection (Section 4.2.3) and emerging beliefs (Section 4.2.2). However, at this stage in data collection, the positive sides overshadowed the negative. Data show that they became more receptive towards this kind of evaluative peer observation and started to recognise the formative elements present in this apparently summative kind of peer observation. The following illustrative examples from the narrative frames by L2 and L3 further strengthen this premise. "My experience of peer observation was formative and summative because it was done only once but it helped me improve my style

during the semester” (L2). Similarly, L3 wrote that her experience of peer observation was “summative” as it was “done at the end of the term” but was also “formative,” as she learned from the feedback received. Nevertheless, sound suggestions were given by lecturers as shown in the table above to overcome the drawbacks.

Overall, lecturers’ cognition demonstrated in this Section 4.2.3 shows there were indeed some formative elements present in this primarily summative exercise of peer observation. This practice was perceived as a means to evaluate lecturers, but simultaneously had capacity to support them in improving their teaching practices, mostly due to the feedback they received in the post-observation meeting.

4.2.5 Summary

Table 4.9 below is an overview of lecturers’ shared beliefs about the benefits and drawbacks of this kind of peer observation in chronological order starting from focus groups to narrative frames. The table shows the development in lecturers’ cognition regarding the benefits of this kind of peer observation.

Table 4.9: Overview of lecturers’ cognitive development

Benefits	Focus group discussions	Stimulated recall session	Interview	Narrative frames
Self-awareness of weaknesses and strengths	L2		L2 L4 L5 L6	L1 L5 L6
Promotion			L1	
Initiate self-reflection	L2			L3
Teachers’ learning			L3 L4	
Improve teachers’ teaching skills				L2
Reassurance				L4
Drawbacks	Focus group discussions	Stimulated recall session	Interview	Narrative frames
Limited access	L1 L2 L5 L6	L1 L2	L1	L6

Adverse emotional effects	L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6		L1	L1 L4
Physical presence	L3		L3	
Students' performance affected adversely		L1 L2 L3 L5	L2	L2
Unnatural class	L2 L3 L4		L1	L3

The data analysis and interpretation in this section have shown that lecturers' cognition expanded over the course of my data collection, which helped them to comprehend a more detailed and positive picture of peer observation at ALI. There is evidence of significant enrichment in their beliefs. They initially started with somewhat negative assumptions that were derived from previous experiences, and then new beliefs emerged after reflecting on their peer observation activity during this research project. The data presented in Section 4.2 show lecturers' journeys from (initial) assumptions to experiential knowledge, suggesting that the experience of participating in this project facilitated reflection leading to their professional learning.

To sum up, an understanding of the local context, the type of peer observation being carried out at the context, and the participants' cognition in its respect has been presented. In the following section, the impact this type of peer observation had on lecturers' emotions is discussed, as in the present study, emotion was revealed to be an important component and seemed to play parallel to teachers' cognition during the entire process of peer observation.

4.3 Lecturers' emotions and peer observation

The initial data recognised the prominence of lecturers' overall emotional vulnerability attached to the practice of evaluative peer observation from their comparable past experiences. However, subsequent data also showed more positive emotions related to the peer observation conducted at ALI. Lecturers indicated their reasons to feel and react in certain ways during the actual process of peer observation at ALI. This section, like the section on lecturers' cognition, demonstrates data in a sequence to display how lecturers' emotions were

integrated and developed into their beliefs from the beginning to the end of the data collection phase.

4.3.1 Initial expressed emotions

During the focus groups, it was mentioned that peer observation affected lecturers' emotions adversely. While focus group A expressed that teachers were emotionally intimidated through the way this practice was conducted, group B discussed that teachers tended to become more self-conscious during an observation made by a colleague with higher professional status.

The three lecturers in focus group A said that being observed by a senior staff member affected teachers and their teaching style by making them nervous.

Extract #4

01 L2: when the observer left, I suddenly felt relaxed and I was not really aware of the tension I was going through [...]

02 L6: ...Well, I try not to think that someone higher in the hierarchy is sitting there to observe me because then psychologically it would have an impact on me. I try to keep myself as a teacher and my teaching methodology the way it usually is, but it is hard to say that it does not affect my performance at all, because, you know there is that **tiny** part in my brain that still signals me that I am under surveillance.

03 L5: Hmmm // yes, being observed by an observer specially, who has higher hierarchical status could affect teachers and their teaching style as it definitely makes them nervous too.

(L2, L5, L6, Focus group A)

From further analysis and data retrieved from lecturers, it seemed that lecturers' emotions were affected negatively by four main points that arose during their experience of peer observation: a) rigidity, b) observer, c) objectives and d) utility for teacher learning. The discussion below between the three lecturers illustrates this dilemma:

Extract# 5

01 L6: It depends on the institutes, some have very fixed ways of going about it and some other institutes might not be very fixed about it.

02 L2: {interrupted while nodding} yea also, the fact that who is observing a teacher is of crucial importance. And it also depends on the weightage that this kind of assessment has on the teacher's career like if it determines the point that this teacher's contract will be renewed or not.

03 L6: {continuing} ... so classroom observation cases could be different and therefore some teachers might feel applausive about it and may not feel **worried** at all and some might completely be on their toes.

<In totality >

04 L5: ... it all kind of boils down to who is observing you or whether their feedback is useful to you or not, whether you respect them or whether they make you nervous, or whether they are not going to give you substantial feedback, or the feedback that they give you might not prove to be useful for you.

(L2, L5, L6, Focus group A)

The above extract indicates that if the observation were executed by a senior staff member and apparently summative and evaluative in nature, teachers' emotions would no doubt be adversely affected. However, if teachers were made aware that this practice was conducted to promote professional learning, then their emotions would perhaps not be affected in such a negative way.

As soon as the discussion was opened in the other focus group (B), it was revealed that L1 clearly disagreed with the idea of teachers being observed by a head, although he claimed to recognise the institute's right to conduct such evaluative forms of observation. He seemed to appreciate the fact that there could be "good or bad teachers", and there was always room for improvement, which the administration would like to assess and inform relevant lecturers to improve. However, at a personal level, he said, "I would rather not have peer observation," because it is "fairly intimidating" (L1. FG). This kind of peer observation seemed to have caused lecturers' emotions to impact their classroom practices as well, as claimed by L4, "...when somebody is reviewing me, I get **conscious**. I tend to think from the reviewer's mind-set, that if I do this, would it be acceptable?" (L4. FG).

The factor of becoming self-conscious and nervous coincided with L1's and L3's views as shown below in their discussion:

Extract# 6

01 L3: ... hmm, when lecturers are observed by someone senior they do not teach naturally, it's more like they are giving a presentation, as they kind of do not feel comfortable in such a situation.

02 L1: {nodding} yaaa, {laughs} it really does make me stay on my toes and even **nervous**, but yea eventually I try to become comfortable with the situation and then take the bull by the horns, but / yea I do take a sigh of relief when the observer leaves {laughs again}.

(L1, L3, Focus group B)

It was concluded in the discussion that a positive and comfortable relationship between the observer and the observed teacher could prevent or at least moderate negative emotional factors, as cited below:

Extract# 7

01 L4: It also depends on your relationship with the observer, as some head of the department and coordinators make an effort to build a comfortable and approachable relationship with their teachers, which perhaps makes the practice of peer observation less intimidating.

02 L3: hmm..

03 L1: ...hmm / yea that could make a difference

(L1, L3, L4, Focus group B)

To recapitulate, based on data gathered from the focus group discussions, lecturers had felt “nervous,” “conscious,” or “worried” during their past experiences of peer observation. They only had negative emotions to express, and since peer observation at ALI was conducted by the convener, who was essentially their line manager, they seemed to associate their present or upcoming emotions with their past experiences. The next section displays the diverse and mixed emotions experienced by each lecturer when they interacted with the convener during the different stages of peer observation at ALI.

4.3.2 Developing emotions

The data from the stimulated recall sessions with each lecturer show that emotional issues were an important aspect of peer observation at ALI. The sub-sections provide an outline of lecturers' emotions during the actual observation and before, during, and after the post-observation meeting. The data have been retrieved from the six stimulated recall sessions and start to show a clear transition of emotions from being negative to positive.

4.3.2.1 Emotions during the observation

Most of the lecturers reported in their recall sessions about being concerned at the back of their minds during the observed lesson about their lesson's pace or the convener's physical presence. L1 said he was usually "very friendly with the students" and "interactive," but since convener was in the class he was "conscious." He felt the need to move on with the lecture and handle students' queries simultaneously to cover certain parts of the lecture in front of the observer and exhibit "use" of "different materials." Moreover, L2 said that she became "impatient" if an activity was not going well and her students were not responding as they usually did. As a result, when she felt that the students' response was "not quick," she would "move quickly to other activities," as she was "concerned" about such unusual happenings. She said, "I had never encountered such awkward silences" and perhaps the convener's presence in class made her and the students "feel nervous." L5's situation appeared similar to L1 and L2. She indicated that her experience during the observation was such that she was "a little bit aware" of the fact that she was being observed by the convener, which in her view "affected" the way she "performed." She reported, "I feel like it made me a little bit disorganised." Also, during L5's post-observation meeting, the convener pointed out that her students came in late, so during her stimulated recall session, she was asked about her feelings at that time of the observed lesson. She answered, "I was getting a little bit nervous and I even asked the students: what's going on? Why is everyone coming late?" This unexpected scenario at the beginning of the observed lecture made her feel perplexed as most of her lesson, particularly the introduction, was interactive, and for that she needed more students. In relation to this, she claimed:

So I almost did get a moment of **panic** / I was like that I would have to completely **change** the structure of my class. I felt nervous from time to time during the observed lecture even though I was trying to relax // but I was certainly self-conscious. (L5. SR)

Likewise, L4 reported feeling uneasy with the convener's presence. Her words were, "I was really nervous. I quickly glanced at him two times to see if he is enjoying the lesson {laughing}" (L4. SR).

Conversely, L3 claimed that she was "more comfortable with this practice and his presence" this time as compared to her previous (first) experience at ALI. She compared her first observation to this one and said, "I even feel that this was better than before," as this time she was able to deliver the lesson more "naturally" (L3. SR). This was partially because she had become comfortable with the convener over a period of time by attending meetings and so "maintain[ed] a collegial relationship", which helped her to overcome the adverse emotional aspect to an extent. L6 did not refer to her emotions regarding the observation stage in the stimulated recall session; however, she mentioned later in her narrative frame that she did not feel any different from her usual classes (see Section 4.3.4).

4.3.2.2 Emotions before the feedback meeting

Lecturers' emotions before the post-observation meeting varied for each in different shades: negative, neutral, and positive. L1 reported feeling "nervous" while he imagined the way in which the negative feedback would be presented to him. Although it was his second time to experience peer observation at ALI, he reasoned that he would be appreciated on "good points." However, in his view there were "bound to be some negative points as well." The occasion of receiving feedback, regardless of it being positive or negative, was characterised as "really awkward" (L4. SR).

L5 and L6, who like L4 were newly hired lecturers, expressed their feelings as "curious" (L5. SR) and "pretty normal" (L6. SR) before going for the post-observation meeting. These lecturers had neutral and no extremely negative feelings, and they were mainly "looking forward" (L5. SR, L6. SR) to their feedback.

However, like L1, this was also the second occurrence for L2 to be observed by the convener and she reported to feel “relaxed” and “casual” about it. L3 was generally “anxious” (L3. SR) to know their feedback but showed positive feelings. This indicates that the majority of lecturers became emotionally more accommodating to this kind of peer observation after they had undergone it the first time.

4.3.2.3 Emotions after the feedback meeting

Five of the lecturers reported that their feelings after the meeting were positive, as they were satisfied with the feedback they received. For L1, L2, L3, L4, and L5, the feedback encouraged them and confirmed their potential as competent lecturers. Lecturers’ overall emotions in this regard show that the positive feedback instilled confidence in them, as indicated in the following quotations:

“ [...] I felt happy about them and felt appreciated.” (L1. SR)

“I feel relaxed // satisfied // really, really motivated {smiling}”
(L3. SR)

L2 also felt “happy,” and L4 said, “I feel good,” as in their views through feedback, it was encouraging to know about their strengths and weaknesses, which is something that L5 also highly valued and felt “kind of relieved” to know. From L2, L4, and L5, the aspect of overcoming their “insecurities” (L4. SR) as lecturers by getting “someone else’s perspective” (L5. SR) to “confirm” (L3. SR) the “right way to do things” (L4. SR), was their main reason to feel so positive after the feedback meeting. By contrast, L6 expressed that she was “a little disappointed,” as she was expecting more detailed feedback.

Overall, with respect to the phases of peer observation, the lecturers mainly felt sensitive during the observation due to being watched and observed. However, once the observation stage was over, five out of six communicated predominantly positive emotions that show their flexibility and openness towards peer observation at ALI.

4.3.3 Emotions on reflection

This section presents lecturers' emotions after they had reflected on the process of peer observation at ALI. Lecturers' stimulated recall data showed that *how* lecturers felt during the different stages of peer observation; however, lecturers' one-to-one interview data revealed *why* each lecturer initially felt adversely during peer observation.

Overall, lecturers reported feeling nervous and stressed because it was their line manager who had observed them; they felt that their reputations as well as their jobs were at stake. They aimed to teach well in the observed lesson, so the convener would not be disappointed with his decision to hire them. However, L4 claimed to have been stressed for four different reasons:

I was stressed about what he is going to think about me or that maybe they are going to kick me out {laughing}. I seriously think that <ALI> has had instructors far worse than me. I am sure and confident about my teaching abilities, and I know that the students do intake 50% of what I teach. Students' reactions tell me that I'm doing the right thing or not, so I don't take stress of whether I am a good teacher, it was because: a) when is he going to come, b) maybe he comes without telling me c) I was worried about my content also because I was teaching one of Beyoncé's song to which he might reject and d) I wanted him to observe most of the lecture so that he sees I deliver a wholesome lecture. (L4. I)

L4 mocked the belief (which L1 highly feared) that she could actually be fired from the outcome of this observation, although she seemed to be confident about her teaching capabilities. Her extract also indicates that she was doubtful about getting her teaching approach endorsed, as she used a song in her lesson which seemed to be an unusual approach at the research site. Only L6 said in her interview that this practice had "no effects" on her emotionally and psychologically, as she claimed to be "a fairly confident person," and in such a situation where she was to be observed by anyone, she dealt with this in a proactive way. According to her:

If it is one of those things that are going to happen in class, I just relegate it to the back of my mind. (L6. I)

Overall, most of the lecturers became more open-minded about peer observation

at ALI, although it still caused some anxiety and stress. The major factor was that peer observation was facilitated by their manager, so the lecturers considered that the outcome might determine their job continuity. In general, becoming nervous or anxious was a natural feeling for most of the lecturers when a superior observer would walk into their class, but the reaction to this kind of observation and the reasons for the reaction varied from individual to individual.

4.3.4 Recapitulation of emotions

Table 4.10 presents an overview of the emotions recapped by lecturers in their written narrative frames. It presents two more stages in regard to peer observation about which lecturers expressed their emotions in the written frames: before the observation and during the post-observation meeting.

Table 4.10: Summary of lecturers' emotions

Lecturers	Before the observation	During the observation	During the post-observation meeting	After the post-observation meeting
L1	"A bit nervous and pressured"	"Initially at unease"	"It was [...] like [...] a judge delivering sentence"	"Happy and satisfied"
L2	"Nervous and anxious"	"Worried"	"Relaxed"	"Felt relieved"
L3	"A little nervous"	"Pretty confident and comfortable"	"Normal"	"Very pleasant"
L4	"nervous"	"Felt like I was being tested"	"I felt proud that I was receiving a good review"	"Good"
L5	"Somewhat nervous"	"Somewhat self-conscious"	"Relieved and excited to receive positive feedback"	N/A

L6	“Wasn’t worried or apprehensive”	“Normal”	“Reassuring and helpful”	“Normal again”
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N/A means, “not answered”

The table shows a clear transition of lecturers’ emotion from negative to positive. It is evident from the table above that initially L1, L2, L3, L4, L5 felt nervous before the observation and felt self-conscious during the observation. Nevertheless, they looked forward to their feedback. Eventually, after receiving mostly positive feedback, and upon reflection, it was apparent that they felt confident about themselves, which helped them to perceive formative elements of this kind of peer observation. They certainly gained professionally, and the following example quotations from L1’s, L4’s and L5’s narrative frames support this point:

I took note of the points that I should change regarding my teaching style. (L1. NF)

I knew what I was good at and what I needed to improve. (L4. NF)

It was acknowledgement of the strategies that I had employed and how I could improve them even more. (L5. NF)

In summary to lecturers’ data on emotions in this section, each participant in the study narrated their story about how they felt and thought in a certain way about assessment of teachers through the current practice of peer observation at ALI. Their emotions played a major role in developing their perceptions. Lecturers had a distinctive perspective and each lecturer as an individual professional embraced the peer observation at ALI in a different way.

Exceptions out of the six lecturers were L1 and L6. L1 described the phenomenon of observation as a “fact that there is big brother present watching me!” (L1. NF). In regard to him feeling uncomfortable during the post-observation meeting, he wrote, “I wasn’t given an opportunity to give my view” (L1. NF). This was mainly because he perceived the hierarchical status difference as quite wide and thus threatening, and the fact that he was part of the Adjunct faculty (unlike the other lecturers) and his contract was renewed every semester. Nonetheless, he

expressed some positive feelings after receiving the feedback as shown in Table 4.10.

On the contrary, L6, who was also quite new in ALI, showed an exceptional attitude in relation to the emotions felt during this peer observation. She expressed consistently that such observation had absolutely no effect on her emotionally or psychologically. Out of the six lecturers she was the most neutral towards this peer observation, not expressing anything widely, negative nor positive. A possible reason for this is that she had known the convener personally before joining ALI, hence did not have the same formality or reservations in her relationship with the convener as the other lecturers.

L2 and L3, like L1, had experienced peer observation at ALI before, and during the field research it was their second experience. During the second experience, it seems that they had understood the broad meaning and purpose of assessing teachers via peer observation and their views seemed to have changed from the first to the second experience of peer observation. They had expressed to feel adversely in their first experience of peer observation at ALI, but, by the second observation, they had become at ease with the process and had gained confidence from their previous positive feedback from the convener. They indicated that they had begun to see peer observation as a more constructive exercise than a mainly summative one.

L4 and L5 had recently joined ALI and were experiencing peer observation for the first time during the field research. They showed more positivity than negativity toward assessing teachers through peer observation at ALI. Both appreciated this practice and agreed with it being continued to maintain quality in teaching standards, and as a means to improve lecturers for the future. This shows that L4 and L5 viewed the experience of peer observation from diverse angles and accepted it as a means of assessing teachers for summative as well as formative purposes.

4.4 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has presented the findings to build an understanding of the phenomenon of peer observation in a private university (ALI) in Pakistan. The principles and procedures of peer observation have been illustrated by underpinning both the institutional perspectives and lecturers' cognition about this practice. Major points of the findings are summarised as follows.

First, no official documentation was found to clarify the formal policy about peer observation. The institutional point of view revealed ambiguities and insufficient information about how to implement the practice of peer observation in terms of the criteria, the exact purpose, and the process. However, the importance of peer observation to enhance lecturers' learning was clearly recognised by the QA member and the convener.

Second, lecturers' understandings of peer observation changed over the data collection period. Lecturers' initial beliefs showed uncertainties and a lack of awareness in regard to who, why, how and what was happening. However, by participating in the present study, through co-construction, rethinking, and reconstruction, their beliefs developed. There is evidence in the data that the lecturers began to support peer observation for their professional growth and not merely for evaluation purposes.

Third, the aspect of emotion played a noteworthy role alongside lecturers' cognition throughout the process of peer observation. Lecturers' thinking seemed to have been influenced by their mixed emotions, leading to differences in their classroom practices during the observation from their usual practice. Such differences could lead to an unfair appraisal of their professional competence. However, the data also show an evident transition in lecturers' emotions from negative to fairly positive.

The next chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the findings with reference to relevant literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Literature on the topic of peer observation is extensive, and peer observation as a form of teacher assessment is widely applied in the field of education as reviewed in Chapter 2. The review of the studies identified key gaps in the research, which this study has attempted to occupy. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the key findings and discusses them in relation to the previous empirical studies conducted on the topic of peer observation of teaching that were reviewed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, having undertaken a grounded analysis of the data, I suggest that the findings concur with the principles of Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984, 2015), which has been used, adapted and refined for the theoretical development of this study.

This chapter is organised into six sections, of which Section 5.1 and Section 5.6 provide an introductory synopsis of key findings and a summary of the discussion, respectively. The body of the chapter is organised into four parts: teachers' professional learning (5.2); rethinking assessment of teachers through the means of peer observation (5.3); and reflective practice (5.4). These three sections relate the key findings of the study to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 with particular attention to what diverged from and converged with the findings of other studies, and highlight issues that have not been fully explored in previous studies. The last section of the body of the chapter (5.5), a journey from assumptions to knowledge, explains the theoretical development that arises from the discussion in the aforementioned sections.

5.1 An overview of the findings

The findings in the previous chapter presented the notion of assessment of teachers through peer observation from two main perspectives. First, from the institutional point of view, which comprised interpretations from official and unofficial documents, the representative of the School on the Quality Assurance Committee (QA member), and the convener of the programme (observer). Second, from the practitioner lens, which encompassed the lecturers' (observees) cognitive and emotional involvement and development. To depict lecturers'

cognitive and emotional development about the topic of peer observation from the starting point to the end of data collection, data were presented in chronological order in Chapter 4.

From a detailed lens, to start with, this research project provided a platform to the lecturers to enable them to speak up about themselves, their cognition, and emotions in relation to assessment of teachers through peer observation. This explication enhanced and extended lecturers' cognition. However, it is evident in the findings that the lecturers harnessed the experience of participating in the research project and became agents of their own professional learning.

As portrayed in the documents, and conversations with the QA member, convener, and lecturers, the institution ALI was encountering a situation of "rethinking" formative and summative assessment of teachers by means of peer observation. One of the main findings that surfaced from the data analysis was that the current peer observation at ALI was ambiguous; it was unclear as to whether it was conducted for predominantly summative or formative purposes, implemented through a bottom-up or top-down approach, or followed a developmental or evaluative model. Such terms are often held to be dichotomies as presented in Chapter 2 but, at ALI, practices of peer observation were integrated along more complex continua.

In addition, the interpretations from the documents, QA member, and the convener revealed that there were no straightforward principles and procedures of conducting peer observation at ALI. This unclear picture of peer observation encouraged lecturers to rely on assumptions, based on their previous experiences, and fostered their uncertainty about important factors related to peer observation. This raised a number of questions; for example: Why is it done? How is it supposed to be done? One major issue was ambiguity in understanding the term "peer" by the observed lecturers. The QA member highlighted the peer (observer) in this peer context as "an expert" who is highly experienced. The observer, being a lecturer of the same course that the observed lecturers taught, rationalised himself as a peer of the lecturers. On the contrary, the lecturers perceived him to be a line manager, as he also held a senior title of Associate Professor and, in that capacity, had the right to exert power and control over these observed lecturers,

who held the title of Teaching Fellow or Adjunct Faculty. Therefore, the lecturers began to question the construct of peer observation and the role of the peer. A second issue was that only two stages were followed: an observation and a post-observation meeting. Constructive pre-observation meetings were not conducted at ALI, and pre-observation communication simply informed the lecturers about the time and date for the observation. Important details about what would be observed were missing, which perhaps initially caused confusion about the objectives and criteria of the practice.

However, lecturers' systematic reflection on their experience during the research project showed strong potential to bridge the gap from their initial assumptions to experiential knowledge. The process of reflection enhanced lecturers' professional learning and allowed them to recognise factors such as objectives, role of feedback, and emotions, each of which played a role to add value to the effectiveness of peer observation. Therefore, lecturers' learning through reflecting on their experience was a significant finding of the present study. Throughout this study, the lecturers were given opportunities to articulate their understandings and cognitive and emotional responses to peer observation, which allowed them to systematically reflect on and conceptualise their ideas about the kind of peer observation taking place at ALI. On the basis of this finding, it is suggested that systematic reflection should be implemented as a mandatory fourth stage in peer observation, following the pre-observation meeting, observation, and the post-observation meeting.

Next, I will expand the above-mentioned aspects and relate my core findings to the findings of other empirical studies about the phenomenon of peer observation.

5.2 Teachers' professional learning

Teacher professional learning has been under-researched in Pakistan. This has been confirmed by a historical review of research conducted between 2000 and 2010 on the professional learning of teachers (Avalos, 2011). Furthermore, as reviewed in Chapter 2 (Sections 2.2.5 and 2.2.6), there is limited research in Pakistan and it has been impossible to locate any such research that explores ESL teacher cognition on their professional learning through peer observation at the

tertiary level in Pakistan. This study was undertaken in a well-renowned private university of Pakistan, referred to as ALI. It is recognised as an internationally acclaimed and high standard university that serves society through excellence in education and research and sets an example for other higher education institutes in Pakistan. Therefore, the particularity of the context is significant. Since we know very little about peer observation practices on the ground, this research sheds light on current practices in Pakistan and fills this important contextual gap. As a result, this study may help to share and cautiously compare the advantages and disadvantages of practices of peer observation in a way that comparable institutes in Pakistan (and elsewhere in Asia) could benefit from its expertise. However, the high prestige, the quality of staff, and the collegial working conditions at ALI might make it less possible to implement the findings of this study in institutions with less qualified staff and more hierarchical structures.

According to the review in Section 2.3, assessment of teachers through peer observation has the potential to enhance teachers' learning. However, peer observation at ALI had the characteristics of a mechanism of quality assurance and accountability, or as a means of surveillance to track and evaluate teachers' performance (O'Leary, 2014). These initiatives are often implemented in private sectors of education to subsequently improve the levels of teaching and learning (O'Leary, 2013). The formal Appointment, Tenure and Promotion policy of ALI certainly gave a sense of "neoliberal performance management agenda" (O'Leary, 2016, p. 6), which complicated the adoption of a practitioner-oriented and emancipatory agenda. These factors shaped lecturers' initial beliefs that peer observation at ALI was predominantly summative and evaluative in nature. A similar situation occurred in a South African university context (Kilfoil, 2014) and is discussed in Section 5.3.1.

From the institutional point of view, there were also inherent contradictions concerning the formative and summative assessment of teachers via peer observation at ALI (see Section 4.1). Findings interpreted from the official documents, the QA member, and the convener suggest that ALI was in a state of transition from a previously implemented summative practice of peer observation to a more formative exercise focusing on the development of lecturers and their practices. This situation is similar to that of Taylor's (2016) study in which two

colleges in the UK implemented the change from a graded (evaluative) to an ungraded (developmental) observation model. This step was taken as the previous approach of peer observation was proving to be futile in terms of bringing any improvements in teaching standards and was only used for teachers' appraisal (Taylor, 2016), which could be a possible reason for ALI to make a similar transition. Hence, it can be implied that the institute, ALI, was in the process of learning.

In this scenario, the current research project provided a catalyst for reflection to each participant of the study. My on-going engagement with the lecturers facilitated the development of their thinking. In spite of the practice of peer observation being framed as summative, lecturers demonstrated their willingness to learn and understand about the potential of peer observation for learning. Subsequently, participation in the research gave the lecturers opportunities to agentively negotiate their professional learning. Participation in research playing a key role in facilitating teachers' cognition and agency has been found in other studies of peer observation as well (e.g. Dos Santos, 2016a; Kilfoil, 2014; Msila, 2014 - discussed more in the following section). However, these studies used a single data collection method to elicit teachers' cognition and provided only a snapshot of teachers' learning, whereas the present study provides a deeper view of lecturers' learning by employing multiple methods, in which lecturers, to an extent, drove the learning process. This freedom and degree of autonomy encouraged the lecturers to be active rather than passive, exhibiting the power and importance of teacher agency in professional learning as claimed by Calvert (2016). Indeed, the findings of this study showed that empowerment took place through the reflective practice, as the lecturers were "agents of their growth" (Calvert, 2016, p. 52). The stimulating reflective practice promoted teacher agency and created an environment that allowed time for lecturers to think (Priestley et al., 2015; Taylor, 2017) about the praxis of assessing teachers by the means of peer observation, which helped them to transform as professionals.

In addition, the wider view of lecturers' learning in the present study also shows the trajectory of learners over a period of time. It is evident from the data that each participant had a distinctive perception that was reflected in his or her individual process of professional learning (Borko, 2004) and was demonstrated

by narrating their stories about assessment of teachers through the current practice of peer observation at ALI. The vignettes at the end of Section 4.3, with respect to emotions, capture each lecturer’s cognition concerning peer observation, illustrating the variability of perceptions and professional learning preferences from person to person, as claimed by Farrell (2007, 2013).

5.3 Rethinking teacher assessment via peer observation: Institutional and practitioners’ perspectives

The following Figure 5.1 illustrates the approach used in this study to scrutinise and review teacher assessment through peer observation in Chapter 2.

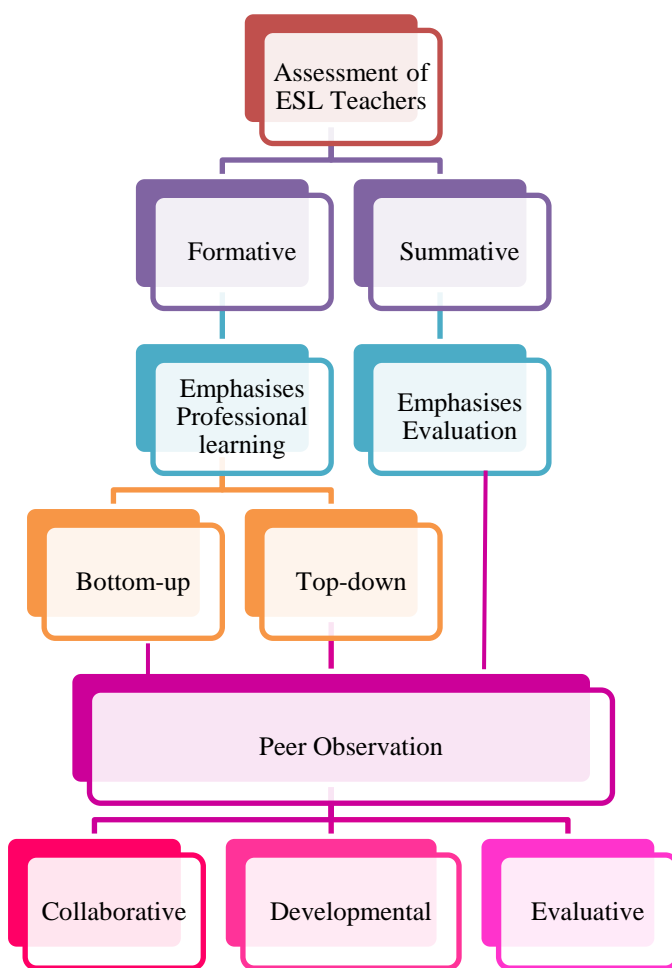


Figure 5.1: Conventional distinctions

Figure 5.1 shows the interrelationship of the assessment of ESL teachers and peer observation. According to the literature reviewed and established in Chapter 2, assessment of ESL teachers could be done through a summative approach, which emphasises evaluation, or through a formative approach that emphasises

professional learning (Popham, 1988, 2013). Peer observation is a common practice to assess teachers for summative or formative reasons, depending on the model that is being followed in the particular context as described by Gosling (2002, 2014). As illustrated in the figure, on one hand, the evaluative model comes under summative assessment and is usually a top-down initiative, carried out to appraise or measure a teacher's competence to feed into decisions like probation, promotion, or contract renewal. On the other hand, the developmental and collaborative models are inclined towards formative assessment and could be top-down or bottom-up initiatives that facilitate professional learning of teachers through constructive feedback, observational learning, and reflection (see Section 2.3 for more details). However, in the present study, this notion of assessment of teachers through peer observation was understood from the lecturers' lens, views and experiences in order to explore the evaluative element and any potential for professional learning. Thus, lecturers' cognition was central to this study.

Since lecturers' cognition is intangible, unobservable, and situated within a particular context (Borg, 2003), and lecturers may have apprehensions in articulating their views and understandings, the use of suitable research strategies is crucial (Barnard & Burns, 2012). Therefore, to capture a holistic picture of lecturers' cognition in relation to peer observation, a multi-method approach was employed. That is, a number of data collection instruments (focus groups, auditing of post-observation meeting, stimulated recall sessions, interviews and written narrative frames) were used over a period of nine months (August 2016-April 2017) to elicit lecturers' assumptions, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and emotions.

The interpretation of findings of the present longitudinal and multi-method study at ALI, from the institutional and practitioners' perspectives, show teacher assessment via peer observation practices as functioning along a complex continuum of objectives and practices. Terms such as formative and summative, bottom-up and top-down, and evaluative and developmental are considered oppositional in the literature as described in Figure 5.1. However, in the following section, the findings of the present study are discussed that show that the boundaries between each category are soft and tend to overlap. The findings also indicate that the appearance and implementation of a practice may be different

from its actual experience for certain reasons. Therefore, the above-mentioned so-called dichotomies or distinctions are arguable.

5.3.1 Formative and summative assessment

Peer observation at ALI exhibited several characteristics which aligned with a summative, evaluative approach. Since peer observation at ALI was conducted only once a semester, it could be categorised as summative peer observation, especially when considering that a key determinant of formative peer observation is its frequency, as suggested by Brent and Felder (2004). In addition, the facilitation of peer observation at ALI by an authoritative faculty member, and the lack of reciprocity in the process, suggest that the practice was evaluative and summative in nature in accordance to the three models of peer observation defined by Gosling (2002, 2014) and reviewed in Section 2.3.1. While these characteristics were communicated in ALI's official APT policy, the official HSS newsletter portrayed peer observation as formative: an exercise that was conducted to help teachers improve their teaching skills (see Section 4.1.1). Nonetheless, both documents lacked explicit guidelines about the principles and procedures of peer observation. Similar inconsistencies have been highlighted in previous studies; for example, Kilfoil's (2014) study conducted at University of Pretoria: although formative peer observation was mentioned vaguely, it seemed that the focus was on teacher evaluation in the official documents in both, the present and Kilfoil's study. Nonetheless, lecturers in both studies understood the idea of such peer observations for quality assurance purposes, although they also considered the concept of formative and collaborative peer observations to be valuable for teachers' learning and development. This contradicts the findings of another study (Dos Santos, 2016a) conducted in Hong Kong, where observed teachers did not demonstrate any eagerness to be observed by their heads, and claimed such practice of peer observation was only desirable from the management's point of view.

In the present study, while the implementation of the practice was summative in nature, the intent behind carrying out the practice was inclined towards formative peer observation (see section 4.1). This discrepancy caused some confusion amongst the lecturers with respect to peer observation at ALI. This situation is

similar to that of Msila's (2014) study in which teachers were also observed by their heads and hence initially perceived the practice of peer observation to be summative and a sort of "invasion" (p. 269). However, after their experiences, the observed participants of both studies recognised that the peer observations in their respective contexts contained formative elements. This underlines Hickey's (2015) argument presented in Section 2.1.1.2 on the conundrum between summative and formative assessment. As the findings of the present study illustrate, the intended purpose of the observer was formative, but the presumed outcome and experience for the observees was formative as well as summative. These are similar to the findings of Kohut et al.'s (2007) study where, although the main purpose was periodic teacher evaluation and appraisal that made it "unavoidably summative in nature" (p. 23), formative benefits were found in teachers' data. Although the intention for the implementation of peer observation was that it was an integral part of the evaluation of teaching, it was still perceived positively and constructively by the observers and the observees (Kohut et al., 2007). This finding is important as it supports the argument that this present study seeks to make through its findings; namely, that an apparently summative peer observation can have formative elements (and vice versa), which could help observed teachers improve their practices and enhance their professional learning. On the contrary, in another study (Karagiorgi, 2012), the purpose and intention of peer observation were formative as peers observed each other's classes, but no perceived constructive outcomes were found by the observers or the observed teachers. The situation is, therefore, complex, as there are possibilities for contradiction between the intended purposes of assessment (whether it is formative or summative) and their intended and unintended outcomes on teachers.

5.3.2 Top-down and bottom-up initiatives

Whilst the extensive literature on peer observation endorses its benefits to help teachers develop professionally, there are concerns associated with top-down peer observations. As evident in the lecturers' initial data, a top-down initiative to peer observations was considered ineffective in terms of teachers' professional learning, as such initiatives are mandated by the administration without teachers' consultation (Farrell, 2013). The fact that peer observation at ALI was a mandatory exercise and the lecturers were not given the choice to withdraw from

it suggested that, from the lecturers' point of view, it was certainly a top-down process. The top-down approach has been found to be applied to peer observation in various studies, for example, Ahmed et al. (2018), Karagiorgi (2012), Sandt (2012), and Swinglehurst et al. (2008). The top-down approach has often been criticised, as it does not give teachers the option to select their peers for observations that undermines observed teachers' autonomy and confidence (Ahmed et al., 2018). As was the case in the present study, this compulsory approach has the potential to leave observed teachers speculating about the benefits and purpose of peer observation as a medium of teachers' learning (Karagiorgi, 2012). The top-down approach to peer observation may also mislead observed teachers in believing it to be a legitimate exercise for quality assurance rather than teacher development purposes (Sandt, 2012; Swinglehurst et al., 2008). To avoid any confusion and negative speculations, it has been recommended that the educational leaders and administration play a crucial role in making the information about peer observation as explicit as possible to the staff members (Ahmed et al., 2018; Wingrove et al., 2017).

A voluntary and bottom-up approach has been found to support more successful on-going formative peer observation as the teachers do not feel "forced" to participate (Wingrove et al., 2017). In this respect, the QA member supported a bottom-up approach to implement this peer observation and believed that, at ALI, peer observation was bottom-up, as it was being conducted according to the lecturers' request (see Section 4.1.2). However, the findings of the present study suggest that a combination of bottom-up and top-down initiatives (Farrell, 2013) to peer observation would be more suitable and beneficial for teachers' professional learning. Peer observation should be supported and facilitated by the management and administration, but teachers should have some autonomy over the practice of their professional learning in terms of setting a focus, guiding the process, and choosing their observee or observer.

5.3.3 Evaluative, developmental and collaborative models

At ALI, the boundary was also blurry between developmental and evaluative peer observation models. Peer observation has been classified into three main models: collaborative and developmental both for formative purposes; and evaluative for

summative purposes by Gosling (2002, 2005, 2014). However, the apparent picture of peer observation being followed at ALI coincided with an evaluative model (Gosling, 2002) or appraisal model (Cosh, 1999). This kind of peer observation has been classified as “supervisory observation” by Andrade (2016, p. 1) and “supervisor observation” or “observations for competence assessment” by Davys and Beddoe (2016, p. 4). In such observation models the observer plays the role of a supervisor more than that of a practitioner and the status difference between the observer and observee is distinct during all the stages of observation (Davys & Beddoe, 2016). Nonetheless, peer observation at ALI did not have such formal characteristics and tended towards being a developmental model as the convener played the more flexible, positive role of an educational developer rather than that of an authoritative evaluator.

Although the lecturers at ALI acknowledged and supported continuation of the current peer observation practices for quality assurance and improvement purposes, they suggested an alternative model of peer observation (see Section 4.2.3.4) to promote a more developmental, non-threatening and non-judgmental, congenial, and reflective approach to peer observation of teaching. This model comprised a hybrid of developmental and collaborative peer observation, based on the lecturers’ understandings of observation as a potential “tool to stimulate and guide reflective teaching”, in that “through structured activities”, a teacher “becomes aware of their own practice and analyses strengths and areas for development” (Engin & Priest, 2014a, p. 3). Hence, the lecturers’ comments echoed Edge’s (1992, 2002) notion of cooperative development, which suggests that peer observation could be an opportune way to assess teachers’ teaching skills and foster professional learning; by cooperating with others, teachers can better understand their own practices, which can be further enriched through the suggestions of others. The idea of promoting collaborative work to eliminate the isolation of teachers has also been endorsed by Robbins (2015).

5.3.4 Rethinking conventional distinctions

While the distinction between formative and summative assessment, bottom-up and top-down initiatives, evaluative, developmental, and collaborative models in the literature help to explain different approaches to assessment, professional learning

and peer observation respectively, this present research's findings reveal the integration of these concepts in practice, as shown in Figure 5.2.

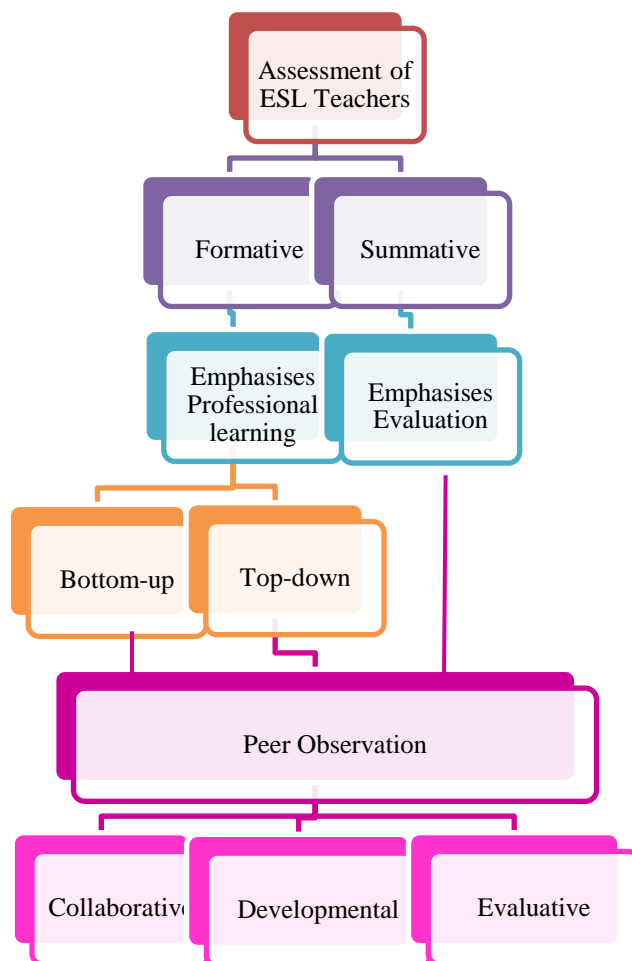


Figure 5.2: Rethinking conventional distinctions

The findings of this research, considered alongside the findings of other studies in this Section 5.3, suggest that these terms should not be considered simple distinctions. There are indeed possibilities of conflation among them as shown in Figure 5.2. Therefore, one may not make a conclusive claim about peer observation and classify it under a single category. Hence, these categories should be perceived as a spectrum of experience, so that participants could gather elements from multiple points along the spectrum. This would allow a more open approach to peer observation that could help to harvest maximum benefits as well as more comprehensive understandings of peer observation practices on the ground.

5.4 Reflective practice

One of the key findings is the importance of reflective practice in the process of peer observation. In the present study, firstly the practice of peer observation itself helped lecturers to “reflect-*for*-action” (Farrell, 2017, p. 10). For example, it was indicated by L4 that she carefully thought over and prepared her lesson in order to perform well during the observation. Moreover, according to the focus group data (see Section 4.2.1), peer observations have the possibility of instigating reflective practice among teachers, not only about their teaching practices, but also about their students’ learning preferences. These points show that participation in peer observation has the potential to facilitate some reflection-*for*-action; knowing that they will be observed may encourage teachers to take a step back and evaluate their current practices from a distance (Bell & Mladenoivic, 2015).

Secondly, some reflection-*for*-action was also prompted by the focus group discussions with the six lecturers, which gave them opportunities to ponder over peer observation and relate their similar past experiences to their upcoming experience. Some focal points were used to initiate discussion, but the lecturers had freedom to discuss about any points related to assessment of teachers through peer observation. This co-constructive approach helped lecturers articulate some of their concerns. Comparable reflection-*for*-action was driven in other studies by the means of an induction session (Donnelly, 2007) or a workshop (Bell & Cooper 2013). However, in these two studies, a senior member led the reflective practice that inclines towards a compulsory approach (Farrell, 2013), whereas in the present study, lecturers themselves led the reflective practice facilitated by the focus groups. This approach gave lecturers the “continuum of opportunity” (Farrell, 2018, p. 2) to take on the role of reflective practitioner and choose whether to subject their own beliefs about teacher assessment through peer observation to critical analysis or not (Farrell, 2015).

Thirdly, in the present study, lecturers’ “reflection-*on*-action” (Farrell, 2017, p. 10) was first stimulated by the feedback sessions with the observer, which prompted them to reflect on what they did well and what they did not do well in their lecture as presented in Section 4.2.2.2. Reflection-*on*-action was further facilitated by the stimulated recall sessions, interviews, and written narrative

frames (see also Richards, 2017 for further exploration of narrative frames as a useful tool for teachers' professional learning). Narrative frames are confirmed to be a viable way of collecting data on teachers' experiences and changes in emotions (Avalos, 2011). The approach of sentence starters used in my study was also found to be effective to investigate experiences of Chinese ESL lecturers in another study (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008). Nonetheless, this re-constructive approach of using various methods enhanced the lecturers' professional learning by unfolding and developing their cognition and helping them to resolve the gaps and dilemmas mentioned in the following sub-sections.

Lecturers' enhancement and development took place through their thorough reflection over the course of the data collection, which lasted almost nine months. As mentioned before in Section 5.2, reflective practice for teachers facilitated by participation in research has been found to be effective in other studies of peer observation (e.g. Kilfoil, 2014; Kohut et al., 2007; Msila, 2014). However, these studies have used either interviews (Msila, 2014) or questionnaires (Kilfoil, 2014; Kohut et al., 2007), which provided only one opportunity for teacher' reflection *on-action*. These studies also lacked a detailed account of lecturers' cognitive development through reflection-on-action, which this study has addressed by employing a multi-method approach and a combination of instruments facilitating oral and written reflection. Use of these instruments enabled the lecturers to cover the journey from their assumptions to experiential knowledge as demonstrated in Section 4.2. By participating in my study, lecturers were able to reflect on and extend their understandings of peer observation. This learning by talking further accords with the concept of "cooperative development" (Edge, 2015); when teachers are invited to put their thoughts, worries, beliefs, assumptions, understandings, and feelings into words, the link between intellectual and experiential learning becomes clearer and leads to self-development.

To facilitate the process of reflection, I undertook the role of the "understander" (Edge, 2015, p. 66), as I maintained a non-judgmental stance, demonstrated respect and empathy for the speakers, and put my own thoughts and feelings aside, so the speakers' conversations were not influenced by my input (Edge, 2015). By adhering to these qualities of an understander, I hope to have elicited honest data.

Lastly, the lecturers' reflective practice also revealed the multifaceted knowledge of peer observation in terms of assessing teachers at ALI; factors that play an important role in peer observation were manifest in various aspects in the data. The following sub-sections discuss these factors by relating my findings to those in other studies.

5.4.1 Objectives of peer observation

On the one hand, the QA member stated that he believed that the practice of peer observation at ALI was constructive and done for the purpose of professional learning of teachers. This coincides with the view and beliefs of the principals who were the observers in Msila's (2014) study. The common belief between the QA member and these principals was that observed teachers grow through receiving constructive feedback and talking about their teaching experiences in the feedback session. Moreover, in the present study the QA member said in his interview that the "result" of peer observation is to come up with a "list of their <lecturers'> best practices." Therefore, through feedback, peer observation at ALI was conducted to recognise good practices of teachers and avoid the correction of bad practices based on the observation made. A similar assertion was made by Cosh (1999, p. 24), who emphasised that peer observation should be conducted for "the recognition and development of good practice." Gathering and disseminating information of "good teaching practices" was one of the reasons to start observations in empirical studies elsewhere: for example, in Japan (Andrade, 2016), and Ireland (Donnelly, 2007) peer observations were conducted to promote development of the teachers observed. However, at ALI no evidence of sharing the observed good practices was found.

On the other hand, the convener of the present study resonated with the purposes of peer observation mentioned by the QA member. But, the convener supported peer observation mainly for the purpose of enhancing students' learning experiences, which could be considered as a consequent factor to teachers' professional learning through peer observation. As said by Donnelly (2007), "what is gained through peer observation can ultimately benefit students" (p. 128). The review of literature on teachers' professional learning by Avalos (2011) also concurs with the convener's belief that the core of such endeavours is

understanding the ways in which teachers learn effectively and transform their knowledge into practice for the “benefit of their students’ growth” (p. 10).

As far as the lecturers in the present study were concerned, initially they were confused as to whether the intended objective of peer observation was accountability or growth. This ambiguity about the purpose of peer observation was also encountered by the participants in Chamberlain et al.’s (2011) study. Participants of their study questioned the objectives of peer observation in a similar way to that of the lecturers at ALI at the beginning of data collection. Implementing peer observation through a top-down approach was found to be a common underlying factor to cause these assumptions in observed teachers’ minds in the present study and other studies (Chamberlain et al., 2011; Karagiorgi, 2012; Sandt, 2012; Swinglehurst et al., 2008; Wingrove et al., 2017) in which observed teachers had little if any autonomy over the exercise. Therefore, the appearance of the exercise, which was briefed by the convener to the lecturers (who distinguished it as a quality assurance or performance evaluation exercise), made them approach it with low expectations for their own learning. This confusion may have also arisen because the official documents, the QA member, and the convener at ALI did not provide any clear picture of the process and objectives of peer observation to the lecturers. This cause of concern converges with the findings of Chamberlain et al.’s (2011) study, in that “the university management and administrative structure seemed to be uncertain of the aims” (p. 197) of peer observation. To address teachers’ concerns and tensions, it has been suggested that a shared understanding is needed between the management and teachers to allow a practice of peer observation that aligns with the individuals’ as well as the institute’s goals and vision (Wingrove et al., 2017). Hence, the need for clarity was paramount to help lecturers know where this practice would lead them. Otherwise, lecturers’ understandings were at odds with the developmental ethos underpinning peer observation at ALI. Nevertheless, the views of the QA member and convener, and the lecturers’ experiential knowledge (see Section 4.2.4) seemed to have come to a mutual understanding that it is conducted for the sake of teachers’ development and improvement.

In accordance with previous research, the findings highlighted the potential for peer observation to become associated with some negative outcomes for teachers.

For example, lecturers perceived peer observation as a threat to teachers' autonomy (Bell & Thomson, 2016) and claimed that it gave limited access to a teacher's actual potential (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2005). An observed class being unnatural, (Cosh, 1999) was also indicated as observed teachers put up a "model lesson, in order to receive positive feedback" (p. 24).

In addition, towards the end of the research project, the lecturers recognised a number of benefits of experiencing peer observation (see Section 4.2.5), which have also been reported in the findings of other studies. Like the lecturers at ALI, others have found that peer observation of teaching facilitated improved teaching practices (Donnelly, 2007; Murphy & Stover, 2016); instigated self-evaluation (Barnard et al., 2011); boosted confidence (Davys & Beddoe, 2016); and created awareness in teachers of their practices (Crabtree et al., 2016). However, these studies were not longitudinal nor multi-method like the present one, which enabled the lecturers to reflect multiple times and shows the potential of peer observation through lecturers' cognition over a period of time.

5.4.2 'Peers' in peer observation

Peers can be defined in various ways; for example, they can be "colleagues from the same department, either of a similar status or there can be differentials of status, or the colleagues can be from another department or from a central educational development unit" (Gosling, 2002, p. 2). This definition suggests that the horizon of what is meant by a peer is rather wide. The ALI peer observation apparently looked like "faculty review" in the words of L4 in her interview, as it was conducted by the convener, who in essence was the line manager of the lecturers. L1, L5, and L6 also had similar perceptions of the convener as presented in Section 4.2.3.4. According to Siddiqui et al. (2007), the difference in academic ranks influences the process if a good rapport does not exist between the observer and the observee. However, despite some tension with L1, there was evidence of a good rapport between the lecturers and the convener in the present study.

Lecturer participants' data described their ideal or alternative peer observation as a reciprocal process between two equal peers who learn simultaneously through witnessing real life teaching practices and receiving constructive feedback by

adopting the two roles observer and observee. This understanding of peer coincided with the view that a peer is an equal - a person who has the “same social status as you” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary of Academic English, 2014). However, lecturers’ understanding of peer observation differed from what was happening at ALI, as the power relationship between the convener and observed lecturer was far from equal. This situation is comparable to that of Dos Santos’s (2016a) study, in which teachers experienced observations that were mandatory visits in their classroom by their “heads” and not “peers.” Consequently, the observed teachers perceived such peer observations as a formal appraisal procedure and not a collaborative learning practice.

Furthermore, at ALI, the lecturer participants’ prior experiences of peer observation shaped their understanding of what is meant by a peer. In Dos Santos’s (2016a) study, teachers experienced evaluative peer observations on an ad hoc basis, because they were required to do so by the institute authority as part of quality assurance agenda run by the government. Comparably, L3 and L6 had previously experienced peer observations conducted by individuals in positions of authority, such as the principal of a school, for the purpose of hiring or establishing tenure. However, they had not experienced a collegial form of peer observation (see Section 4.2.1). Based on these findings, it is important to mitigate embodied power relations between the observer and observee. For example, a “buddy system” could be established, as suggested by Sandt (2012, p. 370). Such buddy system would entail colleagues (buddies) observing each other’s classes perhaps as often as four times in a semester to focus on any teaching strategy, method, or material that they would mutually endeavour to be investigated. This could promote understandings amongst observed teachers concerning the potential of peer observation to foster professional learning, to give teachers the opportunity to critically reflect on their own teaching approaches and to extend their pedagogical skills.

On the contrary, the convener viewed himself as a peer of lecturers (see Section 4.1.3). His view corresponded with the role of the observer in the supervisory observations in Andrade’s (2016) study, in which the observer is a peer, and not a supervisor, who learns by observing and sharing information for mutual benefit. However, the aspect of mutual benefit is usually absent in such an observation as

these observations are not reciprocal, and the power imbalance is evident (Davys & Beddoe, 2016). Therefore, the difference between the peers in supervisory, evaluative, or developmental observations should be addressed and clarified between the two parties to avoid any negative speculations.

5.4.3 Process of peer observation

In their interviews (see Section 4.1.4), all of the lecturers reported that peer observation at ALI had three main stages – pre-observation meeting, observation, and post-observation meeting. These stages recall similar models of peer observation conducted elsewhere (Dos Santos, 2016a; Kohut et al., 2007; Msila, 2014).

Before the observation

Findings showed that lecturers were observed without any pre-agreed criteria or prior discussion. However, it has been argued that the pre-observation meeting plays an important role in breaking ice between the observer and observee and making the observee feel more comfortable by building a relationship of trust and mutual benefit (Robbins, 2015). A pre-observation meeting could also have given the lecturers a chance to indicate any area that they felt required focus (Dos Santos, 2016a), share materials or discuss their pedagogical strategies (Andrade, 2016; Crabtree et al., 2016). That lecturers at ALI were given no pre-information and were left to explore along the way about the process and stages of peer observation, likely contributed to uncertainties in lecturers' minds about the criteria and purpose of peer observation. Therefore, it can be implied (See Section 6.3.2.3) that some prior preparation of participants in the shape of a short in-person conversation (Hammersely-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2005) or an interview (Kohut et al., 2007) is essential to enhance the outcomes of peer observation. These are feasible steps to implement at ALI and in similar contexts. Good communication before the observation can clarify aspects such as the role of observer and observee, and subsequently help observed teachers value and understand these peer observations for effective and collegial engagement (Andrade, 2016; Drew et al., 2017).

During the observation

The use of an instrument or a set guide prior to the visit is crucial to keep the observer focused (Andrade, 2016; Overland et al., 2017). Similar to observers in Ahmed et al.'s (2018) study, at ALI, the convener made some notes as he observed the lecture which did not follow any designated guide. This point was mentioned by L1 and L5 in their stimulated recall sessions. Such an unstructured method may have benefits; for example, it allows freedom for the observers to write about any point they see and think (Andrade, 2016), whereas a structured method such as a checklist can restrict the observers' assessment into predetermined categories (Kohut et al., 2007). Indeed, observees may feel frustrated with an overly "reductionist approach" – that fails to "encompass the complexities" of their pedagogic practices (Edgington, 2017, p. 107).

Nonetheless, an unstructured method has been found to make the provision of feedback more challenging in terms of honesty and usefulness (Overland et al., 2017). Notwithstanding, the unobtrusive behaviour and polite demeanour of the observer were appreciated by the lecturers (see Section 4.2.2.2) and aligned with the guidelines set for the role of an observer in Andrade's (2016) study. For example, in the observation sessions at ALI, the convener sat in the lecture without intervening. It was also reported that he blended well in the class as one of the students. He did not show any facial expressions that would cause discomfort to the teacher observed as caused by the observer in another study (Edgington, 2017). In this 2017 study, the observer's physical presence and apparent judgmental approach contaminated the environment of the classroom and had a crippling effect on the observed teacher's ability to teach.

After the observation

The professionalism displayed by the convener during the post-observation meetings at ALI instilled greater positivity in observed teachers about, and acceptance towards, this kind of apparently evaluative peer observation. In addition, according to the stimulated recall data of L2, L3 and L6, the style of executing the post-observation meeting by the convener is in partial agreement with how it was done in Kohut et al.'s (2007) study in which the exchange of ideas between observer and observee was allowed and promoted. Post-observation meetings in dialogue form, in which both parties are regarded as mutual

beneficiaries, have also been suggested by Gosling (2005). Conversely, the other three lecturers expressed that the post-observation meetings at ALI were conducted as a monologue (see Section 4.2.2.3). This was also found in another study where observees were not encouraged to say anything (Ahmed et al., 2018). This kind of one-way communication in post-observation meetings seems to be a common phenomenon in observations carried out by a senior staff member, as observed teachers and their teaching are the focus of comment and review (Davys & Beddoe, 2016). Nevertheless, overall, the post-observation meetings at ALI were conducted in a relatively informal style. There was still a degree of formality in terms of following a structure in giving feedback, as evident in lecturers' data and witnessed in the auditing. This formality and structure were perhaps essential, as it has been said that a too "relaxed and stress-free" (Karagiorgi, 2012, p. 452) style prevents full involvement of the teachers. Also, the convener in the meeting conveyed well to the lecturers about what was observed and avoided being evaluative and judgmental, which increases the success of receiving and benefiting from feedback and the effectiveness of peer observation (Day, 2013).

To summarise, despite the lack of guidance to execute peer observation and absence of pre-observation meetings, generally speaking, the lecturers' data show that the observations and post-observations were conducted in an effective and structured manner at ALI. Also, interpreting peer observation as a tool of teachers' professional learning can be contentious. Explicit knowledge about the purpose of, the participants in, and the procedure of conducting peer observation at ALI was overlooked by the QA member and convener. Hence, perplexity among participants was inevitable. However, as discussed in relation to other studies, communication as to the *why*, *who*, *how* of peer observation should be addressed to avoid ambiguities by head of departments and other individuals in positions of authority, who play a crucial role here to promote rigour and consistency in observations (see Section 6.3.2.3 for implications). Otherwise, teachers may develop varied perceptions of peer observation, as evident in the present study.

5.4.4 Importance of feedback

Feedback from the observer was found to be a particularly important factor in the professional learning of lecturers in the present study as well as other studies (Dos Santos, 2016a; Psalla, 2013). The present study indicated there were some factors which enhanced the usefulness of feedback as a component of developmental peer observation.

Despite some forms of feedback having been critiqued as a form of commenting on another's teaching to which experienced teachers may act defensively (Cosh, 1999), the findings of the present study show that it genuinely helped the six novice lecturers to develop professionally. Feedback has been found to be of useful importance to novice teachers, as they are still on the "learning curve" (Blackmore, 2005, p. 227), which makes them eager to learn from their senior colleagues in order to reassure they are on the right track of teaching (Webster, 2002). Feedback has also given novice teachers ideas to improve their teaching skills (Ahmed et al., 2018). In the present study all six lecturers were fairly new to the field of tertiary teaching and considered the convener as an expert in his field. Subsequently, they were found to be receptive towards the feedback given to them in the post-observation meetings.

A second factor was the extent to which the observer's feedback corresponded with the observed teachers' expectations for professional learning. Findings of other studies show that alignment is not always achieved between the feedback provided by the observer and the observed teachers' expectations (Day, 2013; Donnelly, 2007). This may result in peer observation being a largely meaningless and useless exercise. However, lecturers at ALI were content with the feedback they received, and endorsed its usefulness and effectiveness. Most of the feedback given by the convener converged with their own evaluation of their teaching, and they acknowledged even those points that they had not anticipated (see Section 4.2.2.2). Overall in the literature, feedback has been found to be constructive, giving observed teachers opportunities for continuous learning and development (Bell, 2001; Shortland, 2010), but such an alignment between teachers' evaluation and observers' evaluation seems to be rare.

A third factor was the competence of the observer in interpreting a teacher's style in the observed lesson and then making comments in their feedback. The same lesson was evaluated by four sources (peers, learners, teacher trainers, and self) in Gün's (2012) study with differing perspectives and feedback from each source. This supports that observing teaching is a complex activity and implies the need for training of observers to attain necessary skills to deliver appropriate and effective feedback (see Section 6.3.2.3). Although the mismatch between the four sources could cause confusion for the observed teacher, it was found that the observed teachers benefited by reflecting on the feedback received from the four points of view. However, in the present study, there was only observer and as said earlier, lecturers agreed with most of the feedback, which is a positive signal to the accuracy and competence of the observer's interpretations. Only in L1's case did a misunderstanding arise with the convener about how he taught (see Section 4.2.2.1 for this episode). Here the convener's judgment was not questioned in terms of his competence to raise this question to L1 during the post-observation meeting, but rather the point was that the convener had little knowledge of the context of the lesson and L1's informal teaching style. Therefore, this implies that observers should make more than one observation to gain familiarity with a teacher's teaching style and the nature of the students. Otherwise, such peer observation could be classified as biased and provide merely momentary snapshots that do not reveal much about recurrent patterns or practices across a period of time.

A fourth factor was that most of the lecturers in the stimulated recall session (see Section 4.2.2.2) described the feedback at ALI: a) constructive, b) delivered effectively, and c) was able to identify some steps that needed consideration. These three elements have been found to be at the core of feedback in order to lead effective teachers' learning (Donnelly, 2007). To sum up, as described by Papay (2012, p. 124), since the feedback given by the convener at ALI focused on "teachers' instructional strengths and weaknesses, highlights areas of improvement, and supports teachers' continued development," it indicates and further supports that this peer observation had formative assessment elements.

5.4.5 Transition in emotions

Teacher cognition about peer observation has been investigated in six studies that have come to my notice (see Section 2.4.5), but the aspect of emotion and its link to teachers' cognition and practices have not been fully addressed in any of the six studies. Some other studies, also discussed in this section, have attended to emotions in peer observation but in little detail.

Peer observation is one of the key forms of teacher assessment and teachers understandably can become uncomfortable or self-conscious about such assessment. As illustrated in the summary of Section 4.3, each lecturer initially embraced peer observation differently and expressed a variety of feelings. Lecturers at ALI are comparable to the observed teachers in Bell's (2001) study, the majority of whom reported feelings of mild apprehension at the idea of being observed while two reported stronger feelings of anxiety or inadequacy. In the present study, before the observation, L1, L2 and L4 also reported feeling anxious, nervous or stressed, while the other three lecturers showed slight discomfort. Such negative feelings before observation in observed teachers are well reported in other previous studies (e.g. Edgington, 2017; Hendry & Oliver, 2012).

However, the emotional aspects depend on how observed teachers perceive peer observation in their particular context. As demonstrated in Section 4.3.1, in their focus group discussions, lecturers at ALI initially perceived peer observation to be a summative exercise, that was steered by their line managers for evaluative purposes (Robbins, 2015). These assumptions caused various negative emotions and especially affected L1's mind-set. He, out of the other six lecturers, strongly claimed to believe that the current process of peer observation was mainly summative and therefore caused a high degree of negative emotions in him. Although peer observation at ALI was not entirely summative, as mentioned earlier this practice was poorly communicated to the lecturers, so it was understandable for L1 to assume it be a judgmental and thus reach this extent of negativity. This reason was also reported to instigate negative emotions in observed lecturers in Ahmed et al.'s (2018) study.

Lecturers at ALI described this kind of peer observation that has a hierarchical approach to be responsible for triggering only adverse reactions and generating a negative response (see also O’Leary, 2016). Hence, in their interviews, the lecturers described their emotions related to the time before the practice of peer observation as having some “fear” (L1), or feeling “excited” (L5), a little “nervous” (L3), “anxious” (L2), and “stressed” (L4). Only, L6 said in her interview that this practice had adversely “no effects” on her “emotionally and psychologically.” However, the emotions of lecturers at ALI were not as extreme as those experienced by observed teachers reported in Edgington’s (2017) study. In her study, extreme emotions of shame were expressed because of reduced autonomy, power relationships, and loss of their identities. In other studies (e.g. Bell, 2001; Hendry & Oliver, 2012), feelings of discomfort and uneasiness were also reported, but were limited to before and during the observation stage, concurring with the emotions of lecturers at ALI (see Table 4.10). However, at later stages of peer observation, such as after the post-observation meetings, positive emotions were also expressed by lecturers in the present study.

Despite peer observation being conducted by the convener, who was an authority figure, it can be inferred from the findings of the present study that adverse feelings on being watched by someone did not have any major repercussions on lecturers’ teaching patterns during observations (see Section 4.3.2.1). This finding resonates with the observees of Kohut et al (2007), in which a similar model of peer observation was followed. Essentially, observees were not affected to the point that it impaired them and the exercise became a futile effort in terms of formative assessment and teacher learning, as was found in the studies of Swinglehurst et al. (2008) and Edgington (2017). Moreover, the systematic reflective practice in the present study encouraged lecturers to make use of this opportunity to discuss their emotions in relation to peer observations. As lecturers were able to recognise the developmental elements of peer observation at ALI, they concurrently started to recognise the positive feelings associated with the outcomes of the practice.

Lastly, all the studies mentioned in this section did not, as such, attend to the interplay of observed teacher cognition and emotion and their impact on their teaching practices during the observations. Ahmed et al. (2018) and Msila (2014)

are two of the few studies that focused on teachers' cognition about the effectiveness of peer observation but failed to describe what lecturers go through emotionally during the whole process. Nervousness during observations (Msila, 2014) and feelings of discomfort during the post-observation meeting (Ahmed et al., 2018) were only superficially mentioned with no explanation as to why. However, the present study gives a detailed account of lecturers' emotions during each stage of peer observation (see section 4.3). This comprehensive and holistic interpretation of lecturers' emotions, from the pre-observation meeting to the post-observation meeting, shows a clear transition in emotions: undesirable at the start but encouraging at the end, as presented in Table 4.10.

To conclude this Section 5.4, the findings of the present study show that the process of peer observation certainly needed to be better structured and executed to mitigate the uncertainties that it had aroused in lecturers' initial cognition. It prompted them to reflect on a number of pertinent and important features related to peer observation that have been discussed in this section. Discussion in this section also suggests that lecturers' participation in this research project and reflection on peer observation provided a process for the lecturers to adapt to the kind of peer observation taking place at ALI. Therefore, lecturers' reflective practice should be incorporated and facilitated in the current process of peer observation at ALI to enhance teacher assessment through the means of peer observation with the aim of achieving professional learning.

5.5 A journey from assumptions to experiential knowledge

Focusing on lecturers' cognition about the notion of assessing teachers through peer observation at ALI revealed a clear thread running through Sections 5.2 to 5.4: lecturers' cognition was developed and empowered through the experience of participating in this project. The lecturers' comprehensive and systematic reflection played a significant role in resolving their uncertainties, mediating their cognition and enhancing their learning about the phenomenon of peer observation in a specific, real context. In this sense, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) offers a suitable framework for the interpretation of the key relationship between reflection and experience and its refinement provides a grounded explanation for the overall findings of this study. As explained in Section 2.5,

ELT supports the development of individuals and helps us to understand how people learn and grow through their experiences. While ELT has been supported by a vast amount of literature and has been applied to student learning, education and sports programmes, and has become a useful basis for understanding how to enhance students' learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2009a; Passarelli, & Kolb, 2012; Sato & Laughlin, 2018; Stirling, 2013), this study has used this framework for understanding lecturers qua learners.

5.5.1 Six principles of Experiential Learning Theory

The analysis of the findings of the present study showed that the six principles of Kolb's ELT were apparent in the learning of lecturers at ALI. The findings are reviewed and discussed first in relation to each principle of ELT in the table below.

Table 5.1: Unfolding the lecturers' learning to six principles of ELT

Findings	Principle
Lecturers reviewed similar past experiences and initially extrapolated the information gained from those previous experiences to the forthcoming experience of peer observation at ALI. This indicates that their learning is an on-going process. Lecturers may apply their new experiential knowledge gained from this project and recent experience of peer observation at ALI to their future experiences of peer observation.	1) Learning is a process
Lecturers' assumptions and preconceptions about peer observation were challenged by new experiences of peer observation at ALI, which encouraged them to relearn and show that learning is grounded in experience. Critical reflection on their concrete experience facilitated professional learning about peer observation. Learning was enriched from recreating pre-existing knowledge about the experiences of peer observation and then reconstructed from the new experience of peer observation at ALI. This new learning will continue to be tested through more relatable experiences after the conclusion of the project.	2) Learning is re-learning
Lecturers at ALI were given opportunities to elicit, experience, reflect on, and conceptualise their learning. However, in the present study they were not able to test or act upon their experiential knowledge. Eliciting is not one of the four learning modes; however, it is important and this point is further elaborated in Section 5.5.2. Each learner experienced the other three modes of learning according to the ELT cycle by participating in stimulated recall, interview, and narrative frame in a chronological order for this research project. This learning process helped them to resolve the conflicts and disagreements.	3) Learning involves mastery of all four learning modes: reflection, action, feeling and thinking

<p>The lecturers' emotions, feelings, assumptions, thoughts, perceptions, and behaviours were all addressed during the learning cycle. The process of discussing and reflecting on their emotions throughout the process of peer observation enhanced their awareness of their positive feelings and seemed to have shaped their attitude towards peer observation at ALI. Throughout the learning process, lecturers demonstrated their adaptation to the current process of peer observation at ALI; however, they suggested ideas to improve it and make it more beneficial.</p>	<p>4) Learning is a holistic process of adaptation</p>
<p>Lecturers were able to experience a real situation of peer observation at ALI. This was a hands-on experience. Furthermore, they reflected on their past experiences with their peers in the focus group, and further reflection was stimulated about the current experience of peer observation at ALI through speaking out and narrating their cognition in a stimulated recall session, interview and then narrative frame that led to critical self-reflection.</p>	<p>5) Learning involves transaction with the environment</p>
<p>As demonstrated in Section 4.2, learning from reflecting on experience enabled lecturers to gain actual knowledge. Learning was specific to each individual lecturer as discussed in Section 4.2.4. It is apparent that the lecturers' cognition went through a transformation. Lecturers were able to make sense of peer observation – understanding its potential outcomes and utility for professional learning – and completed their journey from assumptions to experiential knowledge.</p>	<p>6) Knowledge is created through learning</p>

The above-tabulated findings of the present study in relation to each principle of ELT suggest that reflection on experience indeed played a crucial role in the learning of the individuals in this project.

5.5.2 The Experiential Learning cycle

Given the four learning stages in ELT (see Section 2.5) and the nature of lecturers' cognition in regard to assessment of teachers through peer observation in the present study, the ELT cycle was systematically adapted to explore the learning stages that the lecturers underwent through reflecting on their experiences at ALI. The first stage of ELT cycle is usually concrete experience. However, the learning cycle may begin at any stage. In this study it started from their assumptions (see Figure 5.3), as the lecturers were applying knowledge gained from their previous similar experiences of peer observation to the current context.

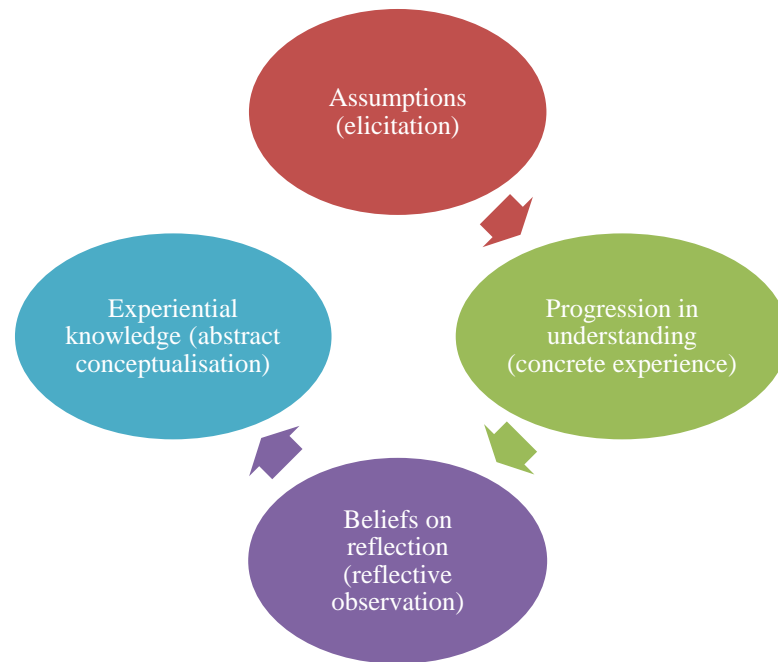


Figure 5.3: Experiential learning of the lecturers

(adapted from Kolb, 1984, 2015)

This stage of elicitation as shown in Figure 5.3 is not presented in Kolb's (2015) ELT cycle; however, the findings suggest that ideally learners' current beliefs should be elicited first in order to know where the individual currently stands in the knowledge about the topic. This preliminary stage is important as it allows exploration of assumptions and expectations, and prepares learners (lecturers in this case) to face a new concrete experience. Therefore ideally after this stage of elicitation, learners should undergo the concrete experience (in this case being observed while teaching), which then should be followed by reflection, conceptualisation and experimentation. As discussed in Section 4.2.1, lecturers' assumptions framed peer observation as a form of summative assessment with little potential benefit for teachers in terms of their professional learning. Although these assumptions were the initial mind states of the lecturers, this process of sharing and co-constructing understandings in the focus groups was important. It showed that lecturers' prior similar experiences were playing a role in making them think and believe the way they did at the time.

The lecturers subsequently re-defined their notions and associated feelings encountered during the process of peer observation. From their beliefs in progression (see section 4.2.2), aspects such as uncertainties and doubts in

lecturers' minds about peer observation at ALI surfaced. However, certain appreciations also emerged, and the transitions in emotions from negative to positive from the beginning to the end of the process of peer observation were recognised and led to the promotion of the exercise.

After the concrete experience, the lecturers reflected on the phenomenon of peer observation at ALI more deeply and shared with me their beliefs on reflection in their interviews. At this point, the experience of peer observation at ALI was still fresh in their minds, which led to critical reflection and a richer understanding of the issue (see section 4.2.3). The critical reflection also helped to resolve their uncertainties and doubts, and directed and developed their cognition about peer observation at ALI. It became clearer to them that it was not just summative assessment, but, in fact, also drew out elements of formative assessment.

Lastly, the continuous and consistent process of reflection allowed the participants to conceptualise the ideas about the kind of assessment via peer observation taking place at ALI. They conceptualised their beliefs on reconsideration and finally echoed their restructured knowledge in a written narrative frame. Through this process, lecturers' beliefs were developed, changed, reformed and substantiated, which led to the development of their experiential knowledge. Lecturers could apply or experiment with their experiential knowledge in their next experience of peer observation. It was not possible to observe this transformation in the time-frame of the project, but the lecturers indicated in their narratives that they could improve their teaching after being commended for their teaching methods and content. They learnt a number of points from peer observation at ALI, such as using different types of literary texts, building students' enthusiasm, and answering students' queries in more depth, and they showed their intention in terms of applying and experimenting with these in the future. Lecturers by this stage of the learning cycle had comprehended that peer observation is not an exercise that needs to be undertaken only because it is enforced. It has a lot to offer in terms of observees' professional learning. This was the last stage in the learning cycle, and many of their ambiguities were resolved. Lecturers seemed to have become more open to peer observation at ALI. However, this does not mean that the learning had ended; it would only be the beginning as said by Akella (2010). Lecturers may test and experiment with their

newly gained experiential information and abstract conceptualisation during their next experience, as shown in Figure 5.4, and then continue the ELT cycle. This aspect of active experimentation could be explored in another study (see section 6.4).

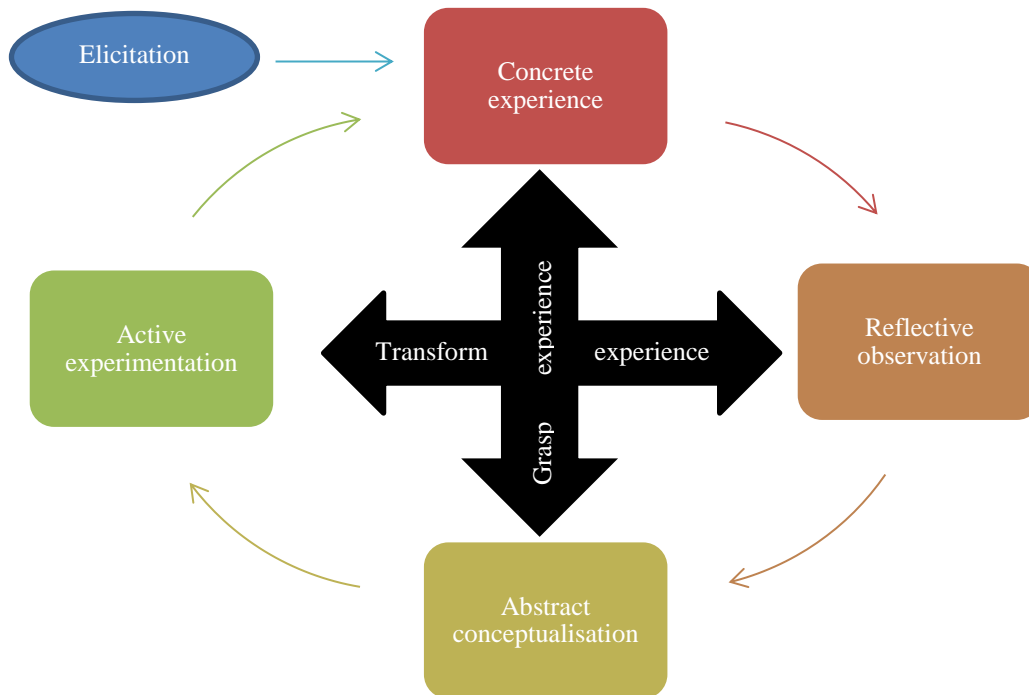


Figure 5.4: Modified experiential learning theory cycle

5.5.3 The social and cultural aspects, and role of an educator in ELT

Although the foundations of ELT theory, the six principles and four learning stages (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005), are holistic and constructivist in nature, philosophically, they can be argued to be based on an individual’s learning experience and focus on the cognitive development of individuals (Holman et al., 1997). Therefore, the theory has been critiqued as discounting social and cultural aspects, which are bound to influence the learners’ reflection and experiences (Seaman, 2008). In response, Kolb (2015) has updated ELT and referred to learning as a “social process” and acknowledged that the development of an individual is shaped by “cultural systems” (p.198), which the findings of this present study confirm. Correspondingly, the step-by-step reflective approach in the present study was indeed useful, as it facilitated a dialogue to build lecturers’ knowledge about peer observation. This process allowed the lecturers to be transforming agents, who took into account the social and cultural reality around

them. However, peer observation at ALI was an activity embedded in the social and cultural aspects of the institute. Hence, lecturers' acquired knowledge from their prior and current experience of peer observation was not only personal but also influenced by the community and its culture, where authoritative members observed teachers for purposes that were initially perceived to be merely summative. Lecturers' knowledge was reconstructed by scrutinising peer observation more comprehensively during the research project. This suggests that learning is indeed about an individual's development, but that it happens socially within an institutional context and collaboratively with peers and cannot take place in isolation.

Moreover, the process of an individual's learning has to be facilitated in some way, and Kolb (2015) has acknowledged that learning occurs between a learner and an educator. The educator role and learning cycle model (see Figure 5.5) show the role of an educator changing at each stage within the learning cycle from a facilitator to a subject expert to a standard setter to a coach. However, I was not regarded as a formal educator in the sense assumed in Kolb's (2015) model, and did not position myself as an educational expert, but rather as a friendly guide. Therefore, it can be said that Kolb's Educator Role Profile (ERP) model in Figure 5.5 seems to restrict the educator roles to people who have higher position in pedagogical practice, such as a teacher. However, my research suggests that a researcher or a colleague (who are not in a position to act as a coach, or evaluator, or expert) could facilitate effective learning throughout the ELT cycle and fulfil the six principles of ELT by extending the role of a facilitator. In addition, the different roles of educator, rather than that of the facilitator in the ERP, represents a hierarchical approach that might prevent the agentic lecturers' professional learning that occurred at ALI.

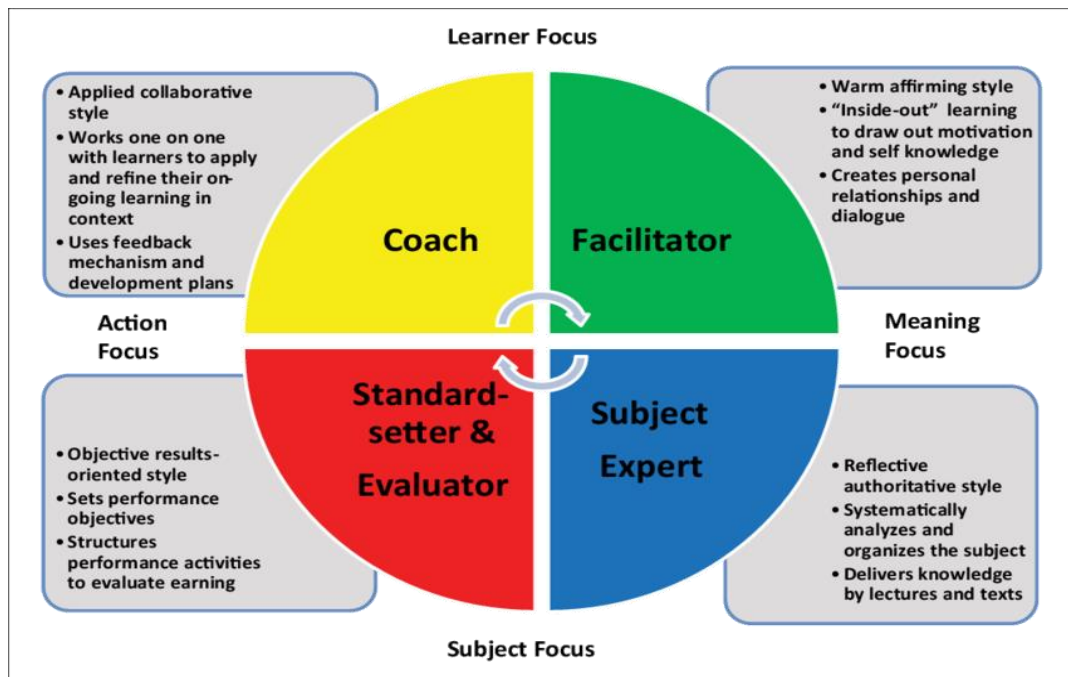


Figure 5.5: Educator Role Profile

(Kolb, 2015) Reprinted with permission

In the present study, I enabled the learning process through encouraging lecturers' participation during the research project, which allowed a deeper interaction with the experience of observation and a more meaningful reflection. This facilitating approach of an experiential educator intends to tap into "the internal interest and intrinsic motivation of learners and [build] on their prior knowledge and experience" (Kolb et al., 2014, p. 207). I adopted "a non-directive facilitator teaching style to help learners learn from direct experiences" (Kolb et al., 2014, p. 207). I remained flexible and tried to maintain a position that facilitated an effective process of learning. I was empathetic and not authoritative, nor was I trying to set any standards (Kolb, 2015). Thus, it was a mainly learner-oriented learning cycle. Remaining a facilitator enabled the lecturers to participate and benefit equally, if not more, from the three stages of the learning cycle. Experimentation did not happen in the present research, but elicitation was done, which has not been mentioned in the educator roles. Therefore, the present study suggests that the social learning between an educator and a learner can be extended from the existing model.

To summarise, the findings endorse that the relationship between experience and beliefs holds crucial importance in the exploration of professional learning. The data analysis revealed that participants' experience of stimulated, collaborative reflection in this research developed their learning. Another angle to appreciate the relationship between experiences and beliefs is also that lecturer participants' beliefs are partly a reproduction of their past related experiences. Both these aspects have been clearly displayed in this chapter and the previous one, and indeed support an adaptation and refinement of the ELT four-staged cycle, the six principles, and the role of an educator. However, knowledge and beliefs are a product of interactions between an individual and their environment. This research project provided lecturers with a solid platform to explicate their cognition at certain points over a period of time. It also highlighted the importance of the addition of the first stage: elicitation, in which lecturers shared their preliminary beliefs. Then the experience and the critical reflection on experience of peer observation provided key insights about the phenomenon of peer observation as tool of assessing teachers, which gradually but profoundly changed lecturers' cognition. Experience and reflection also positioned peer observation as a developmental process, and shifted the lecturers' anxiety and tension to a place of acquiescence and contentment.

5.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has discussed the key findings of the present study and alluded to their implications for conducting peer observation of teaching in higher education. It presented an overview of the key findings, followed by the main discussion that was divided into four main sections. The first section discussed the broad picture of a prominent finding, which was that participants were agentic in their own professional learning and utilised their participation in the current research project to this end. The second section problematised the framing of peer observation through discrete distinctions: summative and formative assessment of teachers, top-down and bottom-down approaches, and evaluative, developmental, and collaborative peer observations, arguing that they should instead be considered as continua. In the fourth section, the concept of reflective practice was discussed, which allowed lecturers to not only reflect on their teaching practices, but also

understand the process of peer observation in a new light. Knowledge about the who, why and how of peer observation was discussed. Participation in this research project also gave lecturers the opportunity to reflect on other factors related to peer observation, such as the role of feedback. In addition, the emotions of the observed teachers were also addressed at length in this present study, which have not been explicitly covered in previous teacher cognition and peer observation research. Lastly, the findings of this study were related and adapted to Kolb's (2015) Experiential Learning Theory which led to a refinement of his cycle, principles, and role of the educator. Reflective practice, an integral part of this theory, influenced the lecturers' explicit and implicit cognitive development, which became evident during the data analysis.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter concludes this thesis. It firstly overviews the scope of the study, and then briefly provides a summary of the findings in Section 6.1, describes the limitations in Section 6.2, and explains the potential contributions and implications of my thesis, presented as contextual, practical, methodological, and theoretical, in Section 6.3. The practical implications are suggested in terms of the praxis of teacher assessment, implementation of professional learning practices and their policies, the principles and procedures of peer observation, the notion of ‘peer,’ and the stakeholders, i.e. people who are involved in each stage of peer observation. Then, suggestions for future research are given in Section 6.4, and finally, my reflections on conducting this study are recapitulated in Section 6.5.

The primary aim of this case study was to improve understandings of teacher assessment via peer observation through investigating the principles and procedures and uncovering ESL lecturers’ cognition relating to peer observation in a private university setting in Pakistan. It has also captured the emotional aspect situated in such practices of teacher assessment. Finally, this research adapted Kolb’s (1984, 2015) Experiential Learning Theory to interpret and explain the findings from a theoretical perspective.

6.1 Summary of findings

A significant finding of this study is that, while the practice and structure of peer observation at ALI ostensibly coincided with a summative approach to assessment, when explored, the intent of the QA member and convener at ALI tended towards a formative approach to assessment. Correspondingly, lecturers’ cognition was probed through a number of qualitative data collection instruments, which revealed that this practice had elements of formative assessment. For example, the lecturers acknowledged receiving constructive feedback from the convener that could help improve their instructional approaches, teaching practices, and content. The lecturers’ professional learning was facilitated via reflecting on the phenomenon of peer observation generally and then focusing particularly on what was happening at ALI. The in-depth investigation and

process of reflection also revealed that, ultimately, this peer observation yielded positive emotions, which encouraged the lecturers to consider the potential outcomes of peer observation for their future professional learning. In short, the findings show divergences and convergences in the following chronological order:

- Firstly, data revealed a divergence between lecturers' initial assumptions, perceiving this practice of teacher assessment to be mainly summative (see Section 4.2.1), and the QA member's and the convener's intent to implement the practice for formative purposes.
- Secondly, there was another divergence between the QA member's and the convener's intent, which inclined towards a formative approach to teacher assessment, and the actual practice of peer observation, which more closely resembled a summative approach to teacher assessment.
- Thirdly, there was eventual convergence between lecturers' experiential knowledge (see Section 4.2.4) and the QA member's and the convener's intent, whereby all parties reflected on the potential of peer observation to be a form of formative assessment of teachers.

Eliciting lecturers' cognition helped to identify a number of important factors related to peer observation. It was found that the lecturers were motivated to learn, and they believed they should continuously work on improving their practices through teacher assessment exercises, such as peer observation, to promote professional learning. However, such practices need to be made available to the lecturers in a comprehensible manner. Otherwise, lack of clarity and awareness among lecturers about the purpose, criteria, and procedure of such practices may lead to invalid assumptions and apprehensions, as was evident in the present study. As a whole, this study provided a foundation for the six ESL lecturers to explicate their understandings, experiences, and cognitive development. The data show evidence of participants' development in their cognition about teacher assessment through peer observation, and the reflective practice allowed them to shed light on various factors of peer observation. The important value of reflective practice in formative teacher assessment through peer observation or in any professional learning activity was also emphasised, as the process of reflection

while experiencing peer observation proved to be a transformational experience for the lecturers. Participation in the research facilitated development of the six lecturers' professional and intellectual awareness of the dynamics of formative and summative assessment of teachers via peer observation.

Lastly, after the data analysis and interpretation, the lecturers' learning process was discussed from the perspective of Kolb's ELT. Kolb's ELT cycle, principles, and role of educator were adapted and refined according to the findings of the present study. See Section 6.3.4 for further details.

6.2 Limitations

This research project has produced thick description and rich interpretations of the data to illuminate the context in which the case study was undertaken and encourage readers to consider how the findings of this study can be relatable to similar settings (Cohen et al., 2007, 2011, 2018). However, this study has some limitations, which are outlined below.

My research was a case study, and therefore was contextually bound to a particular Pakistani university. Data were gathered from six ESL lecturers in this context, so due to the small sample size, generalisations from this study would not be feasible. However, generalisation was not an aim of my research. Nevertheless, some transferability to universities with similar characteristics, in South Asian contexts and elsewhere in the world, could be made but with caution, especially as regards to institutions with fewer resources.

Also, because my main focus was on lecturers' perceptions and practices, the outcome of this practice in terms of students' learning was not addressed. In other words, my research did not deeply investigate whether teacher learning through peer observation can result in a better learning experience for students.

Another possible limitation was that I was not able to audio record the post-observation meetings (because I did not have the convener's consent to do so) to derive the stimuli for the stimulated recall sessions. Since I heavily relied on the rough field notes made during the auditing of the post-observation meeting and my memory, I had to conduct the recall sessions very shortly after the post-

observation meetings. This gave me only a short amount of time to consider my prompts and follow-up questions. Nevertheless, auditing the meetings gave access to the full scenario, as explained in Section 3.4.3.

Lastly, to mitigate potential bias, I employed various research instruments for data triangulation. The question may arise as to my familiarity with the research context, and whether my dual roles of insider and outsider biased the way in which I conducted the research. However, I do not believe that this was the case. In fact, the dual role was a strength to this research and added to the trustworthiness of this research as pointed out in Section 3.8.

6.3 Contributions and implications

Despite these limitations, the present study has contributed to the academic understandings and the current corpus of literature in four ways: contextually, practically, methodologically, and theoretically. There are also significant implications arising from the present study. These contributions and implications are addressed in the following sections.

6.3.1 Contextual

Peer observation is widely researched in contexts like the UK, USA, and Australia, but practices in Asian contexts still need to be explored more fully. Only a few studies have been conducted on peer observation in Asian contexts; for example, in Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, UAE, and Vietnam (Ahmed et al., 2018; Dos Santos, 2016a, 2016b; Engin, 2016; Engin & Priest, 2014a, 2014b; Nguyen & Ngo, 2017). Considering the limited number of studies, it can be said that peer observation is an emerging research issue in the region. Moreover, teacher cognition in relation to professional learning has not been researched as such in Pakistan, and this study occupies this important contextual gap. The study has provided a detailed account of Pakistani ESL lecturers' cognition towards peer observation as a professional learning practice, as well as evidence about current practices of peer observation on the ground. On the basis of the findings, other educational institutes in Pakistan may rethink, reshape, and restructure their professional learning practices in order to enhance teachers' pedagogical practices and develop their learning. It is hoped that the outcomes of this study will

enlighten institutes, educational leaders, heads, and staff members about peer observation as an effective form of assessment and professional learning practice not only in Pakistan and Asia but also elsewhere in the world.

6.3.2 Practical

This thesis argues that, in order to fulfil the goal of developing teachers through peer observation, the following practical implications should be considered.

6.3.2.1 The praxis of teacher assessment

Theoretical understandings of assessment in education divide it into two main approaches: formative and summative. However, the findings of the present study suggest that, although these terms are distinguishable through their specific descriptions and characteristics, they cannot be classified as simple dichotomies in practice. The boundaries between each are fluid and have the potential to merge into one another. This study suggests that summative peer observations could go hand in hand with formative peer observations and hence yield more fruitful benefits not only from the institutes' perspective but also the teachers' perspective.

6.3.2.2 Professional learning practices and policies

The findings of this study revealed that lecturers were considered as learners and expected to learn professionally from peer observation. However, they were not given any formal support to understand the principles and procedure of peer observation nor were their views on the practice systematically gathered. Thus, some implications for lecturers' professional learning practices are to be considered.

Firstly, there should be an agreement between lecturers' and institutional points of view to bring a mutually beneficial, shared understanding of professional learning strategies. Keeping lecturers' perspectives in consideration, a more effective process of peer observation that promotes professional learning can be developed from consideration of the findings of this research.

Secondly, hierarchy levels should be alleviated to promote collaborative and

congenial professional learning practices. As is relatively common in Pakistani contexts, various levels of hierarchy exist in institutes and organisations. Under such a complex (and controversial) hierarchical system, consonance between educational leaders, facilitators and lecturers is important to move in the same direction. A suggested approach is to conduct collegial focus group discussions or workshops between all stakeholders to provide opportunities for asking questions, achieving clarification, and co-constructing possible solutions to problems.

Thirdly, regarding ALI's Appointment, Tenure and Promotion policy, the discussion in Chapter 5 suggests that institutional policies in regard to any professional learning, promotion, and appointment exercise ideally should be explicit in accordance to the requirements of the institute, its leaders, and staff to avoid the sort of contradictions which were evident in the present study. Findings of the present study suggest that teachers' exclusion in forming an institutional policy about their assessment and professional learning strategies would undermine teachers' standing and their confidence in their own profession. Institutional policies should be flexible and subject to change according to the needs of teachers as professionals. Hence, at institutes, teachers' general and specific knowledge about professional learning should be engaged in shaping any policies related to them, which may also enhance motivation for teachers to participate in and adopt the implemented policies. Therefore, before implementing any practice of peer observation, educational leaders should first try to understand and address the needs and agency of the teachers to implement peer observation accordingly. Otherwise, there will be divergences between the policy and the needs of the teachers for professional learning, as found in the present study.

Lastly, the findings of this research also ascertain that the policy-makers should implement teacher-friendly policies for professional learning that foster real growth and learning. Professional learning exercises should not be just top-down or power coercive, rather they should be exercises that weave well into lecturers' thoughts and beliefs. They should be designed to meet the lecturers' needs and requirements and may vary from individual to individual. It may be challenging to cater to the needs of all teachers. However, teachers' needs and strengths should be recognised and analysed before introducing any professional learning exercise, such as peer observation.

6.3.2.3 Principles, conduct, and stages of peer observation

One of the main issues that emerged from this present study was the lack of understanding about the principles of peer observation. Conveying the concept of peer observation via an induction session to teachers and other participants, such as managers and observers, may be a useful way to make all parties aware of peer observation in their particular context. This preliminary process could bring clarity and enable teachers to recognise in advance the *who*, *why* and *how* of peer observation as suggested in Donnelly's (2007) study. In this way, the conflicts and complexities of understanding peer observation could be mitigated. Hence, participants of peer observation should be prepared formally or informally prior to engaging in the peer observation.

As far as the conduct of peer observation is concerned, the intention to observe a complete lesson should be made clear and realised, so teachers do not feel pressured to prove themselves in a short span of time. Observation of full lessons and repeated observations done at intervals will give a more holistic picture of the class and the teaching pattern of the observees. Also, feedback in the post-observation meeting should be effective and constructive. The post-observation meetings should provide an opportunity for discussion between the two parties rather than a one-way dialogue. Observed teachers should be given room to discuss their concerns to improve their learning and boost their confidence to participate in this activity more willingly. It can thus be suggested that the observer should be guided in delivering supportive feedback appropriately and professionally and in building mutual trust between the two parties during the process of peer observation.

In relation to the stages of peer observation, a commonly agreed systematic procedure of peer observation was missing at ALI. The findings suggest that there needs to be a pre-observation meeting where criteria should ideally be negotiated openly with the observed teachers to give them a sense of freedom, feeling of ownership, and some autonomy in their own assessment. As mentioned previously, the findings also endorse reflective practice as a necessary step in peer observation to ensure teachers' learning is being enhanced. Therefore, a fourth stage of reflection should be added to the practice of peer observation, as shown

in Figure 6.1.

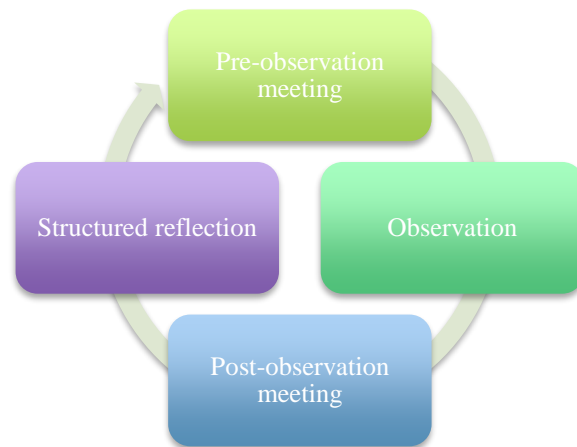


Figure 6.1: Recommended cycle of peer observation

Teachers' reflection could be facilitated in oral or written form, or both, as done in the present study, to promote formative peer observation. Reflective practice among participants of peer observation could also be carried out through sharing and talking to their colleagues, maintaining portfolios, writing a journal, or having a discussion following the post-observation meeting with the observer. Such reflective practices would encourage teachers to challenge their own cognition in order to restructure and manoeuvre their praxis. The effectiveness of any of these suggested reflective practices may be investigated in detail in future research.

However, the four stages of the peer observation shown in Figure 6.1 should be explicitly discussed between the observer and observees beforehand to avoid misunderstandings and enhance clarity. The reflective practice should be followed up by the next practice of peer observation to make this exercise an on-going and continuing learning cycle for observed teachers. In this manner, observed teachers would be given opportunities for reflection-*for*-action (thinking and gauging their abilities and practices before the lecture) and reflection-*on*-action (after the observed lecture, during the post-observation meeting). Clear documentation of these reflections would assist teachers to reflect-*for*-action again; that is, thinking for future improved teaching.

The findings of the present study also support the point made by some studies (Eri, 2014; Grainger et al., 2015) that have also indicated that after reflection, a fifth stage, implementation, should be incorporated to examine the extent to which

new learning is being tested in future classes. Modifications to teaching practice, and the outcomes of these, could then be discussed in the next pre-observation meeting to continue the learning cycle as shown in Figure 6.2.

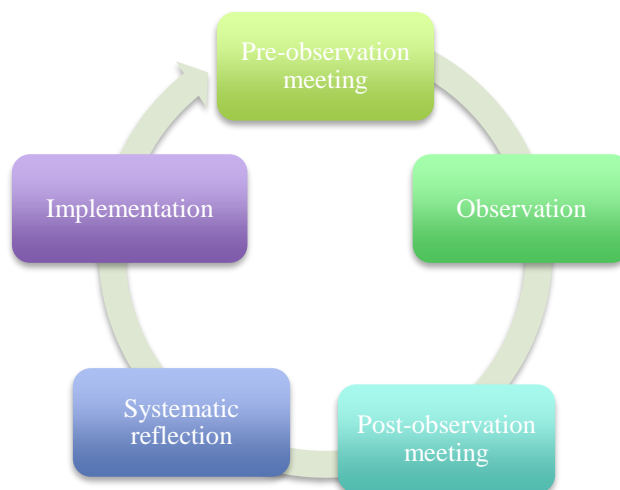


Figure 6.2 Recommended cycle of peer observation further enhanced

Finally, and ideally, observed teachers should also be given an opportunity to learn by making observations of lessons taught by their peers. Reciprocity in the practice of peer observation can be said to be of crucial importance to ensure an entirely developmental, reflective, and collegial peer observation.

6.3.2.4 The notion of ‘peer’

At ALI, the lecturers’ multifaceted understanding of the meaning of “peer” indicates a new line of argument. It suggests challenging the core features of the Pakistani learning culture in which a hierarchical approach to teacher assessment and learning seems to be embedded. This was found in other Asian contexts as well, for example, in Vietnam (Nguyen & Ngo, 2017). In such a hierarchical society, it can be hard for teachers to identify if faculty members other than equally ranked colleagues could be acknowledged as their peers. However, at ALI, it was discovered that although the convener was in a position of authority, he maintained a collegial disposition with the faculty members. His professional positioning in teacher assessment was more horizontal than vertical, which led to a developmental rather than evaluative practice of peer observation. Therefore, the construct of the “peers” in peer observation in any context should be mutually

understood before categorising the assessment approach and model of peer observation.

6.3.2.5 Stakeholders

The main stakeholders involved in peer observation in this particular setting were the six lecturers as well as the QA member and the convener, both of whom played managerial roles. The participation of the QA member and the convener in this research project suggest prompting others who are responsible for organising and implementing observations to further reflect on *what* to do about this peer observation and *how* to develop it further, and to hypothesise *why* it is to be continued in the future.

The findings of this research encourage other individuals in the position of the QA member and convener to realise the need to make observed teachers aware and maintain uniformity about the purpose, criteria, and construct of the practice, and to ensure consistency in official documents, some of which are the main means to make teachers aware of peer observation. The inconsistency in information about peer observation was overlooked by the management personnel, which perhaps could be the case in other settings.

In addition, peer observation should not be restricted between a senior and junior colleague. The observer could also be an equal, or a junior colleague, and this suggestion could guide the practice of peer observation in the future at ALI and in similar settings where peer observation is conducted between two parties that have difference in professional status. However, to ensure the reliability and the credibility of the information collected from colleagues (that it is not biased or influenced by their prior relationships and interactions with teachers), an outsider, or an external observer who has no link with the teacher, may observe to cross-check the validity of the information gathered from the observations. This will enable observations in particular to provide useful and truthful data on teacher and student interactions and the learning environment. Nonetheless, the role of the external examiner should be clarified officially in relation to safeguarding the institute's policy and rules.

6.3.3 Methodology

The present study has contributed to research methodology relating to peer observation in two areas - the multi-method approach and grounded theory analysis. This study employed a unique combination of data collection methods that has not been previously employed in any peer observation research. The combination involved oral collective articulation followed by individual oral and then written articulation.

The data collection took place over a period of nine months, allowing for the development of cognition to occur. The focus group discussions at the beginning of the study helped lecturers feel at ease with the topic and construct their ideas collectively. After that, they shared details of their related experiences during the one-on-one stimulated recall sessions and interviews. The use of stimulated recall sessions stimulated lecturers' cognition, and confirmed the importance and benefits of reflective practice in peer observation of teaching. This structured process of data collection also provided them with an opportunity to voice their concerns and to build on their knowledge through the repeated engagement. This knowledge was recapitulated after a lapse of time in a written narrative frame. Throughout the data collection procedures, I made a conscious effort to develop a good relationship and rapport with my participants. The collected data were rich, endorsing a multi-method approach which enabled me to make a holistic interpretation of the findings.

Data analysis was guided by a grounded theory approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), that led to an adaptation and refinement of Kolb's (2015) ELT cycle, six principles, and role of educator. The analysis of data in this research suggests that researchers should apply multiple analytical strategies and not limit themselves to a single tool to interpret meaning from the data. This present study contributes to teacher assessment research by using the approach of grounded theory analysis, which served its purpose to analyse and interpret data as it emerged. This study also proposes that grounded theory analysis should be done by using different digital and manual tools while adhering to a grounded theory analysis approach. This approach may prove to be relevant or useful to other researchers and doctoral candidates in capturing a holistic and

comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon through the means of grounded theory analysis. Lastly, technology is there to assist the researcher to analyse the data: tools such as NVivo (Bazeley, 2007).

6.3.4 Theory

The inductive approach to use and adapt Kolb's ELT in this particular context has added to the theoretical understanding of lecturers' cognition. It has provided an in-depth analysis of the relationship between lecturers' cognition and their experiences of peer observation, and the notion of learning from reflecting on experiences.

First, the current research has proposed an emerging understanding of Kolb's ELT cycle by identifying the importance of a preliminary stage: elicitation. This preliminary stage showed that Pakistani lecturers' initial beliefs were formed by their prior experiences of assessment through peer observation as teachers. Most of these preliminary beliefs comprised assumptions about the purpose, criteria, drawbacks, and some benefits of peer observation. Therefore, these beliefs can be stated to be unsubstantiated knowledge as lecturers may never have had the opportunity to reflect on them or had the option to co-construct or reconstruct as they did in the present study. However, it was important to gain this knowledge in order to understand the sources of these assumptions and make connections between teachers' initial beliefs and prior experiences. Therefore, I consider that such elicitation should be an essential component of the ELT cycle. The stage of elicitation was followed by the stages of concrete experience, reflective observation, and active conceptualisation in line with Kolb's ELT cycle. Through this process the lecturers' unsubstantiated knowledge was transformed into substantiated knowledge, which could be tested in a future study to continue and complete Kolb's ELT cycle as suggested in Section 6.4.

Second, this present research proposes that an educator role during the ELT cycle does not have to change at each stage. As illustrated in Figure 5.5, the role of the educator in Kolb's (2015) ERP model switches from a facilitator to a subject expert to an evaluator to a coach to finish the learning cycle. However, the findings of the present study suggest that the role of an educator can remain that

of a facilitator to initiate teachers' learning at each stage of the learning cycle by leading discussions, asking open-ended questions, and enabling active engagement and participation of learners with the research topic. This approach promotes a learner-oriented learning cycle rather than an educator-oriented one, and the educator also becomes a part of the learning process, as they learn to work in a facilitative and collaborative learning environment. This does not mean that the Kolb's ERP model (see Figure 5.5) is faulty, but rather that, in the present study, the shifting of educator roles was not found or even possible. I was not in a position to take on the roles of an expert, an evaluator and a coach, and neither did I wish to, as these roles depict a hierarchical relationship that would undermine lecturers' autonomy, which was central to this study. I stimulated lecturers' learning and maintained a collegial relationship with them. This continuous role of the facilitator throughout the cycle led to lecturers' empowerment in terms of peer observation particularly at ALI, which suggests that this idea could be applied elsewhere. A colleague, researcher or peer could pursue the whole ELT cycle by adhering to the role of a facilitator.

Third, the present study concurs with, and contextualises, Kolb's (2015) own revision of his original theory that experiential learning is a social activity; learning of an individual cannot take place in isolation. The six lecturers were provided with a platform to articulate their beliefs and build on their knowledge through co-construction and re-construction. This reflection facilitated their cognitive developmental progression throughout the research project. This indicates that an institution, its leaders, and facilitators should provide teachers with opportunities to express their views collaboratively. Therefore, the social and cultural factors play a major role to support learning. Hence, institutions should also provide their teaching staff members with professional learning activities that have a proper infrastructure involving experiential learning as a core component.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

The findings of this study suggest numerous opportunities for future research projects in regard to peer observation and reflection and their impact on teachers' professional growth. One of the key findings of this research is that lecturers learn through reflecting on their experiences of peer observation. It would be interesting

to know if this finding is borne out by employing similar qualitative research methods in similar Asian contexts or elsewhere.

This exploratory research, which upholds reflective practice in the sense that it promoted deep learning and critical thinking can lead to follow-up, systematic action research. A future intervention in an action research project in the form of trialling and introducing the recommended model of peer observation (see section 6.3.4.3) could be carried out in the same or similar contexts to measure and explore the success of the recommended model of peer observation. The main aspect to research could be the importance of systematic reflective practice following the post-observation meeting.

More research into teacher learning in Pakistan is required. A quantitative study using surveys could also be conducted at the district level to collect data from a larger sample to measure teachers' motivation to participate in peer observation as a professional learning activity. Also, questionnaires could be used to compare between a number of professional learning exercises, for example, workshops, seminars, self-assessment, peer assessment or mentoring. This could give a wider understanding of the context, culture, and personal preferences of teachers of a particular country, state, or district. The outcomes of such research could help educational leaders at the relevant level examine these practices and respond with appropriate arrangements and resources.

Also, as mentioned in Section 6.2, students' data and any consequent changes in their learning in relation to the practice of peer observation would be informative for institutes, their leaders, and teachers. In small-scale case studies, similar research methods and procedures could be used to focus on how students' learning experiences could be improved through teachers' professional learning activities such as peer observation. However, if the researcher aims to investigate this issue more broadly, then a quantitative or a mixed method study could be conducted.

Grounded analysis opened a space for development and helped this research move from data to theory, rather from theory to data, to lead to a situated explanation of the findings. Therefore, Kolb's four-stage ELT cycle was adapted and refined

according to the findings of the study. Nevertheless, the lecturers of my study did not complete the ELT cycle, as the stage of practical, active experimentation was not achieved. Hence, perhaps an intervention study could be applied using the ELT cycle to create conditions under which participants could do practical experimentation and the ELT cycle can be completed, which then may suggest further investigations.

6.5 Envoi

From this research, I truly believe that we learn from reflecting pertinently on our experiences. Regardless of what role we play, we should find our experiences instructive and formative and the motto should be *learning by doing and thinking* which, in my opinion, is a worthy pursuit. Hence, we as teachers and researchers should learn to continuously reflect, explore new avenues, and consequently polish ourselves as prospective educators.

Now going back to where I started this journey, my aim was to seek the answer to an issue that was stated in Section 1.2 in Chapter 1: whether the praxis of peer observation of teaching in the specific context was summative in nature, or whether it included elements of formative assessment. My main interest was to find out the dynamics of the praxis of assessment of teachers through peer observation. The answer came up that the practice was a conflation of formative and summative peer observation, as it had the potential to both benefit the institute for quality control purposes and enabled faculty members to yield professional gains. The findings indicated that this kind of peer observation which is done by an authoritative faculty member has the potential to facilitate some learning of the teachers involved in this process. Given a thorough understanding of assessment, I believe summative and formative approaches can complement each other, and both are important for the development of teachers as learners. Hence, if they are carried out hand in hand, it can be fairly productive.

As my final note, I would like to say that writing this thesis has been a long yet rewarding journey. It has certainly enhanced my critical thinking and theoretical understanding about the phenomenon of teacher assessment, peer observation, professional learning, teacher cognition, multi-method approach, and much more.

The journey of writing this thesis has now come to an end; however, this does not mean that my research has come to an end. There is far more to explore and learn. Nevertheless, I believe I have been transformed professionally, academically, and personally, which makes these years by far the most fulfilling and worthwhile period of my life. This entire process has instilled enormous awareness and refinement in me, which undoubtedly has brought a shift in my perspectives and generally in my way of thinking to view and handle issues.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of empirical studies on peer observation

Author/s	Context	Method	Sample	Key finding/s
Barnard, Croft, Irons, Cuffe, Bandara & Rowntree (2011)	Queensland University	Action research	298 teachers completed surveys	Feedback is an important element to learn and initiate self-reflection of teachers.
Bell (2001)	Australian university	Interpretive paradigm Written reflections and reports were analysed.	28 academic teaching staff	Collegial peer observation of teaching was found to be an effective tool for professional learning.
Bell & Cooper (2013)	Engineering school at an Australian university	Case study using questionnaires and interviews	20 staff members out of which only 8 were in the final stage	A workshop was conducted by the coordinator, which proved to be effective in preparing teachers for peer observation and helped teachers reduce their concerns and fears.
Bell & Mladenovic (2015)	Business School, University of Sydney	Surveys, focus groups and interviews	Tertiary level tutors	Tutors observed other tutors in their respective discipline to learn. Tutors reported to learn and bring changes to their teaching practices to promote better student learning.
Bell & Thomson (2016)	A research-intensive university in Australia	Qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews	4 Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching	Educational leaders must understand the needs and agency of the teachers to implement peer observation accordingly.
Blackmore (2005)	Different Schools in a tertiary context.	Case study Secondary data	40 various levels of staff	Newly hired teachers tend to take more benefits from this exercise as they believed in learning, whereas old staff just endured the practice for the sake of it.
Blackmore (2005)	Different Schools in a	Case study using interviews	40 various levels of staff	Feedback enabled teachers to reflect on their teaching.

	tertiary context.			
Byrne, Brown, & Challen, (2010)	University in the South of England	Mixed method using interviews and questionnaires	10 teachers participated in interviews and 36 in questionnaires	Face-to-face feedback in peer observation is introspective, but is not worthwhile to improve practice. It
Carroll and O'Loughlin (2014)	Irish university context.	An exploratory qualitative approach using pre- and post-observation interviews	10 novice teachers	Participants reported to fear and feel nervous prior to participating in a collaborative process of peer observation. They perceived it as a judgmental exercise and had little knowledge of what was going to happen.
Chamberlain, D'Artrey, & Rowe (2011)	University setting in UK	Mixed-method methodology using questionnaire and focus group discussions	Multidisciplinary faculty: 84 participated in questionnaires and 16 attended focus groups	Ambiguity and lack of structure and connection between the objectives of peer observation and its outcomes were found.
Crabtree, Scott & Kuo (2016)	Occupational therapy at a research university	Quantitative using content validity form	7 occupational therapy faculty members	4 stages of peer observation were followed: pre-observation, observation, instructor's self-reflection, and possible recommendations.. Such systematic and constructive peer observation has the potential to facilitate professional growth.
Day (2013)	An ELT practicum for graduate students in the Department of Second Language Studies, University of Hawaii.	Mixed method using two questionnaires , open ended and close ended.	15 multi-cultural students, who taught EFL at universities in Thailand	Reflective practice as a fourth stage by the means of writing a report on their experience of peer observation was facilitated. This exercise made teachers be aware of even the minor things in a classroom.

Donnelly (2007)	Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching, Higher education, Ireland	Interviews, and document collection.	3 participants from the program	Peer observation developed confidence in teachers about themselves by recognising their strengths and identifying areas of improvement.
Dos Santos (2016a)	English language learning school in Hong Kong	Post-observation interview with the researcher	6 ESL teachers (non-native speakers)	Lack of experience and awareness about the peer observation led to assumptions in teachers' minds.
Farrell (2011)	ELT	Case study using observation instrument	The author and a novice ESL teacher	Bottom up: Reflective practice was done through the means of classroom observation, which proved to be beneficial.
Grainger, Bridgstock, Houston & Drew (2015)	Public university in Australia	Authors' experiential summaries and reflections	The authors	Each review was accompanied by a written evaluation from the observer and students for the purpose of triangulation.
Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond (2005)	School of Law and School of Science in a University	Interviews	18 lecturers Associate deans of both Schools	Reflective practice for participants is important in order to actually learn from peer observation. Otherwise, teachers professional learning is limited
Hendry & Oliver (2012)	Australian university	Interviews	9 graduates	This study raised the question that receiving feedback may not necessarily result in self-reflection as it would through observing a teacher.
Karagiorgi (2012)	A primary school in Cyprus	Action research using in-depth interviews	7 teachers	In peer observation with a top-down execution showed that teachers felt compelled to conduct an observation without understanding its purpose.
Kenny, Mitchell, Chróinín,	Faculty of education,	A qualitative action research study	Four lecturers	Peer observation promoted reflection not only into teachers'

Vaughan and Murtagh (2014)	University of Limerick, Ireland			practices, but enabled teachers to place themselves in the “students’ shoes” to understand students’ best learning needs.
Kilfoil (2014)	University of Pretoria, South Africa	An exploratory study using online questionnaires	32 lecturers	The University of Pretoria policy discusses peer review and peer observation of teaching for promotion, quality assurance and teaching development.
Kohut, Burnap, & Yon (2007)	University of North Carolina	Survey data was used	80 untenured faculty and 143 tenured faculty	Formative elements were found in this summative exercise of peer observation.
Marshall (2004)	Theology and religion, Higher education	Exploratory study using secondary data		Peer observation is an opportunity for teachers to learn from each other by sharing in each other’s teaching.
Msila (2014)	School in South Africa	Qualitative study using interviews and classroom observations	3 principals and 15 teachers	Classroom observations were made by the principals as mentors. It was found to be a suitable practice to develop teachers professionally.
Murphy & Stover (2016)	Online setting	Open-ended questionnaire, and debriefing meetings	10 faculty members	Concerns, such as time, ambiguity of <i>how</i> peer observations may be done, and qualification of the observer were critically reviewed and addressed. The identification of these barriers led to successful formative peer observations.
Overland, Levander, Black & Evans (2017)	University of Washington’s primary care continuity clinic sites	Mixed method using pre- and post-survey	25 residents	Residents learned from both, observational learning and receiving feedback in this peer-to-peer model of peer observation.
Psalla (2013)	Greek state school	Mixed method case study	2 English teachers	Peer observation of teaching was proved to

		using interviews, observation sheets, field notes and journal entries.		constitute useful and feasible ways for teacher development. It provides a richer understanding of teaching and enabled the two teachers to come up with more effective solutions to improve their classes.
Sandt (2012)	The University High School in Melbourne, Australia	Action research project using interviews and surveys	13 teachers were interviewed and 62 completed the survey	An action plan was evaluated. It was recommended that peer observation should be formally recognised within the institute to make it an effective and a cooperative practice.
Shortland (2010)	UK higher education sector	An interpretive case study using 10 developmental peer observations	Peer observations between 2 equally experienced teachers	The frequent peer observation helped the observee take up feedback from a “critical friend.”
Snydman, Chandler, Rencic, & Sung (2013)	Tertiary academic medical centre, UK	Surveys	21 medicine residents	Observees reported to improve their teaching styles through receiving feedback. It made them better teachers.
Sullivan, Buckle, Nicky, & Atkinson (2012)	Paediatric Teaching Faculty in UK	Reflective feedback was analysed using grounded approach	16 faculty members	Developmental model with four stages was implemented: pre-observation, observation, post-observation, and reflection. Teachers valued the feedback they received.
Swinglehurst, Russell & Greenhalgh (2008)	University of London External Programme	Action research using online focus groups	26 multi-disciplinary teachers	Clarity of purpose whether it is for teachers’ evaluation or improvement needed to be articulated.
Thurlings, Vermeulen, Kreijns, Bastiaens &	Netherlands	3 face-to-face feedback meeting groups	13 teachers and a supervisor	The pattern of feedback was analysed; it is a complex process and depends on patterns of

Stijnen (2012)		and 1 virtual group was analysed		interactions between the two parties.
Walker & Forbes (2017)	An online programme that was jointly managed by York and Waikato coordinators	Small-scale study using interviews	9 pairs, each pair involving one tutor from University of York and one participant from Waikato	While the benefits of getting a complete outsider's perspective were appreciated, the external observers' difference in perceptions were also witnessed in this cross-institutional and cross-cultural online peer observation study.
Webster (2002)	ELiCOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students)	Action research project using observation sheets	9 mixed nationalities teachers	It was doubted in the findings whether a peer can evaluate a teacher without having any background knowledge about the classroom, learners and teachers' teaching style.
Wingrove, Hammersley-Fletcher, Clarke & Chester (2017)	English and Australian University	Semi-structured interviews	18 university teachers, 9 Australian and 9 English	English and Australian context viewed peer observation as a voluntary, reciprocal process, and a summative review.
Woodman & Parappilly (2015)	Flinders University, Australia.	Each stage of the process of peer observation was evaluated.	2 relatively inexperienced science lecturers	However, the participants in this study were paired without receiving any formal training. The results of the study show that both the teachers gained immense confidence.
Yiend, Weller & Kinchin (2014)	Master's course in Mental Health Studies	A single case study using written feedback	One lecturer, three peers and one educational expert	Feedback identified areas of weaknesses and was given and received for critical reflection and then apply that reflection on the teaching parties.
Zepeda, Parylo, & Ilgan (2013)	Turkey and US schools	Quantitative post-positivist paradigm using surveys	491 teachers	Results showed that peer coaching is widely practiced and accepted in American school, whereas in Turkish schools it is rarely applied.

Appendix 2: Copy of questionnaire

Recent Qualification:		Years of teaching experience:	
Working title:		Gender:	<input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F

Please choose the true answer that applies to you. You may choose more than one answer.

1. Which type of professional development activity do you prefer?

- a. Workshops or seminars
 b. Conferences
 c. Reading scholarly articles on professional development
 d. Classroom observation
 e. Reflective journals
 f. Other, please specify

2. Who do you refer to, to discuss the daily issues of classroom practices?

- a. My colleagues teaching the same course
 b. The head of the department
 c. The coordinator of the course
 d. Dean
 e. My friends
 f. Other, please specify

3. If you were to participate in classroom observation, whom would you prefer to be observed by?

- a. Dean
 b. Senior teacher
 c. Junior teacher
 d. Head of department
 e. Coordinator of the course
 f. Other, please specify

4. By whom are you usually observed?

- a. Dean
 b. Senior teacher
 c. Junior teacher
 d. Head of department
 e. Coordinator of the course
 f. Other, please specify

5. What is the usual rationale behind the practice of peer observation?

- a. Evaluation teaching
 b. Collaborative
 c. Contract renewal
 d. Promotion
 e. Professional development
 f. Other, please specify

6. How frequently do you think peers should be observed?

- a. Once a semester
 b. Once in a year
 c. Monthly
 d. Never
 e. Other please specify _____

In the following section, you are asked about your perception about classroom observation. Please check the answer that best represents your response to each statement.

Items	Statements	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Unsure (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
1.	It could help teachers develop professionally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.	It could encourage open discussions about classroom issues, and the teaching and learning process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.	Quality of teaching could be maintained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.	It could be an effective means of collecting information about classroom practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.	It may provide teachers with good chance to see how others teach effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.	It may provide an opportunity to get feedback on one's teaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.	It could be a means of building collegiality in an institute	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.	An observer could get the chance to see many of the same problems that they face in their classroom practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9.	It may help to collect information about the lesson that the teacher who is teaching may not know otherwise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10.	The feedback could be helpful in identifying a teacher's strengths and weaknesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.	It could enable teachers to reflect on their teaching practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12.	It could be a good way to evaluate a teacher's performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13.	You think training is required for teachers to practice classroom observations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please feel free to add any further relevant comments regarding classroom observation of teaching.

.....

Thank you for your time to fill this questionnaire and if you wish to participate further in this research as explained in the informant letter, write your name on the list on the table next to the door. The information obtained from you will be kept completely anonymous and this will now be part of the research data.

Appendix 3: Notes on piloting

Piloting was an important feature for this research study to ensure the feasibility of the design, relate the different data collection procedures (questionnaire, focus group discussions, stimulated recall sessions, interviews and narrative frames) with each other, and to make sure that each instrument has logical and meaningful questions, prompts or focal points. Piloting also helped me to be well prepared, skilled, and confident before actually starting the data collection procedures. It also proved to be a good practice to try each procedure in terms of setting the recorder, arranging meetings, and getting used to transcribing and summarizing the data.

My second supervisor conducted workshops on data collection instruments: interviews, focus group discussions and observations in March and April 2016, which extended my understanding in relation to the data collection instruments and also polished me as a researcher. In these workshops, first theoretical implications were stated in relation to the relevant instruments and then practical implications were facilitated by giving the workshop participants an opportunity to practice the respective tool with their neighbouring partner (or partners in the case of focus group discussions). I facilitated an interview and a focus group discussion in both the respective workshops. These brief demonstrations on how to do a focus group discussion and interview helped me to pilot my instruments further with my PhD fellows and supervisors later in June 2016.

The questionnaire was piloted with English language teachers who gave me useful feedback after filling in the questionnaire and all the required amendments were made in the questionnaire to suit the participants of my study. The focus group discussion was piloted amongst three of my PhD fellows. The stimulated recall was piloted with my second supervisor; the post-observation meeting that took place between my second supervisor and PhD fellow was audio recorded. The interview was piloted with one of my flat mates, who is an ESL teacher from Malaysia. We piloted it at home in an informal environment.

The piloting of the questionnaires covered the following points: time taken to complete the questionnaire, the limited number of items covering the main aspects of the phenomenon, the clarity of language and the number of options in the multiple choice questions. The points piloted in the focus group discussion included the adequacy of focal points, the time involved, and the interest of the participants. The piloted interviews helped to check the manner of the interview, probing skill and the ideal environment in which the interview should take place. The following points were piloted in the audio recordings of the post-observation meeting and stimulated recall session: the time span between the meetings and the recall, the time needed to transcribe the key extracts of the pre- and post-observation meetings and the efficiency of the prompts to conduct stimulated recall session. However, the pre- and post-observation meetings were not recorded and I ended up auditing the post-observation meetings only (see Section 3.5.3 *Auditing post-observation meetings*). The narrative frame was piloted with my colleague at Pathways College and some points were added to ensure that the sentence starters were sufficient to elicit maximum data.

Appendix 4: Copy of consent form for lecturer participants

I _____, agree to participate in Shazre Sarfraz's PhD research project, as described in the information letter. By signing this form, I confirm that I have been given an opportunity to read the information letter, to ask questions and have them answered. I agree to participate completely voluntarily in this project in the ways that I consent below.

Please (✓) the appropriate box for each statement.

Statements	Yes	No
I understand that I do not have to participate in this research.		
I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this research at any time.		
I understand that I can withdraw information obtained from me until the checking of the transcriptions.		
I agree to take part in the focus group discussion.		
I agree to have the post-observation meeting audited by Shazre.		
I agree to participate in the stimulated recall session.		
I am willing to have an individual interview with Shazre.		
I give my permission to Shazre to audio record the focus group discussion, stimulated recall and interview.		
I wish to have summaries, key extracts, or transcriptions of the focus group discussion, stimulated recall and interview to review and correct.		
I am willing to write within a narrative frame for this project.		
I understand that my rights to privacy and confidentiality are appropriately safeguarded.		
I assure that I will keep the content of the focus group discussion confidential within the group.		
I understand that Shazre will take all possible steps to safeguard the participants from identification.		
I understand that only Shazre and her two supervisors will have access to the data collected for this research project.		
I agree that Shazre keeps the data very securely for academic purposes for five years.		
I understand that every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality but this cannot be guaranteed.		
I understand that the outcomes of the study will be available globally on the internet through the UOW Research Commons Database.		

Participant: _____

Researcher: _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5: Sample of a stimulated recall session

Me: So , you just had this post observation meeting so first of all tell me how did you feel before the session, before entering the office? You said you were “nervous.” Why?

L1: I was a bit nervous because I knew that there will be good points but there are bound to be some negative points as well, so it was more like how those points will be intimated [slightly falters] . . . conveyed to me because there could be awkward moments because I have been working here. I was questioning that how would they be addressed and what will be the way of giving the feedback. I also felt that since you were also there perhaps then he must have felt that there have to be some good as well as bad points. I was just anticipating. I am not saying that my lecture went perfectly but so yea. . .

Me: The good points and the bad points that he mentioned, were they quite similar to what you were expecting?

L1: Yes, somehow [laughing] I even discussed some of them with you before going inside his office. They were almost exactly the same!

Me: Yea [laughing] specially the one when he said that “why did you sit in the class.”

L1: [laughing] yea so I was expecting it all. I knew it all.

Me: ok, tell me I noticed that you were sitting like this [miming posture] Do you usually sit like this?

L1: I always sit like this in front of him because ‘He is Dr. ****!’ I have this that he is the Head, and I am Adjunct, and my contract is renewed every semester, so I am not on tenure or something. We have this difference.

Me: Did you like the way the feedback was delivered? First the good points were mentioned, and then the suggestions started to come and then some questions to ask you at the end.

L1: Yea, it wasn’t very critical or he was not being very censorious or that sort of a thing. He was mostly suggesting and that was a good point. And for the negative points he was mostly suggesting and he had toned them down. . . mitigated them.

Me: At one point I felt that the feedback session was not interactive. It was a one-way thing, more like a monologue.

L1: [interrupted and said] I was trying to make it an interactive session [laughing] and at one point I interrupted but he would not let me speak!

Me: Yea, so I have this point written here, so tell me what do you think?

L1: it was very difficult for me to interrupt and he wasn’t letting me say what I wanted to say. He was like overpowering the session.

[My office landline rings so we stop the interview for roughly 40 seconds.]

L1: [continuing] So, yea, it was more like a lecture and I wanted to say something from my part but it took me around like two minutes to say something. I suggested to him that I want to say something to him, but he was not letting me say anything [laughing]. He wanted to finish perhaps because he was going on and on or maybe he was not expecting me to say something. His was like, just sit here and listen.

Me: hmmm.

L1: even the last time it was like a monologue. He likes to overpower. So you know the point that I made in the focus group that the teachers perspective is important.

Me: When he questioned you about answering students' questions. He said, **"your answers were brief"** Was that the point where you wanted to say something?

L1: yea, I wanted to say like ok, I do answer students questions properly, but I was a bit more conscious of the fact that he was there, observing the class so yea. .

..

Me: With his hands going around in the air like this [miming] how did you feel?

L1: His domination was quite obvious from the very fact that I was sitting in his office, and he was in his chair and the position that he had and I was sitting opposite him, showed the job and the work that he was doing. Like he is giving me feedback and he had just observed me, so it was very much there. I am not surprised that it was reflected or translated to his feedback also.

Me: There was one point when he was asking you for some clarification. He questioned you **"why did you not give enough clarification to the students about certain terms?"** You perhaps did not reply to their queries and he felt that students were not convinced with your explanation so you should have gone into more detail.

L1: yea, he thought that I had not provided sufficient explanation to students' questions. They were still not clear and they were asking the difference between this and that so I did reply to their queries except that he felt that the students weren't convinced and my explanation should have been more detailed.

Me: so do you think the coordinator gave you enough room to support yourself here?

L1: I wanted to say that usually I am very friendly with the students and I am interactive, but since he was there, you were conscious of this fact. I was more on my toes kind of a thing. The questions were coming from nowhere. The questions were spontaneous ones and they were persistently asking. I was conscious that I have to move on with my lecture and handle their queries too, because I have to show him that I have covered all this. He had informed me that he would only observe me for 50 minutes and then leave, so I tried to at least show him the wholesome view of the lecture. I was using video too, so it was to show him that I use different material.

Me: One thing yea, the coordinator felt that the students were **"being conscious of the fact that the TA (teacher assistant) was there to mark their class participation"** Do you think that the students were conscious of the fact that <the convener> is also there to observe?

L1: the students are used to having the TA there in each and every class, but yea, yea, the students were very serious and usually they are not like that. They were very straight forward otherwise they interact and pass jokes with me.

Me: Ok, now let's come to the part where he started giving you suggestions. Could you tell me what was going through your mind at that time?

L1: I was anticipating like I said before. I was like, ok, let it come, let it come [laughing]. It was good to listen to the good points too. I felt happy about them and I felt appreciated there.

Me: And what about when he talked about **"sarcasm."** He questioned you on saying **"like I use sarcasm with you guys"** What was that?

L1: yea yea, I was like no I shouldn't have said this in class. So basically, I was teaching the students rhetorical devices so one of them was sarcasm and I said

'like I use sarcasm with you too'. So and then he was like why? So I think he didn't like why I use sarcasm with my students. He expects me to be reporting or something. I did explain that it's like light sarcasm [laughing].

Me: You explained yourself later about it, but tell me were you expecting that? I mean this comment.

L1: I thought about it 'should I say it or not?' just like a minute before saying it in my lecture but then I thought that this is my second semester and fourth year of teaching and if I am like that, let's be natural, so why fake up? Why be artificial? if he is there. I did think that if he has a problem with that and if he questions me, I will deal with it later but I just wanted to be honest in class with my students. Because last time I remember I was more prepared, more fake in the class. I was very straightforward in delivering the lecture. This time I just wanted to keep it real. Probably because this time I was more at ease, as this was my second time of being observed in this institute and now I have relatively more experience as compared to the last time. So I was like, 'I'll see if this will be an issue, I don't really care'. I don't think that it was a big issue and I think he misinterpreted it and made a big deal out of it. Maybe he thought of sarcasm in a negative way.

Me: Yea, maybe he took the literal meaning of sarcasm.

L1: For example, students give me some tardy work or they are very late in class and they are often absent so I would just make a sarcastic comment on them being so frequently absent.

Me: Hmmm.

L1: that is the point I made earlier because with just one observation, you do not get the whole picture or the context of a teacher's teaching style or attitude so either have two three observations in a semester, but I don't know if they have the resources and the time to do this. Perhaps we should have someone else, people from the quality assurance department.

Me: hmmm, yea maybe, maybe . . .

Tell me more about your feelings during the session?

L1: like I said I was more relaxed this time from the very beginning. I was like whatever it is I will just handle it, but yea there was this pressure to . . . to . . . to not really err though it is impossible. I don't really know from his point of view how would he like it because at the end of the day I think it is all very subjective in the sense that how he views it, how the students view it. And it depends on the relationship that I have built with my students, have I provided them with enough space, friendly environment in the sense that they take my sarcasm in a friendly way. Have I built that relationship? Sarcasm coming from a strict teacher would be different and I am not strict.

Me: Overall, how would you describe this session?

L1: there are more of the positive points than less of the negative points. Aaah, not enjoyable [laughing] I felt like going back to school and visiting the principal's office. And I have to sit and listen just do 'Yes Sir!'

Me : Anything you'd want to talk about your observation. Like during the observation time, how you felt or anything.

L1: I was not at ease. I do not know if it is my personal reason or his, maybe both and also the kind of information and that the kind of lecture that I was getting and the very nature of it was intimidating so. . . yea.

Me: . . . hmm ok. Thank you.

Appendix 6: Sample of a completed narrative frame

On the whole I find peer observations to be more or less useful because I can get feedback regarding my teaching methods. Peers can point out weaknesses that I would not have noticed myself.

Recently I experienced peer observation and the participants in the activity were the Head of Department.

Before the observation I felt nervous and anxious.

During the observation I felt worried that students might not respond enough.

During the post observation meeting I felt relaxed.

After the peer observation I felt relieved but curious about how it went.

The feedback I received was largely positive.

I found it a positive experience because I learnt how I could improve my style and I was commended for my methods and content.

As a result I changed one thing about my style.

On the other hand, the drawbacks of the activity were that the students became conscious and reserved during class.

As a result they did not participate as much as they usually do.

In general peer observation could be formative when peer observation is done a couple of times during the semester.

In general peer observation could be summative when it is done only once in semester.

My experience of peer observation was formative and summative because it was done only once but it helped me improve my style during the semester.

This practice could be made more effective by doing it at pre-decided times during the semester.

In general peer observation is an effective means to assess teachers because they can't observe their own style while teaching so it is useful to have someone else observe and provide feedback.

Appendix 7: Timeline of data collection procedures

<p>Formal meetings with the HoD, Dean, and Convener.</p> <p>August 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Met the HoD to discuss her participation in the research in detail. I was informed during this meeting that HoD does not observe any lessons and in any case, to conduct my research I need to take the Dean’s permission. - Met the Dean, explained him my research project and he supported and agreed to my research plans however; he claimed that there is no official model of peer observation that they are currently following. Hence he recommended me to come up with an effective model that aligns with teacher’s thinking. - Over Skype meeting with supervisors, figured out the options to change my research plans. - Then, one day, I found the Dean and HoD together outside the academic block so met them casually. They informed me that the convener of the English Stream probably does review teachers through peer observation once a semester so I could ask the coordinator for further details. Therefore, I scheduled a meeting with the convener. - Met the convener and he explained the peer observation model that he follows. I shared my research project with him and he supported it. - Later, formalised the convener’s consent during a short meeting with him in his office.
<p>Beginning-of-semester staff meeting</p> <p>September 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessed teachers during one of the beginning-of-semester staff meeting and, orally explained to them about the research, distributed the information letters and invited the teachers to the subsequent special meeting. - Reminded about the special meeting over e-mail and also attached a copy of the information letters.
<p>Special meeting Questionnaire</p> <p>Follow-up meetings with teachers</p> <p>Individual formal meeting with teachers</p> <p>September 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explained the research project in detail, asked the teachers to complete the questionnaire and sought potential teacher participants’ expression of interest by asking them to write their name and contact details on a piece of paper, if they wish to participate further in the research. Three teachers turned up and all three agreed to participate in my research. During the special meeting the teachers were also asked to complete the questionnaire - Some teachers were not able to attend the

	<p>special meeting so they requested to schedule a meeting with them later via e-mail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducted Follow-up meetings with these teachers in their offices and covered everything that was done in the special meeting. Out of these, three teachers showed their expression of interest to participate further in the research project. - Later met <u>six</u> teachers (who showed their expression of interest) individually in their offices, during their offices hours, and formalised their consents. - Confirmed <u>six</u> teacher participants to participate in my research project.
<p>Focus group discussions October 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducted two focus group, each comprising three teacher participants. - Wrote summaries and got them validated.
<p>Audit post-observation meetings Stimulated recall sessions November 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audited six post-observation meetings and wrote field notes during the meeting. - Side by side also followed up these post-observation meetings with a stimulated recall session with the teacher participants. - Conducted six stimulated recall sessions.
<p>Interviews Collecting documents December 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducted six interviews with teacher participants. - Conducted an interview with the Convener. (This interview was not audio recorded so made field notes.) - Wrote summaries (with key extracts) of these interviews and got them validated. - Tried to locate any official documents relevant to my research. - Met and then interviewed one of the representative of the HSS School as the member of the Quality Assurance Committee.
<p>Narrative frames March/ April 2017 (The frame was e-mailed from New Zealand)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emailed the frame in a Word doc. to the participants - People involved: the six teacher participants completed it individually. - Time to complete the narrative frame and send it back: 3 weeks. Took teachers actually 6 weeks

Appendix 8: Copy of information letter to the lecturers

Dear respected teacher,

I am writing to invite you to participate in my PhD project and I would appreciate your interest and participation in my research.

The title of my project is “Rethinking formative assessment through peer observation and reflection: A case study of the beliefs and practices of Pakistani lecturers.” Through this study, I intend to explore continuing professional learning through peer observation and reflection as it can help teachers to be aware of their thinking behind the practices of their teaching style.

By examining peer observation, I hope to construct and provide the teachers and the institute with an enhanced understanding of effective peer observation practices that support professional learning. I would be grateful if you agree to participate in my research and data collection in the following ways:

Phase 1 of the research: This phase requires the maximum number of language teachers to participate.

- Special meeting: you will be invited for a special meeting in September 2016 to discuss the research project in detail and to fill in a questionnaire that is explained below.
- Questionnaire: In the special meeting I will be distributing a questionnaire, which will entail a variety of closed ended questions: fill-ins, multiple choice questions and likert scale statements, and a couple of open-ended questions. If you come to this meeting I am assuming that you are agreeing to fill in the questionnaire. However, you may not wish to participate further in the research. You will be requested to complete the questionnaire during the meeting and the whole meeting will not take longer than 30 minutes (approximately 10 - 15 minutes for explanation and 10-15 for completing the questionnaire). Completion of the questionnaire comprises phase 1 of the research. At the end of the special meeting if you wish to participate further in the research, Phase 2, I would like you to leave your expression of interest i.e. name and contact details on a piece of paper.

Phase 2 of the research: This phase requires four to six participants.

- Individual formal meeting: After the special meeting and having your contact details, I will follow up with you via e-mail for an individual formal meeting in your office to formalize your consent through signing a consent form. During this meeting, you may ask any question or for further clarification.
- Focus group discussions: You will then be invited to take part in a focus group discussion in October 2016, in which you will follow a list of prompts that will be facilitated by me. You will be invited to discuss the pertinent topics and issues with other teachers. The discussion will take approximately 45 minutes and it will be audio-recorded with a digital recorder. A summary of the discussion will be provided to you to check that it is an accurate record and you may make any corrections. The focus group discussion will take place in one of your offices at the university or if you wish I can arrange it outside the campus. Due to the varied number of people participating in this discussion, withdrawing from information obtained from you during this discussion will not be possible even if you later wish to decline. However, the information will be kept anonymous.
- Audit the post observation meeting: In November 2016, I will be present in an inconspicuous spot during the post observation meeting so I could make field notes so I can capture the key aspects of the process of the peer observation that you follow. A neat copy of the field notes of the post observation meetings will be sent to you to check that it is an accurate record and you may make any corrections.
- Stimulated recall session: Then, I will invite you for a stimulated recall session and the stimuli will be from the field notes and general observation of the post observation meetings. According to your convenience, this session will take place as soon as possible after the peer observation. It will take 20 to 25 minutes and this session will be audio- recorded with a digital recorder subject to your consent. I will provide you with a transcription of this session to check that it is an accurate record and you may make any corrections.
- Interview: In December 2016, you will be invited for an individual, face-to-face interview with me, which will approximately take 30 to 40 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded and I will provide you with a summary and some key extracts of the interview to check that it is an accurate record and you may wish to make any corrections.
- Narrative frame: Lastly, you will be asked to write within a narrative frame that will be based on your next experience of evaluative peer observation. To facilitate your writing and critical thinking skills the frame will provide assistance and direction to structure the narrative frame's content. The frame of the narrative will be emailed to you as a Word doc attachment in March 2017 with a reasonable deadline of three weeks to complete it and send it back.

The whole procedure to collect my data will be spread over seven months, from August 2016 to February 2017. I assure you that this research will adhere strictly to the University of Waikato's Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Rights of the

participants of this study in terms of privacy and anonymity will be fully respected during and after the research.

All the data collected will be used only for the purpose of this thesis and only my supervisors and myself will be privy to the information collected. The institute and participants will be given pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. I assure that I will endeavour to maintain your confidentiality and anonymity. Any information gathered from you will not be disclosed to anyone and your identity will not be revealed.

I will keep transcriptions of the recordings for five years for academic evaluation and review but will treat them with the strictest confidentiality. Afterwards, notes, documents will be destroyed and recordings will be erased. No names will be used in my PhD research or in any publication or conference presentations.

Moreover, your participation in this research is totally voluntary and if you wish to participate but later decide to withdraw, you have full right to do so until the checking of the transcriptions, without having to state any reason. You can refuse to answer any question and may also ask any question during the participation in this research. You will also have access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded as my thesis will be available globally on the internet on the University of Waikato Research Commons.

I shall conduct this research in such a manner that does not affect you or the institute's routine work in any way.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact me via email on [xxxx](#) or by cell phone number on xxxxx. You may also contact my chief supervisor, Dr. Rosemary De Luca via email on [xxxx](#) or my co-supervisor, Dr. Roger Barnard on xxxx.

Sincerely,

Shazre Sarfraz

Appendix 9: Focal points

1. Assessment of teachers
2. Professional learning of teachers
3. Classroom/ peer observation
4. Role of feedback
5. Role of observational learning
6. Suggestions for effective classroom/peer observations

Appendix 10: Sample interview questions

1. What is your understanding and beliefs about peer observation of teaching?
2. What are the sources of these beliefs? ^[1]_[SEPP]
3. How do you feel about peer observation of teaching in your context?
Explain.
4. What is the procedure of peer observation in your context?
5. What do you like about it and how does it benefit you?
6. What do you think are the possible issues linked to it? How do you think the respective authorities can overcome them?

Appendix 11: Sample of research journal notes

According to plan

August 2016

- Had formal meetings with the two respective HODs to formalize their consent.

September 2016

- Accessed teachers during one of the beginning-of-semester staff meetings and, orally explained to them about the research, distributed the information letters and invited the teachers to a subsequent special meeting.
- Reminded about the special meeting over e-mail and also attached a copy of the information letters in the e-mail.
- During the Special meeting, explained to teachers about the research project in detail, asked the teachers to complete the questionnaire and sought potential teacher participants' expression of interest by asking them to write their name and contact details on a piece of paper, if they wish to participate further in the research. Three teachers attended the special meeting and all three agreed to participate in my research. During the special meeting the teachers also completed the questionnaire.
- Later met six teachers (who showed their expression of interest) individually in their offices, during their offices hours, and formalized their consents. So, by now I confirmed 6 teacher participants to participate in my research project.

October 2016

- Conducted two focus group discussions, each comprising three teacher participants.
- Wrote summaries with key extracts and got them validated.
- Tried to locate any official documents relevant to my research.

November 2016

- Audited 6 post observation meetings, each meeting were between the coordinator and a teacher participant and wrote field notes during the meetings.
- Side by side also followed up these post observation meetings with a stimulated recall session with the teacher participants. Conducted 6 stimulated recall sessions.
- Wrote summary of two stimulated recall sessions and got them validated.

December 2016

- Conducted 5 interviews with teacher participants.
- Conducted an interview with the Coordinator. (This interview was not audio recorded so made field notes.)
- Wrote summaries (with key extracts) of these interviews and got them validated.
- Located a few official documents relevant to my research.

Appendix 12: Sample of field notes

Post-observation meeting #1

Auditing. .	A post-observation meeting at the Writing and Commination stream, HSS School, ALI.
Meeting between. .	A lecturer participant and convener
Location	Convener's office, HSS new wing, Academic block, ALI
Audited by	Shazre Sarfraz
Purpose to audit	To observe and audit a post-observation meeting and then make field notes while auditing that would act as a stimulus for a stimulated recall session with the respective lecturer participant.
People involved	Lecturer participant, convener, researcher
Material used to write field notes	Note pad and a pencil
Time spent	Approximately 12 minutes
Purpose of post-observation meeting	The convener provides feedback to the observed lecturer.
Seating	Face-to-face between the lecturer and convener and the researcher sat in an inconspicuous spot in the corner of the room.
Atmosphere	Comfortable yet restless

Body language	Convener's: Straight and reserve Lecturer's: Anxious and restless
Sitting postures	Convener's: upfront Lecturers: bent with a hunchback with hand and legs both crossed.
Materials referred	Slides used by the lecturer
Feedback pattern	Structural: starting off with good points, some suggestions, and then some questions to ask.
Feedback delivery style	90% monologue
Coordinator's feedback delivery	Spoke equally for good and areas of improvement and mitigated the weak points.
Coordinator's voice quality	Clear, assertive and overpowering
Main points mentioned	- Answer students' questions in more detail. - Conveying the meaning of the rhetorical device "sarcasm."
Question/s raised	Why were you sitting most of the time while teaching?