

<http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/>

Research Commons at the University of Waikato

Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

**AN INTEGRATION OF A PROCESS APPROACH AND FORMATIVE
ASSESSMENT INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING OF
ESL WRITING IN A MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY: A SOCIOCULTURAL
PERSPECTIVE**

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics

at

The University of Waikato

by

ZUWATI HASIM



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2014

STATEMENT OF INTELLECTUAL OWNERSHIP

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

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

Date: 12August 2014

ABSTRACT

A review of relevant literature indicates that assessment of students' academic writing needs to include formative as well as summative feedback, especially when process approaches to the teaching of writing are adopted. However, in Malaysia, assessment is perceived as mainly for grading purposes and the teaching and learning of academic writing are firmly based on a product approach. The present study took the form of a collaborative action research project intended to consider the extent to which elements of process writing and formative assessment could be introduced, from a sociocultural perspective, into the normal classrooms of two Malaysian ESL teachers and 48 learners at a selected Malaysian university.

This project was carried out in three phases. Phase 1 gathered documentary and interview data on current issues pertaining to ESL writing assessment practices in Malaysian tertiary classrooms. Phase 2 was carried out through two action research cycles during which a formative assessment intervention was introduced in classroom teaching. Interviews in Phase 3 were conducted to discover the immediate and long-term impacts of this action research project on teachers' beliefs and subsequent pedagogical and learning development. The data from documents, interviews, classroom observations, briefing and feedback sessions were subjected to a process of grounded analysis. From the analysis, categories and themes were generated and structured to address the research questions formulated for this research.

The present study suggests that process writing is more meaningful to the learners when formative assessment is incorporated into the teaching of ESL writing. It allows more opportunities for ESL learners to gain feedback and feed forward from both teachers and peers. Through feedback and feed forward, learners were given an opportunity to develop their understanding based not only on their previous mistakes but also on the new input to improve their writing. In addition, the use of feedback and feed forward helped both teachers and learners learn to view assessment in a positive way. However, it was evident that any intention to integrate curricular innovations, such as formative assessment and process writing, must acknowledge the institutional and sociocultural contexts of the participants, and thus be tailored to fit in with normal pedagogical activity.

The findings of this study were viewed through the lens of sociocultural theory. By interpreting the implications of the study in terms of mediation, scaffolding and regulation, the basic construct of a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was refined to formulate a specific *zone of writing development* (zwd). This is intended to shed light on the actual means by which learners can be enabled to perform written tasks with structured guidance so that they can eventually do similar tasks without assistance.

The overall results of this study contribute to the contemporary debates in Malaysia about alternatives to current assessment practice. Closing the gap between teaching and assessment, through the integration of formative assessment and process writing, within a basically product approach, is intended to be the main contribution of this research. The study makes a contribution to the areas of both writing instruction and writing research. Blending the existing practices with

elements of process writing and formative assessment highlights the usefulness of peer review activity within a ZPD through the practice of scaffolding. Also, this study adds to the importance of doing action research collaboratively and in a collegial manner, with a longitudinal perspective. Although the setting of the research was in Malaysia, the findings of the study could provide guidelines for research elsewhere, the collaborative approach to action research applied in other contexts, and appropriate modification of the ZPD (in this case, a zwd) could be applied to enhance the teaching of other skills.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis has been a long journey of learning and I am indebted to the many people who have supported me along the way in various manners. Hence, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and profound appreciation to the following individuals and organisations.

First of all, my full appreciation goes to my supervisors Associate Professor Dr Roger Barnard and Dr Rosemary De Luca, who have patiently and continuously supported, challenged, and encouraged me throughout the study.

To Associate Professor Dr Beverley Bell, who was there to assist me with my research and ethics proposals during my early years of PhD study, I really appreciate your kind support and feedback.

Also, thank you to the Malaysia Ministry of Higher Education and the University of Malaya for the study leave and the financial support to complete my study at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

My deepest gratitude goes to the participants of my research for their willingness to participate in the research. For the two teachers who collaboratively participated in my research, thanks for your patience and ideas contributed.

To my beloved family – my husband: Khairul Nizam, my children: Amyra Izzati, Arif Danial, Amily Izzati, and Aisyah Safiya, my parents and parents-in-law – there are no words which could describe my appreciation of what you have sacrificed throughout my study years. Thank you so much for believing in me and for going over the many hurdles with me.

Finally, my gratitude goes to all my friends:

Dr Che Hashim Hassan, Hyeseung Jeong, Junaidah Januin, Dr Jonathan Banks, Sonja Van Alphen, Dr Viet Nguyen, Dr Patricia Rodie, Dr Yusmini Yusof, Dr Abdul Razak Zakaria, Shira Yaakob, Fariza Rusly, Rina Razak, Azila Adnan, TESL V mates of PPP/ITM-UKM and many others for their words of encouragement, help and support, in many ways.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT OF INTELLECTUAL OWNERSHIP	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Focus of the Study	2
1.1.1 Context of the Study	4
1.1.2 Instruction and assessment in the Malaysian education system	6
1.2 Statement of Problem	11
1.3 Research Objectives	14
1.4 Definition of Terms	14
1.4.1 English as a second language (ESL)	14
1.4.2 Sociocultural perspective	15
1.4.3 Language proficiency	15
1.4.4 Formative assessment	15
1.4.5 Intervention	15
1.4.6 Higher-learning institution	15
1.5 Overall Structure of the Thesis	16

CHAPTER 2	17
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	17
2. Introduction.....	17
2.1 Education in Malaysia.....	18
2.1.1 Unity building through <i>Bahasa Malaysia</i> as a medium of instruction	19
2.1.2 English language and its status in Malaysia	22
2.1.3 Importance of English language education in Malaysia	24
2.1.4 English language and the demand for it at the Malaysian higher learning institutions.....	27
2.2 Approaches to the Teaching of English as a Second Language in Malaysia.....	31
2.3 ESL Writing Instruction and Culture	34
2.3.1 Approaches to the teaching of writing	39
2.3.2 Studies on ESL writing in Malaysia	48
2.4 What is Assessment?.....	49
2.4.1 The roles of assessment	50
2.4.2 Assessment for formative purposes	51
2.4.3 Assessment for summative purposes	54
2.4.4 Assessment in Malaysia: a shift of paradigm.....	57
2.4.5 Assessing writing	59
2.5 Feedback in ESL Writing Classrooms	61
2.5.1 Summative and formative feedback.....	61
2.5.2 Peer review and peer feedback in ESL writing classrooms	63

2.6 Research into Teachers' Beliefs and Pedagogical Practices	65
2.7 Sociocultural Theory: Its Relevance to Malaysian ESL Contexts	71
2.7.1 Vygotsky and his developmental approach	72
2.7.2 Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and its relevance to ESL writing classrooms	73
2.7.3 Zone of Proximal Development	76
2.8 ESL Formative Writing Assessment in Malaysia and ZPD: Expanding the Construct.....	82
2.9 Summary.....	84
2.10 Research Questions	85
CHAPTER 3	87
METHODOLOGY	87
3. Introduction	87
3.1 Interpretive Paradigm	88
3.2 Action Research as a Methodological Approach	91
3.2.1 Collaborative action research	93
3.2.2 Adapting a model of action research	96
3.3 Research Design	98
3.3.1 Setting.....	98
3.3.2 Participants in the study	99
3.3.3 Action research procedure.....	103
3.4 Research and Data Collection Procedures.....	116

3.4.1 Access to participants and ethical considerations	116
3.4.2 Data collection process	117
3.5 Data Analysis	122
3.5.1 Thematic analysis of qualitative data	123
3.5.2 Grounded analysis approach	123
3.5.3 Analysis of survey data	125
3.6 Warrants/Trustworthiness in qualitative research	126
3.7 Summary	127
CHAPTER 4	129
FINDINGS	129
4. Introduction	129
4.1 Intervention: Phase 1 Findings	130
4.1.1 Issues in ESL writing pedagogical practice	131
4.1.2 Issues in the ESL writing process	138
4.1.3 Issues in ESL writing assessment	152
4.1.4 Summary of Phase 1 findings	163
4.2 Intervention: Phase 2 Findings	165
4.2.1 The writing intervention	166
4.2.2 Scaffolding the students' writing	169
4.2.3 Briefing sessions	171
4.2.4 Pedagogical practice	172

4.2.5 Learning development as indicated in the students' written work	188
4.2.6 Task feasibility and acceptance	198
4.2.7 Summary of Phase 2 findings.....	201
4.3 Intervention: Phase 3 Findings	204
4.3.1 Immediate impact of intervention on students	205
4.3.2 Immediate impact of intervention on teachers	211
4.3.3 Development in teachers' pedagogical practice over time.....	214
4.3.4 Summary of Phase 3 findings.....	224
4.4 Summary.....	226
CHAPTER 5	230
DISCUSSION.....	230
5. Introduction	230
5.1 Overview of the Findings	231
5.2 ESL Writing Teachers' Pre-intervention Conceptions of ESL Writing Pedagogy	234
5.2.1 Teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice relationship	235
5.2.2 Main factors affecting teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice.....	244
5.2.3 Teachers' conceptions of writing assessment	246
5.2.4 Teachers' knowledge of and attitudes towards assessment.....	248
5.3 Development of a Writing Pedagogy: the Inclusion of Process Writing and Formative Assessment.....	250
5.3.1 Evidence of change in ESL writing teachers' pedagogical practice	251

5.3.2 Evidence of development in students' writing.....	255
5.3.3 Evidence of change in teachers' conception of ESL writing pedagogical practice	258
5.4 Immediate and Long-term Impacts of the Writing Intervention	262
5.4.1 Immediate impacts of formative assessment and process writing intervention	263
5.4.2 Long-term impacts of the writing intervention on teacher's beliefs and practice	267
5.5 Understanding the Findings through Sociocultural Perspective	270
5.6 Summary of discussion	283
CHAPTER 6	285
CONCLUSION	285
6. Introduction	285
6.1 An overview of the study	285
6.2 A Summary of the key findings	287
6.3 Limitations of the present study	290
6.4 Implications of the present study	292
6.4.1 Implications for teachers	292
6.4.2 Implications for teacher educators	293
6.4.3 Implications for policy makers	294
6.4.4 Theoretical implications.....	295
6.5 Suggestions for further research.....	297

6.6 Final Statement.....	299
References	301
APPENDICES	327

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Four key elements in Vygotsky's ZPD	77
Figure 3.1: The action research processes adapted from McNiff and Whitehead's (2000) action research stages	97
Figure 3.2: Diagram for Phase 2 of action research.....	108
Figure 5.1: A diagram of activity for creating a ZPD	271
Figure 5.2: ZPD in the present study	271
Figure 5.3: A zone of writing development for promoting ESL students' learning	274
Figure 5.4: System for ESL writing that integrates formative assessment	276
Figure 5.5: The concept of zwd within the ZPD	278

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: A comparison of product and process approaches to writing	46
Table 3.1: Distribution of students according to writing group, teacher and gender	101
Table 3.2: A framework for the action research procedure and data collection..	105
Table 3.3: A summary of documents collected in phase 2 of the action research study	110
Table 3.4: A summary of observations made according to writing group and research cycles.....	112
Table 3.5: A summary of data collection sources relevant to each research objective	115
Table 4.1: LCM4000 Marking Scheme.....	132
Table 4.2: Timed in-class writing procedures indicated for LCM4000 course...	140
Table 4.3: A summary of the timed in-class writing procedures as described by the ESL writing teachers	144
Table 4.4: LCM4000 Assessment schedule	159
Table 4.5: Unit of work and formative assessment tasks	167
Table 4.6: A summary of formative assessment and process-product writing procedures.....	168
Table 4.7: Top three students' and bottom three students' essay scores.....	189
Table 4.8: Students' responses on feedback received from teachers	205
Table 4.9: Students' responses on peer collaboration and feedback.....	206
Table 4.10: Students' perceptions of the ESL writing intervention and their learning development	208

Table 4.11: Students' perceptions of writing intervention.....	209
Table 4.12: Collaboration among students.....	210

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Document analysis protocol.....	327
Appendix B: Interview schedule	329
Appendix C: Briefing and Discussion guide	330
Appendix D: Observation checklist.....	331
Appendix E: Survey questionnaire	334
Appendix F: Follow-up interview guide	343
Appendix G: Letter of invitation	344
Appendix H: Guidelines for blog access	345
Appendix I: Course schedule/ scheme of work	349
Appendix J: Course outline	352
Appendix K: In-class timed essay procedure	356
Appendix L: Marking scheme	360
Appendix M: Model texts.....	362
Appendix N: Researcher developed peer-review checklist.....	364
Appendix O: Band marking scheme.....	367
Appendix P: Ethics Approval.....	369
Appendix Q: Approval to conduct research in Malaysia	370
Appendix R: Student's consent form	372
Appendix S: A sample of peer-review in Cycle 1	373
Appendix T: A sample of peer-review in Cycle 2.....	376
Appendix U: A sample of writig outline	379
Appendix V: A sample of student's essay.....	381

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

My research, informed by sociocultural theory, is to investigate how formative assessment and process-product approaches to writing could be integrated into the teaching and learning of ESL writing from a sociocultural perspective. Having been an English language teacher for six years and a teacher trainer for another six years at several Malaysian institutions of higher-learning, I have noticed that although assessment should serve several purposes (Antón, 2009; Black & Wiliam, 2003; Bloom, 1968; Garfield, 1994), in Malaysia it is primarily used for summative rather than formative purposes. The long-established national standardized assessment for pupils in primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary schools has had a significant impact on their learning styles and behaviour. The impact has influenced the nature of subsequent university teaching and the way assessment is conducted and perceived to suit a certain set of standards (Lee, Hazita, & Koo, 2010).

Based on my teaching experience, I have concluded that teaching and assessment in the Malaysian educational setting are seen as separate entities, where assessment is always conducted to grade and report on the learners' achievement (Barnett, 2007; Garfield, 1994; Lee et al., 2010). This has indirectly developed a culture of teaching to the test, in which most attention is given to preparing the learners for accuracy on the test and achieving good grades (Hamp-Lyons, 2003).

Unfortunately, such a culture ignores the important formative role assessment can have in the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 2003; Shepard, 2000).

While some parts of the world have benefited from using assessment to inform pedagogical practices and as an important part of the learning process (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003; Wilson & Sloane, 2000), Malaysia is still looking for ways to incorporate assessment into the education system to make it less examination-oriented and more useful for teaching and learning. A call for assessment reform was made in 2007 by the Malaysia Ministry of Education and Malaysia Examination Syndicate at the International Forum of Educational Assessment System, Petaling Jaya. At that forum, several issues on assessment quality were raised, one of which was the need to develop assessment as a tool for “raising the teaching and learning practices” (Malaysia Ministry of Education & Malaysia Examination Syndicate, 2007, p. 3). As one of the participants invited to the forum, I was motivated by this initiative to find and develop ways to promote a shift in the Malaysian assessment system.

1.1 Focus of the Study

The focus of my research is on the integration of process-product approaches (see Section 2.3.1.1, Section 2.3.1.2, and Section 2.3.1.3) and elements of formative assessment in the teaching and learning of English as a second language (ESL) in the writing classroom at tertiary level. This was explored from a sociocultural perspective whereby learning and a change in practice are viewed as a developmental social process.

Assessment in general has two main purposes: formative and summative purposes. Formative assessment gives emphasis on the process of learning where the aim is to improve teaching and learning through its continuous use (see Section 2.4.2) while summative assessment focuses on the product whereby the main aim is for grading purposes and it is conducted at the end of semester or a course (see Section 2.4.3).

The focus of this research is in line with my academic background, teaching experience and research interests. Additionally, I am interested in expanding English language competency among learners at Malaysian higher institutions and believe that expanding and improving ESL competency could be achieved through such integration. As a teacher educator, I also would like to explore the use of formative assessment and how it could be integrated into the existing educational system in ways that would be useful for teacher training purposes. Hence, the main purpose of this study is to understand and further explore ways of integrating formative assessment and process-product approaches, specifically at tertiary level, into the teaching and learning of ESL writing and to investigate how the integration of formative assessment could promote positive assessment reform, influence pedagogical change, and promote learning from a sociocultural perspective through the concepts of scaffolding, mediation, and regulation.

This research was conducted through collaborative action research with two ESL teacher participants at a higher-learning institution in Malaysia. To address the unique needs of culturally pluralistic Malaysian learners, it is crucial to explore and investigate the use of formative assessment in the ESL writing classrooms from a sociocultural perspective that acknowledges individual difference in learning within a certain sociocultural context.

This study was carried out in three phases to achieve its objectives. The first phase involved obtaining a description of the ESL writing assessment in practice according to curriculum documents and interviews with the teacher participants. The second phase of the study explored the actual changes and challenges in the pedagogical and learning process by integrating a researcher-developed intervention in the first cycle of the action research. Subsequently, in the second cycle, the intervention was modified through the collaboration between the researcher and two teachers, to integrate a process-product pedagogical approach and formative assessment into the existing ESL writing pedagogical practice. The focus was specifically on peer review activity and feedback on students' draft writing. The third phase of the study focused on evaluating the immediate impact of the intervention on the students and the long-term impact on the teachers. The findings of this could have given implications for pedagogy and policy-making elsewhere.

1.1.1 Context of the Study

Language is commonly used as a tool for nation building and is seen as a symbolic tool for political, social, educational and economic events among policy makers (Shohamy, 2006). For instance, as a multilingual society, Malaysia promoted the Malay language – *Bahasa Malaysia* – as its national and official language when it achieved its independence in 1957 (International Labour Organization, 2006). This was the founding government's initiative to unite the population (Alis, 2006). The Malay language was chosen because it was an informal lingua franca, which was widely used as the language for communication between different ethnic communities in the region (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997),

and “an important language of administration and diplomacy in the Malay archipelago” (Asmah, 1997, p. 15). At the time, education was the most effective channel through which to establish the Malay language for national identity and integration among Malaysians (Ongkili, 1985).

After Malaysia achieved its independence in 1957, education in Malaysia changed substantially in relation to the national language policy (a further description of the development of education in Malaysia and its language policy is presented in Chapter 2). Today, although the Malay language has been long established as the national language and as the medium of instruction in public schools, colleges, and universities, English is widely used for communication.

Due to increasing social needs and global demands, the importance of the English language has been strongly emphasized in Malaysian schools and universities (Akiko, 2003; Annie & Hamali, 2006; Baskaran, 2002; Foo & Richards, 2004; Hanapiah, 2002; Jalaluddin, Awal, & Bakar, 2008; Mandal, 2000; MOHE, 2007b; Murugesan, 2003; Puteh, Daud, Mahmood, & Azli, 2009). Hence, English remains a core subject in both primary and secondary schools and in a large number of English language proficiency courses offered at the local higher learning institutions (Economic Planning Unit, 2006; MOHE, 2007b; Nunan, 2003).

The emphasis on the teaching of English language skills in schools is becoming obvious when competency in English is made one of the pre-requisites for students to enrol into particular degree courses or programmes at higher learning institutions (www.portal.mohe.gov.my, 2010a). For example, admission to a bachelor’s degree in Law at the University of Malaya requires that a candidate

pass at least four subjects with distinction, including English, in the Malaysia Certificate of Education examination (MCE/SPM) (www.um.edu.my, 2010; www.upu.mohe.gov.my, 2010).

The importance of English in the Malaysian education system is further shown by the establishment of the Malaysian University English Test (MUET), in addition to other academic qualifications, for the purpose of selecting and placing students into specified degree programs (www.portal.mohe.gov.my, 2010b). The government circular disseminated on October 15, 2010, published by the Admission Unit of Malaysia Ministry of Higher Learning (UPU) states that the minimum general admission requirement to local universities is a pass in the Malaysia Certificate of Education examination (MCE) or widely known as *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM), with a distinction in the Malay language and at least Band 1 in MUET (MOHE, 2010).

1.1.2 Instruction and assessment in the Malaysian education system

There are several factors that contribute to the varying levels of competence in the use of the English language by Malaysian learners. The first factor is the national language and educational policy that emphasizes the use of the Malay language as the national language. For some, the policy has somehow demoted the use of the English language by limiting the opportunities to use the language for learning and communication (Murugesan, 2003; Norrizan, 1992).

Secondly, much emphasis has been placed on gaining academic skills in the core subjects and in my experience, very little emphasis is given to continuous assessment of English for communication and language skills within the core

subjects. Although students sometimes need to make presentations using the English language in their core-subject classes, the focus of assessment is primarily on the content rather than on language and communication skills. This has caused learners and teachers to pay less attention to language performance. Hence, it is unsurprising to see a majority of students excel academically in their subject matter while being unable to communicate well, especially in the second language, English.

Thirdly, learners tend to see teachers or lecturers as the sole source of information, which is detrimental to language learning because it contributes to one-way communication that leads to an educational culture of dependent learning, passive involvement from the learners and reduced classroom interaction. Gosling and Moon (2001) argue that such a transmission style of teaching makes it difficult for teachers to identify what learners are able to do or have accomplished as a result of the classroom teaching.

This situation of teacher dominance or teacher-centeredness appears not only in Malaysia but also in other parts of the world. A study conducted by Xie (2008) at a Chinese university, for example, indicates that teacher dominance is a factor in the learners' poor performance because teachers tend to focus on the delivery and assessment of knowledge rather than on developing collaborative work with and between their learners. In the United Kingdom, Wingate (2007) concludes that many university teachers fall into the teacher-centeredness category, in which they believe their role "...is delivering knowledge, not supporting student learning" (p. 396). This belief has caused a gap, especially in dealing with how students learn and to what extent teaching has effectively taken place. This situation is quite pertinent to Malaysia. Thus, although teaching is taking place, little attention is

given to the learning progress of the students since teaching is generally done for summative evaluation purposes.

The current assessment system in Malaysia also limits the development of English language competence. The emphasis on summative evaluation and examination-oriented teaching has led in many contexts to a culture of teaching and learning for the test (Hamp-Lyons, 2003). Similar to teacher-centeredness, examination-oriented teaching has often resulted in learners simply memorizing material and then reproducing what they have learned. Some reported that grades correlate with the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Biggs, 2001; Ebel, 1980; Ume & Nworgu, 1997) but I would argue otherwise as, in my experience, learners in teacher-centred classrooms are usually passive recipients where they tend to absorb and then restate all of the information received when assessed. Being able to reproduce information learnt from a particular course subject, and achieve high scores in some cases, does not indicate that learning has taken place. Grades alone would not be an effective yardstick to evaluate effective teaching and learning (Ume & Nworgu, 1997).

Assessment in Malaysia is primarily summative or continuously summative (which is sometimes mistaken for formative assessment, a distinction discussed in Section 2.5) and quantitative in nature, both in schools and at the tertiary level. Little emphasis is given to the process of acquiring and using the English language effectively. Hence, language is not successfully acquired but is basically learnt in a structured way solely to pass the examinations. Consequently, the majority of the students learn by rote, memorizing rules, and are unable to use what they have learnt. More than twenty years ago, Ballantyne (1989) said that “memorization, recitation, and regurgitation are the key elements

of the learning experience for most university students around the world. Examinations are given at the end of the courses, school years, or college programs, and sometimes on all three occasions” (p. 296). His claim is indeed still relevant, at least in Malaysia.

Education in Malaysia is a dynamic process, but little actual change to its assessment practice has been evident in the last twenty years (Asraf & Ponnudurai, 2008; Economic Planning Unit, 2006; Priya, 2010). However, according to Yaacob, Nor, and Azman (2005):

Malaysia intends to transform its educational system, moving away from memory-based learning designed for the average student to an education that stimulates thinking, creativity, and caring in all students, caters to individual abilities and learning styles, and is based on more equitable access. (p. 18)

To achieve this transformation, there must be a shift in the way assessment is viewed and administered. The focus of assessment should not be limited to the end of year or end of semester examination, but should be seen as a continuous process that allows both assessing for learning and assessing of learning to take place.

Recognizing the need to improve the current system, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) has welcomed a review of the current state of English language education and assessment (Malaysia Ministry of Education & Malaysia Examination Syndicate, 2007; MOHE, 2007a). Assessment reform heralds the idea of humanizing assessment and intends to create an assessment-friendly environment where assessment will become part of the teaching and learning process (Economic Planning Unit, 2006; MOHE, 2007c; Tuah, 2007). A proposal

presented by a Malaysian government official at the International Forum of Educational Assessment System states that the new proposed educational assessment reform should focus on assessment both *of learning* and *for learning*, use various assessment methods to gather data about students' development, performance, and achievement (holistic assessment), assess both the product and process of learning, and empower teachers to conduct quality assessment (Tuah, 2007; emphasis added).

Tuah (2007) suggested that the newly proposed idea regarding the assessment system will take another seven to nine years to implement because it needs to be carefully and thoroughly researched. As an ESL teacher and a teacher educator, I am directly involved in this initiative. The urge to change the current assessment system, coupled with my interest in the field of assessment and ESL, has led me to conduct research in this area. Due to the need to further improve and to raise the English proficiency level among Malaysian learners, I wished to explore how formative assessment could be integrated into the existing education curriculum in Malaysia. A need for the Malaysian education system to shift away from the practice that perceives assessment solely for grading purposes has already been expressed (Akiko, 2003; Bajunid, 1995; Examination Syndicate, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2001; Tuah, 2007). Thus, it is the aim of this thesis not only to suggest how to effectively incorporate formative assessment into current practice but also to contribute to academic understanding of assessment as a developmental process.

1.2 Statement of Problem

There is great concern about the use of English among Malaysians because there has been a decline in the English language proficiency level among Malaysian learners and graduates, partly due to the shifting policies with regard to the medium of instruction and language status (Nunan, 2003; Puteh et al., 2009; Tan, Mohamed, & Saw, 2009; Yasin, Shaufil, Mukhtar, Ghani, & Rashid, 2010). There have also been extended discussions in the local newspapers and in government reports about the quality and the level of English language competence among Malaysian learners. This situation has forced relevant government bodies to examine and review the Malaysian education system ("IPTA sedia laksana program pertingkat bahasa Inggeris," 2006; MOHE, 2007c; Prime Minister Office, 2009).

The English language proficiency level among ESL learners remains an issue (Diyanah, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2001; MOHE, 2007b). The fact that students are compelled to learn English for a total of eleven years (six years learning English language as a core subject at the primary school level and five years at the secondary school level) before entering universities does not guarantee they will be proficient in the language. For instance, Yasin, Shaufil, Mukhtar, Ghani, and Rashid (2010), in their research on the English language proficiency of Malaysian civil engineering students, found that the learners' "...ability of using the English language was low, irrespective of the type of workplace or level of study" (p. 165). A mismatch between the knowledge of the English language actually acquired by students and the level of knowledge required for communicative purposes was also identified. Because English is regarded as a global language, there is an urgent need to further encourage

Malaysian learners to become more proficient in the English language (Akiko, 2003; Hanapiah, 2002; MOHE, 2007a). The main reason for increased proficiency in English is to enable students to easily, confidently, and effectively communicate ideas in speech and in writing (Stapa, Maasum, Mustaffa, & Darus, 2010; Yasin et al., 2010).

The lack of communication skills (oral and written) and the lack of competency in English as a second language (ESL) among Malaysian undergraduates are the reasons why the majority fail in job interviews (Rodrigues, 2006). According to Datuk Mustapa Mohamad, a former Minister of Higher Education, graduates in one institution in Malaysia are more employable than graduates from some other local higher learning institutions due to their strong command of English (mSTARonline, 2006). Indeed, some employers seek graduates from certain institutions due to the quality of graduates produced: quality here refers not only to excellence in academic achievement but also to interpersonal and communication skills in two or more languages. It is clearly stated in *Graduan* - a trusted web site (www.graduan.com.my) for Malaysian students seeking employment after their graduation - that "...other than good academic credentials, job advertisements constantly define a graduate as the person with the following qualities – highly confident, eager to learn, results-driven, possesses enthusiasm and initiative, *good communication and interpersonal skills, excellent written and spoken English,...*" (Omar, 2010; emphasis added).

Although it is not an absolute requirement for some companies to have graduates who are proficient in the English language, the ability to use the language proficiently will definitely create more opportunities for employment and

education for the graduates. Poor performance and lack of ability to communicate in English, especially when written communication is required, result in unsatisfactory outcomes. For example, in applying for a job, fresh graduates need to send in an application letter with their resumé to prospective employers. Limited ability to communicate ideas in English gives a poor impression and there is high probability of the application being rejected, even one from a student with outstanding academic results in the content subjects. Based on this awareness, teachers and researchers are endeavouring to further understand the problems and find ways to improve the situation.

Also, acknowledging the rising problem, the Malaysian government has established a nationwide campaign to achieve a high standard of proficiency in the English language by promoting research and by giving incentives and encouragement in various forms for the teaching and learning of English language (Murugesan, 2003). Through the recent initiative for assessment reform to support and further develop the English language competency among Malaysian learners, my multiple roles of ESL teacher, teacher educator, and researcher is to use, reflect, and research on possible ways to address the English language competency from the scope of formative assessment.

1.3 Research Objectives

The following are the research objectives set for this study.

1. To develop a description of the current ESL writing assessment practices at a selected higher learning institution in Malaysia;
2. To identify issues/ aspects for improvement in ESL writing assessment;
3. To explore, from a sociocultural perspective, the changes and challenges of integrating formative assessment and elements of a process approach within the teaching and learning of writing skills;
4. To evaluate the immediate impact of the intervention on the teachers and students and the long-term impact on the teachers' pedagogical practice and perspectives; and
5. To identify the extent to which a sociocultural perspective could contribute to academic understanding of writing pedagogy and collaborative action research.

1.4 Definition of Terms

In order to establish a consistent and common understanding for the terms used in this study, some key terms used in this thesis are defined in the following subsections.

1.4.1 English as a second language (ESL)

'English as a second language' (ESL) is widely used in this thesis to refer to English as a second language. English in Malaysia is regarded as a second rather than subsequent language, based on its status in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia.

1.4.2 Sociocultural perspective

The term ‘sociocultural perspective’ is used to refer to the constructs of sociocultural theory which are considered relevant for supporting change for teaching and assessing of writing in the ESL classrooms.

1.4.3 Language proficiency

‘Language proficiency’ in this thesis refers to the learners’ performance in English and focuses primarily on the learners’ ability to use the written language for communicative purposes.

1.4.4 Formative assessment

‘Formative assessment’ is defined as ongoing assessment that is intended to help promote educational development, improve learning and provide feedback to both teachers and students, as well as feed forward for the students

1.4.5 Intervention

The term ‘intervention’ is used in this thesis to refer to the assessment tasks and procedures developed for the research. This includes the acts/results of creating and introducing new materials as well as pedagogical practices and assessment procedures, which are new or different to those the teachers are accustomed to using.

1.4.6 Higher-learning institution

The higher-learning institution in this thesis is a public university in Selangor, Malaysia.

1.5 Overall Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organised into six chapters. This first chapter, Chapter 1, has presented the introduction to the study: the background, the aims, and the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 focuses on a review of the relevant literature which leads to the conceptual framework of this study. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of my research, in which the steps and procedures for data collection and data analysis are laid out explicitly to provide a clear picture of how the research was conducted and the data were analysed. Chapter 4 describes and presents the findings of the three phases of the study. Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the research in relation to key features of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the limitations of the study, pedagogical and theoretical implications, and some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

This chapter begins with a review of related literature that gives an account of education in Malaysia. It also encapsulates the understanding of assessment and its practice in the Malaysian second language classrooms and how assessment can be used to assist learning among the learners of English as a Second Language (ESL), particularly in the ESL writing classrooms at the tertiary level. Section 2.1 gives an overview of education in Malaysia with an emphasis on the English language and its development in the Malaysian context, which is necessary to provide a clear picture of the status of ESL and its influence on the current pedagogical and assessment policies and practices. It also gives an overview of the transitions of the medium of instruction from English to Malay language or vice versa. This would allow readers to relate the broader context to my research within this particular ESL environment. Section 2.2 gives an overview of the approaches to the teaching of ESL in Malaysia. Section 2.3 reviews the literature on ESL writing instruction and culture. Types of assessment, the purpose of assessment and how it is practised within the ESL writing classrooms are presented in Section 2.4. Section 2.5 reviews the importance of feedback in ESL writing classrooms. The definitions for formative and summative feedback are also presented in this section. Section 2.6 reviews literature on teachers' beliefs and practice. Section 2.7 introduces Vygotsky's developmental approach and some of the key constructs of sociocultural theory. The next section, Section 2.8,

presents the relevant issues for implementing formative assessment in a Malaysian setting and the relationship of ZPD to formative writing assessment. Section 2.9 provides a summary of the chapter. Finally, Section 2.10 outlines the research questions addressed by this study.

2.1 Education in Malaysia

Before looking specifically into ESL in Malaysia, I would like to present an important historical overview on the Malaysian education and its language policy, which will later in the chapter inform the status of English language and its significance in Malaysia. This historical perspective is also useful in trying to link its influence with the focus of the study, which is on the use of formative assessment in the teaching and learning of ESL from the sociocultural perspective.

Education in Malaysia has gone through vast changes. Under the British colonization, prior to 1957, the Malaysian education system was based on the British policy towards immigration, employment and racial segregation where the three main ethnic groups in Malaya - the Malays, Chinese, and Indians - were mainly separated based on their economic activities (Foo & Richards, 2004; Putih, 2004; Singh, 1993; Sufean, 2004). During this period, the type of education received by each group was determined by its geographical and economic status. The Malays were located in the villages and most went to informal Arabic/Religious schools. The Chinese were located in towns and went to the Chinese-medium schools, while the Indians were located in the plantations and went to the Tamil-medium schools. There was no single language chosen as the

medium of instruction in all the schools. Each type of school chose its own medium of instruction.

2.1.1 Unity building through *Bahasa Malaysia* as a medium of instruction

In 1957, when Malaysia was about to achieve its independence from British rule, there was an urgency to unite the nations in this culturally plural society: the Malays, the Chinese, the Indians, and other ethnic groups, through the use of national language. The newly established government saw language as a symbol of identity and allegiance, as in other newly formed or reformed countries (Rubin, 1971). Hence, identifying and deciding on one national language was an important way of building a national identity and promoting national integration. Thomas (2000) added that “much attention in status planning centred on the selection of a national language for purposes of modernization and nation building” (p. 198).

However, the use of a national language for Malaysia at that point in time was merely to unite its culturally plural ethnic groups and build the Malaysian identity rather than moving towards modernization. Education seemed the most appropriate starting point for imposing the national language policy (Milne, 1970). After independence (31 August 1957), the process of nation building through the use of national language was started and implemented into the national education system. The change from the English language to *Bahasa Malaysia* was first driven by the National Education Committee. This committee, formed in 1955, laid out a strategic plan called the Razak Report (1956), which was aimed at reviewing the education policy and developing a national education

system which could fulfil the needs of the people of the then federation in maintaining and developing the society, culture, economics, and politics of one nation; and placing *Bahasa Malaysia* as the national language and at the same time preserving and acknowledging the development of languages and cultural values of others (Sufean, 2004). The initiative made by the National Education Committee to unite the nations through the use of *Bahasa Malaysia* as the national language was endorsed in the Razak Report and Education Ordinance (Education Committee, 1966), which emphasized the development of the national education system that had required *Bahasa Malaysia* to be not only the national language but also the main medium of instruction at all national schools. The main focus of the report was to unite the nation through a set of curricula that revolved around the Malaysian environment and cultures, a sole language used as the main medium of instruction, and a standardized examination system for all.

In 1957, at the beginning of independence, Bahasa Malaysia was first introduced in the education system as a compulsory subject, but not as a medium of instruction, in both primary and secondary schools. The National Language Act 1963 (The Commissioner of Law Revision, 2006) was enacted, and stipulated that *Bahasa Malaysia* was to be regarded as the national language and should be used for official purposes “subject to the safeguards contained in Article 152(1) of the Constitution relating to any other language and the language of any other community in Malaysia” (The Commissioner of Law Revision, 2006). This National Language Act raised *Bahasa Malaysia* to become the main medium of instruction. Subsequently, more schools replaced the English language with *Bahasa Malaysia* as the main medium of instruction. The process of changing the medium of instruction from English language to Bahasa Malaysia was seen as a

gradual process. This was projected in the Education Act 1961 (*Akta Pendidikan 1961*, 1984) as cited in Alhabshi and Hakim (2001, p. 4):

Tujuan Dasar Pelajaran di dalam negeri ini ialah bermaksud hendak menyatukan budak-budak daripada semua bangsa di dalam negeri ini dengan menggunakan bahasa kebangsaan sebagai bahasa pengantar yang besar, walaupun perkara ini tiada dapat dilaksanakan dengan serta-merta melainkan hendaklah diperbuat dengan beransur-ansur.

The purpose of the Education Policy in this country is to unite the pupils from all races in this country through the use of national language as the main medium; however, this initiative will not be accomplished immediately but must be carried out gradually.
[Researcher's translation]

The initiative to use the national language as the medium of instruction did not involve just the primary and secondary schools. It was extended to the university level when in 1971, the University and University Colleges Act (AUKU) was endorsed to emphasize the use of the national language as the medium of instruction in the curriculum (Rappa & Wee, 2006). Sequentially, in 1983, the national language became the medium of instruction for all the courses offered at the university level (www.pkpim.net, 2005).

Having a pluralistic society, the early Malaysian government set up after the British rule was aware of the need to ensure the social and cultural necessities of each ethnic group were adhered to. Hence, the 1956 Razak Report also emphasized that the Education Policy had to fulfil the needs of the main ethnic groups of the nation who had the right to receive education in any particular schools they preferred (www.pkpim.net, 2005). It was also enacted in the Federal Constitution that “no person shall be prohibited or prevented from using

(otherwise than for official purposes), or from teaching or learning, any other language” (International Labour Organization, 2006, p. 141). Thus, the use of other languages as medium of instruction was allowed at school types other than the national schools.

2.1.2 English language and its status in Malaysia

English gained its place and status in Malaysia prior to independence of Malaysia (then known as Malaya). According to Gill (2002, p. 37), when Bahasa Malaysia was selected as the national language and “the official language of the nation,” the English language was reduced in its roles and status from being the prime language and the sole medium of instruction during the colonial era to a merely taught second language in national schools. Since then, the English language has been regarded as the second most important language in Malaysia (Asmah, 1996) and the second language of the nation (Sufean, 2004; www.pkpim.net, 2005). With regard to the use of language for nation building, it was highlighted in the Razak Report (1956) that, while *Bahasa Malaysia* would be the main medium of instruction, the English language will be taught as a compulsory subject (Foo & Richards, 2004; Kam, 2002). The status of English was also stipulated as important after the national language in the Malaysian book of laws, precisely the Federation Constitution (1957) that clearly stated in Article 16 – regarding citizenship and Article 152 (1), (2), (3) – regarding the national language policy (International Labour Organization, 2006):

Article 16 - regarding citizenship ... where the application is made before September 1965, and the applicant has attained the age of forty-five years at the date of the application, that he has a sufficient knowledge of *the Malay language* or *the English language* or, in the case of an applicant ordinarily resident in Sarawak, the *Malay language*, *the English language* or *any native language* in current use in Sarawak [emphasis added].

Article 152 (1), (2), (3) – regarding national language policy (1) ... The national language shall be *the Malay language* ... (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of Clause (1), for a period of ten years after Merdeka [Independence] Day, and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides, *the English language* may be used in both Houses of Parliament, in the Legislative Assembly of every State, and for all other official purposes ... (3) Notwithstanding the provisions of Clause (1), for a period of ten years after Merdeka Day [Independence] Day, and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides, the authoritative texts— (a) of all Bills to be introduced or amendments thereto to be moved in either House of Parliament; and (b) of all Acts of Parliament and all subsidiary legislation issued by the Federal Government, *shall be in the English language* [emphasis added].

Nevertheless, for some researchers in Malaysia, the English language in Malaysia is perceived as a foreign language (EFL) (Azman, 2002; Sidek, 2012; Supyan, 2008). For example, some of the Chinese in Malaysia may regard Mandarin as their first language, Bahasa Malaysia as a second language, and English as their third language. It can also be a second language, especially for those in the East Malaysia (that was part of the Borneo), namely the Sarawakians and Sabahans; for example, their native language is their first language, followed by English, and then by *Bahasa Malaysia*. Yet other Malaysian citizens regard English as their first language (Mallan, 2005). The position of English language is indeed complicated when how it is used by the pluralistic society of Malaysia is examined. However, in this study, the English language in Malaysia is referred as

a second language (ESL) based on how it is identified in the Federal Constitution, despite an awareness that there are other ethnic groups who would use any other language as their first language which then makes English as a third or subsequent language after *Bahasa Malaysia*. Sometimes it could even be a foreign language (EFL). Despite being formally registered as second to *Bahasa Malaysia* (Foo & Richards, 2004; Hanapiah, 2002) and being used as one of the Malaysian official languages, the status of the English language remains so significant due to the globalization and the economic development of Malaysia (Kunio, 2001; Putih, 2004).

2.1.3 Importance of English language education in Malaysia

Moving towards internationalization in the era of globalization made the government once again review the National Education System. In 1996, the National Education Act was produced and within which the University and University Colleges Act (AUKU) was amended to cater to the current needs and challenges as well as to realize the national goals of developing the nation and economic growth. At this stage, the national language was no longer the central focus for unity. Instead, the focus had been shifted to ensuring the development of an education system to be regarded and accepted by all. The emphasis was on Malaysia developing a world class education and becoming a centre of excellence (Alhabshi & Hakim, 2001). Together with the development and the fast changing world of communication and technology, the need for English was again emphasized when the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (1999, p. 40) argued that:

... to compete on equal terms with the world's most advanced countries, Malaysians - as well as most other Asian nationalities - still have some way to go. There are skills that must be learned and values that may yet have to change... We do not become European simply because we wear a coat and a tie, speak English and practice democracy instead of feudalism. We have to learn the language of telecommunications, of computers, of the Internet.

What Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad meant by his statement was the need to learn English because it is the language of globalization. The English language is seen as significant for the nation-, economic-, and knowledge- building in Malaysia due to its value as an international language that dominates the fields of trade and communication. "In view of the global forces impinging on the national economic, political, and cultural contexts, governments have to respond by initiating educational changes to meet these global imperatives" (Putih, 2004, p. 35) and many are beginning to realize the need to reinstate the English language as the medium of instruction (Foo & Richards, 2004; Zaidi, 2005). Hence, the Malaysian Ministry of Education introduced the learning of Science and Mathematics in English for Primary 1, Lower Secondary, and Upper Secondary level in 2002 and this was expected to be fully implemented in 2008 (Zaidi, 2005).

Tan (2005) examined the position of the English language in Malaysia by reviewing the press and news agency reports pertaining to the language policy and education in Malaysia. The main finding of his review indicated that the debate on the English language appears to be more on the importance of English rather than concerning the status of English in Malaysia. This indicates a shift of focus when *Bahasa Malaysia* is already established as the national language. Tan (2005, p. 54) asserts that:

...it would appear that many of the arguments for reinstating English as a medium of instruction centre on the notion of English as the main language of knowledge, and for the information and communication technology that Malaysia needs to be competitive in today's globalised world. Also important is apparent cognisance of potential problems or resistance in the rural or less developed parts of Malaysia. (p. 54)

Although there is a clear cut status of both the *Bahasa Malaysia* and the English language, the choice of which language to use for the medium of instruction is still in debate (Baskaran, 2002; Lee, Lee, Wong, & Ya'acob, 2010; Lotbiniere, 2009). Most of the time, the debate is related to the decisions and changes made to the Malaysian education system and policy to accommodate sociocultural and political demands. This is seen when the 2002 implementation of English as a medium for the teaching of Mathematics and Science in the Malaysian primary and secondary schools (PPSMI) was called off after a few years since the PPSMI received negative criticisms recently due to its poor implementation. These have subsequently caused a wider urban-rural divide and poor performance results in Science and Mathematics assessments nationwide. The phasing out of the use of the English language as the medium for teaching Science and Mathematics by 2012 (Lotbiniere, 2009) has put *Bahasa Malaysia*, once again, as the medium of instruction.

Whatever the learners' needs in terms of language use for instruction and communication, the debate on the choice of language as the medium of instruction, either in schools or higher learning institutions, will continue. Changes are likely to occur through the revision of the Malaysian Education Policy, which is dependent on political forces as well as socioeconomic development needs. With regard to the use of the English language, despite

negative responses from the extreme nationalists who fought for the use of the national language for the medium of instruction, the English language still remains and is still taught as a compulsory subject in primary, secondary and tertiary levels due to its importance. What is perhaps more important than a debate on the language for medium of instruction, is a debate on ways to make the teaching and learning of English more effective, interesting and meaningful for the Malaysian learners. Consequently, the finding of ways for effective teaching and learning of English language could assist in developing individuals who could use the English language communicatively.

2.1.4 English language and the demand for it at the Malaysian higher learning institutions

English language proficiency has become one of the key requirements for university entrance, whereby prospective university candidates have to sit for the Malaysian University English Test (MUET), and this signalled the need for English proficiency at the university level. Learners in Malaysian higher learning institutions are urged to learn English and are expected to be competent in the target language. This is reflected in the large number of English language classes offered to Malaysian learners at higher learning institutions, from general English proficiency (GEP) classes to English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In early 2005, the public universities in Malaysia mandated the English language to be used in Sciences and other related subjects (Mohini, 2008). In 2006, the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia (MOHE) urged graduates to use the English language for presentations at least three times, commencing July 2006/2007 semester. The main aim was to ensure that Malaysian graduates were proficient

and confident in using the target language for communication. This urge is taken positively by most vice-chancellors of the public universities, being very well aware of their graduates' lack of proficiency in the English language ("IPTA sedia laksana program pertingkat bahasa Inggeris," 2006).

The drive for Malaysian higher education to 'go global' has also reinforced the mediating role of English at the higher learning institutions (Mohini, 2008). Being competent in this global language, consequently, would help Malaysia to make progress in the internationalization of higher education, where "the use of English in teaching and learning continues to be encouraged, especially in Science, Mathematics, and technical subjects" (MOHE, 2007b, p. 28). It is the aim of the Malaysian government "to develop the higher education sector as an international hub of educational services" (Yean Tham, 2010, p. 100) by means of allowing the English language to be used as a medium of instruction at the higher learning institutions in Malaysia. Competency in the English language among learners is a key to positive student mobility and exchange, which would indirectly help in promoting Malaysia as a centre of educational excellence.

The need for the English language to be taught at the Malaysian tertiary level is further intensified by employment and global competitiveness. Hanapiah (2002) has identified several domains (business, employment, education, tourism, politics) where competency in the English language is a necessity. It is expected that Malaysian graduates with certain skills and English language competency will find employment more easily than those with limited English communication skills (Hanapiah, 2002; Murugesan, 2003; Nor Hashimah, Norsimah, & Kesumawati, 2008). Lim and Normizan (2004), who conducted a case study to find out the impact of English language proficiency on the probability of exit from

unemployment, confirmed that the English language proficiency contributed to the unemployment exits among the Malaysian graduates. Yasin, Shaupil, Mukhtar, Ghani, and Rashid (2010), in their study on the English proficiency of the engineering students at one of the polytechnics in Malaysia, revealed that the students' English language ability was rather low and there was a need for curriculum revision as the level of English language learned did not meet employment requirements.

Another study by Kassim and Ali (2010) investigated the need for English language skills in the workplace in a survey conducted among in-service engineers. The results of their study acknowledged the importance of productive skill in English for employment purposes. Speaking and writing skills score the highest means of importance, which provide an indication that emphasis should be given to these skills when it comes to the teaching of English at the higher learning institutions in Malaysia. In a more recent study, Nair et al. (2012) who conducted a survey to gather feedback from selected companies on Malaysian graduates' language skills, found that English language proficiency among new Malaysian graduates was still considered unsatisfactory. The various studies conducted on English language proficiency at the tertiary level indicate that the mastery of English is important for the graduates' employment and the lack of proficiency in the English language among students of Malaysian higher learning institutions is still an issue and needs to be addressed.

Mohini (2008), based on her research findings of academics' perspectives on the use of English as the main medium of instruction, revealed various reasons for the academics choosing English to be used in their teaching classrooms. These include contributing to the internationalization of the university, enabling the

graduates to compete in the job market, and enabling students from different cultures to learn together. Although English is often used as a medium of instruction and the English language proficiency courses are offered to help university students improve their English language proficiency, quite a number of Malaysian ESL learners at the higher learning institutions still have difficulty in achieving the expected level of English (Stapa, Maasum, Mustaffa, & Darus, 2010).

The lack of proficiency in the English language consequently affects their academic performance. It also has become one of the factors that lead learners to having low self-esteem and contributes to a high apprehension level among students. Some ESL learners become passive and tend to lag behind because they are unable to express themselves in English and are afraid of making mistakes. Acknowledging the demands of English for the Malaysian graduates, several developmental studies (described in the next section) were carried out to observe not only the level of English language proficiency among the Malaysian graduates but also the pedagogical aspects of teaching the English language. The studies aimed at contributing to the ways of improving the teaching and learning of English among the lecturers and students of public higher learning institutions without neglecting the use of national language (mSTARonline, 2006). While these various studies were focused on issues on the teaching and learning of English and concern for the needs of English language, it is the focus of my study to find ways of improving the pedagogic practice with a belief that it could subsequently lead to effective teaching and learning of the target language.

2.2 Approaches to the Teaching of English as a Second Language in Malaysia

In relation to the teaching of ESL, Pandian (2002) has outlined the development of teaching and learning English in Malaysia where, until 1983, the English syllabus for primary and secondary education was divided into three phases, spanning three different approaches. The primary school syllabus was based on a structural-situational approach, while the lower secondary English syllabus employed contextually-based teaching structures. The upper secondary education involved an abrupt transition to a communicative syllabus. Although there seems to be a shift at all levels towards the communicative syllabus and integrated syllabus (Su-Hie, 2007), the teaching and learning of English in Malaysian higher learning institutions is still structured in such a way that the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are mostly taught in isolation. It is important to emphasize that grammar is still an important focus in the Malaysian classrooms as far as English language learning is concerned. To illustrate this, Nik, Sani, Chik, Jusoff, and Hasbollah (2010), in their case study, observed this phenomenon in Malaysian higher learning institutions, “ESL writing [for example] *reinforces grammatical structures*” (2010, p. 8 - emphasis added). Normazidah, Koo, and Hazita (2012), in their recent study, also highlight that the teaching of reading, writing and grammatical rules has become strongly emphasised in the teaching of English language in the Malaysian English language teaching scenario. This is believed to be significantly influenced by the national examination system that contributes to the neglect of teaching the communicative aspects of the target language. Normazidah et al. (2012) also reported that “because of the high importance placed on the examination...teachers tend to concentrate on the

teaching of grammar and neglect the communicative aspects of language learning in their teaching” (p. 38).

Although communicative language learning has been introduced into the official Malaysian upper secondary school curriculum (Pandian, 2002), it has had little effect on the teaching approach. According to Pandian, due to the examination-oriented system, the Malaysian students tend to master the language by rote and later apply the language rules learned to pass the examination. In 2004, the Minister of Malaysia higher learning institutions, Datuk Dr Shafie Salleh, remarked that “most of our [Malaysian] students are good at memorizing facts and information, but they do not know how to use the knowledge they have in real-life situations” (Ramanan & Kaur, 2004). Similarly in 2011, the Malaysian Prime Minister highlighted his concern over the education system that focuses on rote-learning and proposed that teachers should improvise and adapt their teaching to move away from rote-learning and to a less teacher-centred approach (Abdul Halim, 2011).

Tan and Ong (2011), in their study on the teaching of mathematics and science in English in Malaysian classrooms, indicated that “the educational system in Malaysia is very exam oriented” (p. 6). They found that in the classroom practice, teachers tend to make students remember keywords in allowing the students to widen their mathematical and scientific vocabulary in English. Doing this would gear the students towards scoring in the examination following a specific examination answer scheme or format. Having to memorize keywords without understanding the concepts obscured students’ ability to apply the knowledge learnt. This has contributed to the problems in writing coherent essays even for

good students, especially in linking multiple facts and the process (Tan & Ong, 2011). Abdul Halim (2011) also claimed that:

when teaching is more teacher-centred, students will become more passive and have a high tendency to memorise. Rote learning also causes students to quickly become bored. Students will start to memorise particular concepts without being given the opportunity to explore and understand the concepts.

This phenomenon of an examination-oriented system, that affects the teaching approach and teachers' beliefs, often hinders the development of communicative competence in the English language. Also, the strong emphasis on grammatical structures (Mohamad, 2009; Suppiah, Subramaniam, & Michael, 2009) differs from the principles of the communicative approach, which generally focus on the meaning and the language functions with little focus on grammatical accuracy (Jin, 2008). Osman, Ahmad, and Jusoff (2009), in their study, observe that in the ESL context, teaching and learning are so decontextualized that many Malaysian ESL learners are not be able to retain what they have learnt in the classrooms due to lack of awareness and opportunity in using the target language in a meaningful context. Thus, learners can hardly make sense of what they are learning and realize the significance of learning the target language, which is one of the contributing factors for the declining standard of English.

Generally, studies by Malaysian researchers on the teaching of English as a second language vary according to the skills focus, the role of the teachers, pedagogical practice and the related research interests. Most studies are triggered by the need for further development and improvement in the teaching and learning of ESL. The changing trends of teaching are obviously influenced by the changing needs and perceptions of learners towards 'what' and 'how' a language

lesson should be carried out (Ahmad Azman et al., 2010; Mustapha, Ismail, Ratan, & Alias, 2010; Rosemala, 2008; Tan, Mohamed, & Saw, 2009; Wong, 2007). Due to this, acknowledging teaching and learning as a social practice could alter the view of language teaching as merely structural into a more productive teaching towards valuable outcomes of learning the target language. Hence, this study will look into the integration of formative assessment and process writing from the sociocultural perspective into the selected ESL classrooms to develop different perspective and pedagogical practice of ESL writing. Since this research focuses on the teaching of writing, the next section (Section 2.4) presents literature related to the teaching of ESL writing and the related issues.

2.3 ESL Writing Instruction and Culture

ESL writing instruction in Malaysia is generally influenced by both the institutional requirements (such as those indicated above) and the sociocultural needs and circumstances of the learners. Various studies in second language writing, carried out worldwide over several decades, contribute insightful ideas on the relationship between sociocultural influence and second language writing.

Kaplan's early (1966) analysis of 700 foreign students' compositions found that writing patterns in English by foreign students differ from the those written by American students of English. This is due to the fact the foreign students' writing is particularly influenced by their first language and own culture. Kaplan (1966) noted, "patterns may be derived for typical English paragraphs, but atypical English paragraphs do exist" (p.20) which influence the writing patterns of English by the foreign students. Kaplan's 1966 seminal work on second language

writing has triggered interest among other researchers to further develop the subject of second language writing and its link to sociocultural issues, which directly contribute to the scholarship of ESL writing instruction.

Considering that ESL learners come from various linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) assert that it is necessary to identify the second language learners' needs for writing, as different groups of L2 learners may require different writing abilities. They further acknowledge the complexity of L2 writing instruction in that teachers do not only need to pay attention to the needs of the learners, but also to the learners' "various life and cultural experiences" (p.25). Elsewhere, Harklau (2006, p. 109) explains that:

... because L2 writing classes typically bring together individuals from a number of cultural backgrounds, intercultural communication and the norms and the values associated with the target language may be areas of significant topical interest to learners. Thus, while teaching about culture may not be an explicit goal of most ESL writing courses, the cultural patterns and values nevertheless form a significant part of the content through which second language writing skills are taught...ESL writing classrooms serve as arenas for cultural orientation and brokerage, and ESL teachers often serve not only as writing instructors, but also as explainers and mediators...of culture and cultural values.

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Harklau (2006) recognize the existence and importance of culture and cultural values in second language writing; however, they look at the influence of culture from very different angles. Grabe and Kaplan examine how L1 cultures could have an influence on the learners' L2 writing and how it could possibly affect L2 writing instruction, whereas Harklau examines the relationship between second language learners' writing and exposure to L2 cultures.

Reichelt (2005), in a study on English writing instruction in Poland, asserts that “writing instruction at all three levels [primary school, secondary school, and university] ...investigated is also shaped significantly by pressure to prepare students for the writing sections of various English-language exams” (p. 225). Similarly, Turvey (2007) who conducted a study on trainee teachers and problems they faced in teaching writing at London secondary schools has also contributed to an understanding of several issues pertaining to the teaching of writing. She argued that the purpose of much of the writing lessons conducted by the trainee teachers was influenced by “various frameworks outside their control, frameworks that have a power to influence practice that is guaranteed by the testing and assessment system” (p. 146). The findings of both studies revealed somewhat the cultural influence on the ESL writing pedagogical practice, that is, educational culture that follows an examination-oriented system which forces teachers to teach to the test. The curriculum and institutional requirements have notably affected the way writing instruction is perceived by both teachers and students.

Research on second language writing and its relation to sociocultural aspects continue to develop. Hyland (2003, p. 32) put forth an interesting and important point related to the complexity of L2 writing and its learners. He claims that:

no two learners are the same, and their different learning backgrounds and personalities will influence how quickly, how well, they learn to write in a second language. Students obviously bring to the L2 writing class different writing experiences, different aptitudes and levels of motivation; they have varying metacognitive knowledge of their L1 and experience of using it, particularly to write; and they have different characteristics in terms of age, sex, and socioeconomic status.

In a recent work, Kormos (2012), reviewed research and academic works investigating the patterns on the impact of individual differences on the process of second language writing. Her article has given insights on the interconnectedness of one's culture and the teaching and learning of L2 writing instruction. She argued that "motivational level and self-regulatory capacity interact with cognitive factors, and they separately and jointly affect writing processes, which include the planning, formulation, transcribing, and editing phases of writing" (p. 400). Kormos also suggested that researchers could further explore how individual differences could have an influence on how students perceived and processed learning through writing.

The various studies on second language writing indicate the relationship of culture with the conditions of second language instruction and learning. One might agree with Kaplan's notion that thinking and writing are very much culturally entrenched. It might also be said that writing style would gradually change depending on the amount of exposure the learners received for learning the target language, writing knowledge, and experience. Due to the cultural complexity, learning English is not easy for many Malaysian students. Similarly, the second language instruction is also seen as complicated. Teachers have to cater to all the different needs of learning by considering the different learners' sociocultural backgrounds and experience and trying to match these with their teaching perspectives and learning expectations.

This increasing recognition of the notion of L2 complexity is highly relevant to the Malaysian ESL setting, highlighting another important aspect in second language writing, which accentuates individual differences whereby a learner's individual demography, cultural and language background, and their experience

of using the target language, play a significant role in the mastery of second language writing. Malaysian learners at the local higher learning institutions come from various backgrounds and regions. Different backgrounds here do not only refer to socioeconomic status, but also regional, religious, and cultural backgrounds, which are quite different among ethnic groups – Malays, Chinese, Indians, and other ethnicities. Even within an ethnicity, there may be cultural differences, as the groups are regionally divided. For example, the Malays from East Malaysia have their own languages/dialects, customs, tradition, and lifestyles which are different from those of the Malays from West Malaysia. In other words, ESL learners from different parts of Malaysia have their own social identities and carry different kinds of background knowledge and experiences with them into the ESL classrooms.

Similarly, teachers' conceptions of teaching ESL writing are generally guided by their sociocultural background and experiences. The teaching of writing in ESL classrooms can be difficult as writing itself involves complex skills and knowledge construction (Belbase, 2012). Having diverse, multicultural groups of ESL students would make the teaching of writing even more difficult. In most of these circumstances, many teachers resort to teaching merely the correct use of the target language in a writing classroom with little weight given to other aspects of writing, such as content, coherence, and mechanics of writing. According to Hyland (2003, p. 2):

...they [teachers] tend to adopt an eclectic range of methods that represent several perspectives, accommodating their practices to the constraints of their teaching situations and their beliefs about how students learn to write...but it is common for one to predominate in how teachers conceptualize their work and organize what they do in their classrooms...Teachers therefore tend to recognize and draw on

a number of approaches but typically show a preference for one of them.

Although teachers are exposed to alternative approaches to the teaching of writing such as process, product, integrative, genre approach, and process genre approach, the widespread tendency in the teaching of writing is to include a focus on grammar (Akinwamide, 2012; Baroudy, 2008; Bruton, 2009). In the writing instruction, teachers tend to choose any of L2 writing approaches that go hand in hand with their perspectives and conceptions of teaching writing. As such, one of the aims of this study is to find out the teachers' beliefs on teaching and assessing writing and their pedagogical practice.

2.3.1 Approaches to the teaching of writing

Since writing skill is recognized as important not only in language learning but also in daily communication, the teaching of writing should focus on more than just language form. The interest in the teaching of writing should focus on both the learning outcome and the learning processes that bring the learners to the final outcome of their written product. The next sub-sections will describe the common approaches to writing - the product approaches, the process approaches, and the genre approaches - that are particularly relevant to the context of the study and the integration of the process and product approaches within the teaching of writing.

2.3.1.1 Product approaches to the teaching of writing

Product approaches, which have dominated the teaching of writing for more than four decades, were derived from a combination of structural linguistics and

behaviourist learning theory of second language teaching (Hyland, 2003). In a standard product approach to teaching writing, students are expected to produce writing that meets the standards set by a course programme which would include good use of grammar, well-organized paragraphs, and a specific rhetorical style (Badger & White, 2000; Brown, 2001). Further, according to Brown, in a product approach to writing:

a good deal of attention was placed on 'model' compositions that the students would emulate and on how well a student's final product measured up against a list of criteria that included content, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical considerations such as spelling and punctuation. (2001, p. 335)

Similarly, Hyland (2003) elaborated that the product orientation of writing involves the writer's writing constructions based on writer's grammatical and lexical knowledge where writing development is an outcome of reproducing and manipulating the proposed models. Littlewood (2009) described the product approaches to writing as those which emphasize the grammatical structures and communicative functions which are determined through needs analysis of the learners in which classroom teaching is geared towards meeting the identified needs as product outcomes. Hasan and Akhand (2010), in describing the criteria of product approaches to writing, explain that students are given a standard sample of text for them to follow in constructing a new piece of writing based on this model. Khansir (2012) adds that the product approaches to the teaching of writing place emphasis on the mechanical aspects of writing that focus on grammatical and syntactical structures, imitating models, correctness and form of the final written product. These various explanations have put forward the main conception of product approaches to writing where learning is seen as a

reproduction of a model set to be an outcome of the learning whereby the focus of learning assessment would be mainly on the correct use of language forms and functions that met with the set model criteria. The following four writing stages described by Badger and White (2000) are commonly agreed to be appropriate: familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing.

A typical product class might involve the learners familiarizing themselves with a set of descriptions of houses, possibly written especially for teaching purposes, by identifying, say, the prepositions and the names of rooms used in a description of a house. At the controlled stage, they might produce some simple sentences about houses from a substitution table. The learners might then produce a piece of guided writing based on a picture of a house and, finally, at the stage of free writing, a description of their own home. (p. 153)

These stages form a logical progression to the end product. Nevertheless, this approach has been subjected to the criticism that it limits learners' creativity (Badger & White, 2000), provides limited rooms for students to "interact, discuss, negotiate, or get concrete feedback" (Mourssi, 2013, p. 732), does little to help students improve their writing as limited when general forms of feedback are given to the students (Mourssi, 2013), and seems to undervalue the students' knowledge and skills (Khansir, 2012).

2.3.1.2 Process approaches to the teaching of writing

Process approaches are based on John Dewey's idea that all learning is seen as essentially process (Susser, 1994). Susser argues that the term 'process' itself has been used in discussions of writing theory, research, and pedagogy but referring to three different focuses: firstly, 'process' that refers to the act of writing itself – i.e.

what expert writers do when composing; secondly, 'process' that refers to describing writing pedagogies; and thirdly, 'process' that refers to designating a theory or theories of writing to establish a consistent writing pedagogy. In this particular section, the focus of the process is on the pedagogical approach of seeing how writing is taught and learnt focusing on the tertiary-level composition.

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) pointed out that process writing, at the time, was a positive innovation where teachers and students would have "more meaningful interaction and more purposeful writing" (p.87). Like product approaches, the standard process approach involves several stages: pre-writing, composing/drafting, revising, and editing although, unlike linear production, the process is seen as cyclical where writers can revisit the pre-writing activities at any time between the revising and editing periods (Hasan & Akhand, 2010; Lee, 2006; Nunan, 1991; Steele, 2004; Susser, 1994). Back in 1990s, a process approach to writing was viewed from a cognitive perspective where concerns in process writing were more on how writing is learned and developed, and emphasis is put not only on the grammatical structure but also on the content, the meaning and the processes that will guide the writers (Brown, 2001a; Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005; Graham & Perin, 2007; Khansir, 2012). However, the view on cognitive processes introduced in 1980s has been discredited and focus is given more on developmental processes which have been influenced by sociocultural theory (Matsuda, 2003).

Moving towards a sociocultural developmental view, Badger and White (2000), describe process writing as an approach that focuses more on linguistic skills than linguistic knowledge whereby learning of writing involves the processes of planning and drafting. Hyland (2003) defines a process approach to writing as

one that “emphasizes the writer as an independent producer of texts, but it goes further to address the issue of what teachers should do to help learners perform a writing task” (p. 10). Graham and Perin (2007) provide a more detailed definition of process writing where they indicate that process writing:

... involves extended opportunities for writing; writing for real audiences; engaging in cycles of planning, translating, and reviewing; personal responsibility and ownership of writing projects; high levels of student interactions and creation of a supportive writing environment; self-reflection and evaluation; personalized individual assistance and instruction; and in some instances more systematic instruction. (p. 449)

Sun and Feng (2009) have suggested that:

...the process approach to teaching writing should be a process including several stages, namely prewriting or invention activities (brainstorming, group discussion, assessing ideas,); drafting; seeking feedback from peers or the instructor; revising on the whole-text level (looking at the overall focus, reconsidering organization, deciding whether there is enough evidence, etc.); followed by revising at the paragraph or sentence level, proofreading, and 'publishing' the final text. In essence, process approach to teaching writing focuses on the writing process rather than the final product. (p. 150)

Similarly, De Luca and Annals (2011) indicate that the emphasis in the writing processes involve generating ideas, composing, and revising but stress that in process writing:

generating ideas, composing and revising are not a tidy group of activities...when you are well into composing you might think of a new point you want to develop. This often happens once you begin working in a concentrated way with the material you accumulated and the writing you did earlier when you were working out what to say. (p. 15)

Thus there is common agreement that process writing is not seen as a linear process. Writing is practised as a social activity with emphasis on students'

interaction that allows the production of ideas and the revision of ideas to occur at any time and at any level of the stages mentioned.

Positive outcomes of process approaches have been reported in various studies (Baroudy, 2008; Gabrielatos, 2002; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2007; Sun & Feng, 2009). Recently, for example, Hasan and Akhand (2010) in their study examined both process and product approaches to writing, and acknowledged that:

The process approach is really significant to let the students generate their ideas in a comprehensive manner. It helps a student to organize his/her thought in a systematic way which enables the student to write fluently in a different language which is not his/her mother tongue. (p. 84)

Graham and Sandmel (2011), in their meta-analysis of 29 experimental and quasi-experimental studies on process writing instruction, reported that those studies found the process writing approach does improve the student's writing and develop a motivation to write. In a recent study, Akinwamide (2012) has investigated the influence of one of the process approaches on the ESL students' writing performance through an experimental study, found that "the students who were taught with the Process-Approach (Experimental group) performed significantly better than those in the Control group" (p. 23). He claimed that the process approach is flexible in allowing students to develop their writing through learner-centred classroom and working with others. When errors are permissible, learners are less constrained by the structural forms, which offer opportunity for learners to explore freely through the writing process and stages. The freedom given to learners is believed can develop creativity in writing and promote originality (Akinwamide, 2012).

However, process approaches to writing may be criticised by teachers, such as those in Malaysia, who are concerned about the final product or the written performance of students at the end of a course that has to meet the institutional requirement and expectation.

2.3.1.3 Genre-based pedagogy

Little research has been done on genre-based pedagogy in Malaysia, which implies that it is not a common practice. Nevertheless, genre-based pedagogy is not new in the field of L2 writing particularly in the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand (Hinkell, 2011). According to Badger and White (2000), genre approaches share similarities with product approaches where focus is given on linguistic forms rather than linguistic skills. Hyland (2004) defines ‘genre’ as “grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations” (p. 4). In addition, genre approaches acknowledge the importance of social context which provides a purpose for writing. In such approaches, model writing takes place whereby “learners are exposed to examples of the genre they have to produce; the construction of a text by learners and teachers; and finally, the independent construction of texts by learners” (Badger & White, 2000). The present study was not intended to focus on genre approaches although a particular text-type genre (compare and contrast essay) was used as it was included in the syllabus of the course under study. The main interest of this study was to integrate formative assessment and elements of process writing approaches into the existing writing curriculum while making little amendment to its syllabus.

2.3.1.4 Integration of process and product approaches

Looking at the characteristics of the approaches, there seem to be overlapping areas between the two common approaches (process and product) in the teaching of writing. Both share the same elements consisting of text, ideas, organisation, and the written draft. What differentiate the two approaches are the procedural stage and how the writing outcome is perceived. For example, in differentiating the two approaches, one can ask: How is writing taught? How are writing tasks disseminated in the classrooms? How is writing developed? And what is the main focus of the teaching, process or end-product? Steele (2004) has made a comparison between the two writing approaches and listed the characteristics of each approach which is summarized in the Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: A comparison of product and process approaches to writing

Feature	Process Approaches	Product Approaches
Text	a resource for comparison	a model for imitation
Ideas	the starting point	Organisation of ideas overcomes the ideas themselves
Drafts	Requires learners to produce more than a single draft	Focusing only on a single draft
Focus	more global focus: purpose, theme, text type, reader-focused	Selected features focus and controlled practice of those features
Process	Collaborative	Individual
Emphasis	on creative process	on the end-product

The comparison allows a clear understanding of what each approach entails which represents the underpinning theory of each.

Kamimura (2000), who investigated the integration of the product and process approaches in the EFL writing, asserted that “both the form-oriented knowledge

and process-oriented skills are necessary to function as successful EFL writers” (p. 1) Based on his findings, he suggested that balancing both the process and product approaches is necessary in meeting the needs of various L2 writers. Similarly, Hasan and Akhand (2010) proposed an integration of the process and product approaches in the teaching of writing where they believe that:

... complementary use of both approaches helps student writers develop their skills in using language by experiencing a whole writing process as well as gain knowledge from the model texts. Such a complementary use of both approaches would help students to be *authors* rather than *copiers*, and so have the potential benefit of integrating critical thinking into their academic writing. (p. 86)

While there is no single best approach to the teaching of writing, these different approaches could be blended to make full use of the benefits each could offer. Combining the process and product approaches to writing is seen as manageable when the teachers aim at learners acquiring the writing skills to use for their academic writing purposes while an educational system requires summative evaluation at the end of the term of the students’ performance and achievement. Nevertheless, the choice of which approach to be used relies very much on the teachers’ beliefs and strategies for writing instructions. This choice is determined by the instructional climate and the learning needs (Lavelle, Ball, & Maliszewski, 2013). As such, a major part of phase 1 of my study was to identify and acknowledge the teachers’ beliefs and perspectives on the teaching and assessing of writing so that possible plans for product-process approach and formative assessment integration could be made in phase 2 from a sociocultural perspective.

2.3.2 Studies on ESL writing in Malaysia

In the last two decades, research on second language writing by Malaysian researchers on ESL has gradually increased. There has been much discussion on ESL writing that focused on the learners' learning strategies (Abdullah, 2009; Nik et al., 2010) and writing patterns (Stapa & Majid, 2009; Tan & Miller, 2007), the use of information and communication technology in the teaching of ESL (Supyan, 2008), writing approaches (Naidu, 2007; Stapa, 1994), and writing performance (Osman et al., 2009). However, very little focus is given on the use of sociocultural constructs and their influence on the pedagogical approach to teaching and writing.

Due to a socio-educational tradition of assessment, Malaysian learners are most often taught to the test, where emphasis is placed on the end results rather than on the process. According to Tan (2006):

Malaysians treat examinations very seriously, with teachers paying closer attention to classes taking public examinations and training students to be *celik ujian* (test wise). This is further supported by the many examination revision books published, and the seminars and holiday camps that teach students examination techniques, as well as how to analyse past questions and improve memory skills. Private tuition centres are all predicated on tests and examinations, on which these businesses depend. (p. 25)

The above extract is one piece of evidence about the Malaysian educational system in practice. Continuous feedback on writing is unlikely to occur when much emphasis is placed on the end of product. Moreover, the large numbers of students per class has also worsened the situation, as the writing process receives less attention over the product approach to writing due to time constraints and inability to focus on individual needs. This, however, has raised questions of 'fair assessment'. In this case, whether the students are fairly assessed; to what extent

students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability as a result of learning; the extent of the knowledge about students' learning when there is little or no emphasis on the learning process. Indeed, there is a need to look further into the current situation of teaching ESL writing in Malaysia. Hence, it is the aim of this study to further investigate the ESL writing pedagogy in practice and its relation to the sociocultural perspectives, since limited studies have been carried out to link ESL writing pedagogy and its assessment within the Malaysian sociocultural context. Also, few studies in Malaysia have been carried out on assessment and on how assessment and learning are integrated, particularly in the ESL context.

Thus for the purpose of this study, it is essential to define assessment, comprehend the different purposes of assessment in education, explore how assessment is perceived by teachers and learners, and what implications it has for the stakeholders, and the pedagogical practices. The understanding of assessment and its influence on the pedagogical practice lead to the primary focus of this study. The next section reviews the literature on assessment in education and the two forms of assessment - the summative and the formative assessments – that leads to the reviews on writing assessment in the Malaysian ESL writing classrooms being the central focus of this research.

2.4 What is Assessment?

It is important to discuss the different definitions of assessment in order to develop a shared ground and understanding for both theoretical and practical development in education (Taras, 2005). Hedge (2000) defines assessment as the

general process of monitoring and keeping records of students' progress. Gray (2002) provides a more specific definition where she introduces assessment as “a form of systematic inquiry with the following elements: learning as hypotheses, educational practices and experiences as context, evaluation as information gathering, and decision making as direction for improvement” (p. 58). Walvoord (2010) defines assessment as a “systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions that affect student learning” (p. 2). Based on these four definitions, it could be summarised that ‘assessment’ is a way of getting inform about the teaching and learning progress through a set of procedures, in which the information received could be used to feed back into the educational system.

This section is divided into five sub-sections. Section 2.4.1 presents the roles of assessment. Section 2.4.2 reviews on assessment for formative purpose and Section 2.4.3 reviews on assessment for summative purpose. Section 2.4.4 gives an overview of the assessment system in Malaysia and its related initiatives. Finally, Section 2.4.5 specifically reviews on the assessment of writing.

2.4.1 The roles of assessment

Assessment should be integrated into the process of teaching and learning (Alderson, 2003; Heritage, 2007; Tunku Mohani, 2003) because much information about teaching and learning could be gathered from assessment. This integration process would develop understanding of effective teaching and learning (Ellis, 2001; Shepard, 2000).

Commonly, assessment serves different purposes. Gipps (1994) identifies the various purposes of assessment (e.g. screening, diagnosis, record keeping, giving feedback on performance, certification, and selection) where these purposes are based on the needs for the assessment information being elicited. Carless (2011, p. 5) lists the three most common purposes of assessment: to aid student learning, to judge the quality of student learning, and to satisfy the needs of accountability. Looking at a wider perspective, the purpose of assessment can be divided into two main categories (Bloom, 1969; Scriven, 1967). They are formative assessment which is pedagogically motivated; and summative assessment which is used to measure the students' achievement (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003; Carless, 2011; Gipps, 1994; Wiliam, Lee, Harrison, & Black, 2004).

2.4.2 Assessment for formative purposes

Various definitions for formative assessment have been provided by educationists and researchers. For example, Cowie and Bell (1999, p. 101) generally identify formative assessment as a kind of assessment used for the purpose of enhancing teaching and learning. In their earlier work, Cowie and Bell suggest that this kind of assessment is “the process used by teachers and students to recognize and respond to student learning in order to enhance that learning, during the learning” (Cowie & Bell, 1996, p. 3). Gipps (2002) defines formative assessment as “the process of appraising, judging, or evaluating students' work or performance and using this to shape and improve students' competence” (p. 74). According to Carless (2011), the formative role of assessment shapes “current and future student learning” (p. 5) which involves the diagnostic role of assessment.

Wiliam (2006, p. 284) argues that “assessments are formative...if and only if something is contingent in their outcome, and the information is actually used to alter what would have happened in the absence of the information.” Carless (2011) has recently asserted that current conceptions of formative assessment do not solely refer to a formal assessment, but also refer to the everyday classroom interactions for and during the learning process which will be carried out in a systematic way. He further concludes that “formative assessment is to do with eliciting and interpreting evidence, so as to enhance instruction and improve student learning” (p. 7).

Looking at various definitions by others (Bell & Cowie, 2001; Black & Wiliam, 2003; Carless, 2011; Cowie & Bell, 1996; Gipps, 1994), it could be summarized that assessment can be considered formative only when there is an effort or initiative to improve students’ learning that involves both the teachers and the learners, with feedback and feed forward as important elements of the assessment process.

Thus, formative assessment is a tool to enhance teaching and learning by allowing students to move from one step to another with the help of interactive feedback from both teachers and peers and the feed forward from the teachers. In addition, formative assessment enables students to assess their own work and the work of their peers under the construct of cooperative learning. Generally, assessment is considered formative only if it shapes the development of a curriculum and promotes a student’s learning.

Various empirical studies on formative assessment in writing revealed the contribution of formative assessment in both the teaching and learning of writing

(Barlow, Liparulo, & Reynolds, 2007; Joe & Christina, 1997; Keen, 2005; Lee, 2011; Parr & Timperley, 2010; Pharo & De Salas, 2009). For the past four years, research on formative writing assessment informed about the diversity of research focus for formative assessment in writing. Meyer (2009) investigated the students' awareness on the use of formative assessment in an academic writing course for first-year students at South African university. His study revealed that by exposing the students to formative writing assessment, they had a better understanding of how formative assessment could assist in their writing development. He asserts that "students could clearly stress their preference for the value of formative comments, which would encourage them to correct their mistakes and develop their writing further" (p. 222).

In another study, Parr and Timperley (2010) examined teacher's written response, within the formative assessment framework, in the writing classroom in New Zealand. Among the focus of their study was to identify the construct of quality feedback and to find out the relationship between teacher's ability in giving formative writing feedback with the students' progress. Findings of their study indicated that there is a strong relationship between teacher ability in giving quality formative writing assessment feedback and the students' progress. They argue that teachers' ability in giving quality feedback is driven by teacher knowledge. They also assert that feedback for formative assessment support students to engage in self-assessment that consequently "help them [the students] to move towards self-regulation of their learning in writing" (p. 81).

In addition, Lee (2011) explored the influence of formative assessment on teachers' instructional and assessment practice and the influence of formative assessment on the students' beliefs and attitudes towards writing, in Hong Kong.

The results of her study indicated that the formative assessment influenced the writing instruction in which formative assessment allowed students to produce multiple drafts, enabled teachers to adopt selective feedback, and allowed teachers to provide more input to help students with their writing tasks. It is also emphasized that the implementation of the formative assessment in writing gave an impact on the students' beliefs and attitudes, where students generally posited "positive attitudes towards writing, enhanced their self-esteem and motivation, and become more convinced of the importance of formative assessment strategies in the writing classroom, such as conferencing and multiple drafting" (Lee, 2011, p. 105).

Various empirical studies have dealt with formative assessment in writing particularly on the student awareness, the effectiveness of formative assessment, the quality of feedback for formative assessment, and the influence of formative assessment on students' beliefs and teachers' pedagogical practice. However, it could be inferred that the number of studies for formative writing assessment is still limited. Drawing on the work of Lee (2011), it is noted that formative writing pedagogical approach is not explicitly and widely discussed or presented in Malaysia.

2.4.3 Assessment for summative purposes

Summative assessment is usually identified as 'assessment *of* learning'. This type of assessment generally refers to the process of evaluating students' learning for the purpose of grading or for sorting or comparing students; this is usually done at the end of a unit, a course, or a programme (Earl, 2003) hence, separate from

teaching and learning process. The use of examinations and psychometric tests are conventional means of assessing learners; they do not look into how assessment can feed forward and be used to assist teaching and learning as their main focus is on the final product, often expressed in terms of a grade. Scriven (1967) and Bloom, Hastings, and Madaus (1971) defined summative assessment or evaluation as the type of assessment that is given at the end of units, terms, or courses which is used to measure the extent of the students' learning. Similarly, Trotter (2006, p. 507) states that summative assessment, traditionally, measures student achievement and gives information about students' level of performance. The purpose of summative assessment obviously differs from formative assessment where the aim is not to indicate the mastery of a particular skills or concepts but rather to indicate a general learning achievement through a standardized grading system.

Interestingly, Wiliam and Black (1996, p. 538) note that "the results of an assessment that had been designed originally to fulfill a summative function might be used formatively." Similarly, Taras (2005), who studied the relationship between formative and summative assessment, suggests that an assessment task may be used for both formative and summative purposes where "it is possible for assessment to be uniquely summative where the assessment stops at the judgement... however, it is not possible for assessment to be uniquely formative without the summative judgement having preceded it" (p. 468). Their claims suggest that assessment, be it formative or summative, can be regarded as one rather than as two separate entities, as they are interrelated and there can be an overlapping in functions and procedures. Hence, in the actual teaching and learning process, it would be useful to integrate the two approaches of assessment.

Nevertheless, it is important to be clear as to what each assessment type is in theory and what it is in practice to avoid confusion about the different purposes these two assessments have to offer as noted by Harlen and James (1997):

...the formative and summative purposes of assessment have become confused in practice...there is a need to recognize in theory and in practice the differences in functions and characteristics between formative and summative assessment and to find a way of relating them together that preserves their different functions...(p. 366)

For the purposes of this research, formative assessment will be referred to as assessment *for learning*, while summative assessment as assessment *of learning*.

By defining the terms, it will be easier to understand and highlight the different purposes of the assessment being practiced in the Malaysian educational settings.

Although the term is widely used in various contexts and perceived differently, there is one common theory or assumption behind several definitions given that is assessment is seen as a developmental process through a systematic system of inquiry about learning and pedagogical practice.

Generally, assessment is not entirely about marking and giving grades. It is a broad term used to indicate the act of measuring, evaluating, interpreting, making sense of the results, collecting information and providing feedback for a set of purpose. In this thesis, I define assessment as a tool for gathering useful information about teaching and learning through an orderly process of inquiry, based on a set purpose that could effectively inform practice and decisions.

2.4.4 Assessment in Malaysia: a shift of paradigm

Summative assessment is widely practised in the Malaysian education system when most schools and institutions worldwide have practised formative assessment (Earl, 2003, p.22; Scriven, 1967). Earl (2003) asserts that summative assessment, which is normally done at the end of a course, is still strongly influential, and this is particularly true in Malaysia. Generally, according to Gipps and Stobart, the exam-oriented system “has profound implication for the style of tasks assessed, the limited ways in which tasks can be explained to students, and a lack of interaction with the testers” (Gipps & Stobart, 2003, p. 550).

Looking towards a more communicative and meaningful way of assessing the learners is to shift the educational assessment system. The purpose is to look at the learners’ competence and how the results of that assessment could be fed forward for effective teaching and learning. When a shift is proposed, it does not mean that the current summative form of assessment is less useful and thus should be discarded. Indeed, the role of summative assessment is as important as any other forms of assessment. However, integrating formative assessment into the current teaching and assessment system could help teachers and individual learners, to a certain extent, achieve the learning goals and reflect on the teaching and learning process without neglecting the grades at the end of a term. Therefore, in maximizing the purpose of assessment, it would be functional and relevant to incorporate and consider assessment as part of the teaching and learning process rather than treating assessment as a separate entity by having it at the end of each course. By integrating assessment into teaching and learning,

assessment is now being regarded as a dynamic process promoting assessments for both formative and summative purposes.

As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, it was with this awareness that in 2007, the Malaysian Examination Syndicate took the initiative and invited several local and regional assessment experts to discuss how assessment could be integrated into teaching and learning. The focus of assessment would no longer be on the end results but on the monitoring of growth in learning and this is called ‘humanising assessment.’ This was explained at a conference by the Director of the Examination Syndicate:

... assessment must be looked at as an integral part of the curriculum and fulfilling multiple purposes: *fostering learning, improving teaching*, providing valid information about what has been done or achieved, and enabling pupils and others to make sensible and rational choices about courses, careers, and others. (Malaysia Examination Syndicate, 2007; emphasis added)

Changing slightly from the usual practices, assessment is now regarded in principle as an essential element within teaching and learning development and thus the teaching and learning process has become an important on-going process. This change of focus for assessment was further emphasized in the forum conducted by the Malaysia Examination Syndicate (2007) which recommended that “the Ministry of Education must re-educate the public to view and accept assessment and not just examination”. It is also highlighted that the change of focus in assessment should be holistic and integrated and should develop and maintain a meaningful balance between formative and summative purposes. To date, the form of formative assessment at both primary and secondary school levels known has been in place for three years since its implementation in 2010 yet there are issues and rooms for improvement (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2011).

This newly adopted assessment system at school level should transcend to tertiary level. As such, a step needs to be taken to introduce the concept at the tertiary education level.

It is with this challenge that my focus is to further explore how assessment is perceived among teachers and how formative assessment could be integrated into the current system. However, it is quite impossible to look at formative assessment in a broader educational assessment setting. Since my background is in ESL and I am involved in the teaching and assessing of writing, I chose to focus my research on the assessment of writing in the ESL context.

2.4.5 Assessing writing

Hyland (2003, p. 31) argues that it is crucial for writing teachers to address the differences between L1 and L2 writing “to ensure their classroom expectations, teaching practices, and assessment procedures are fair and effective” (p. 31). The emphasis in teaching and assessing L2 writing should not be set only on the learners’ competency in L2 linguistic components but should also consider the learners’ sociocultural background as the development of ideas will be based on their experience and exposure. It is unfair to disregard the learners’ sociocultural background when setting assessment tasks as this could distort and deter the writing process; from the generation of ideas through to drafting the written tasks.

Another important statement by Shaw and Weir (2007, p. 17) is that:

... success in language learning and performance assessment depends primarily on an individual’s ability in the intended construct, there are of course many other variables which are likely to impact on performance and which relate to personal

characteristics on the individual test-taker; this include factors such as age, interests, experience, knowledge, and motivation. (p. 17)

This statement highlights the importance of assessing language learning from a sociocultural perspective where learners' backgrounds are so influential. Thus the outcome of every assessment would depend on the learners' various backgrounds and sociocultural variables rather than knowledge alone. The recognition of the importance of the learners' backgrounds has not been occurring in the design of assessment in the Malaysian system. The Malaysian view of assessment, because of historical and cultural factors, is very examination-oriented and achievement based and this view has become a socio-educational tradition (Taras, 2006) that has influence the purpose of teaching. Hence, the inclusion of sociocultural theory (see Section 2.7) in this particular study is relevant and indeed fundamental.

Although the majority of studies on second language learning and writing were conducted in the target language environment (Braine, 1996; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Kaplan, 1966; Leki, 2001; Storch, 2009), such studies are increasingly carried out in non English speaking environments, namely Asia. Hence, exploring ESL writing in a pluralistic community within its second language environment would complement the earlier findings on ESL writing scholarship, which were mostly based in a target language environment. Since most studies in second language writing focus on the role and the cognitive aspect of the learners, ideas regarding the teaching of writing are based on how teaching and learning are, thus, conceptualized from the cognitive view. Hence, there is a need to explore other aspects of teaching and learning.

To promote pedagogical change and development in ESL writing practice in ESL classrooms in Malaysia, relying upon the cognitive aspects of learning alone is not adequate. Considering the cultural diversity among Malaysian learners, there is a need to accentuate the link between learners and their ESL writing from the sociocultural perspectives. As mentioned in the preceding section, the various studies conducted on ESL writing in Malaysian contexts pay little attention to the role of assessment in the teaching of writing, and in order to answer the call to maximizing assessment and integrating it into the teaching and learning process, this study is further narrowed to ESL writing assessment in Malaysia.

2.5 Feedback in ESL Writing Classrooms

Li and De Luca (2012), in their recent review of articles on assessment feedback, revealed that most studies indicate that feedback results in positive outcomes for the students' writing which contribute directly to the increase of their writing grades. Nevertheless, choosing appropriate forms of feedback is crucial in motivating and helping students to move on with their writing, hence improving their learning processes and outcomes (Parboteeah & Anwar, 2009; Shute, 2008).

2.5.1 Summative and formative feedback

There are various forms of feedback given to ESL students in writing classes to help them improve their writing. In writing, there is no single best form of feedback to be given to the students because different students require different forms of feedback, and they perceive and expect differently from their teachers, as

they will have different learning style preferences. Nurmukhamedov and Kim (2010) state that:

in order for teachers' written comments to make the greatest impact on student revisions, teachers should not only carefully select what to comment on but should also consider which commentary type would be the most effective way to convey this comment. (p. 272)

Feedback, like assessment, could be classified into formative feedback and summative feedback that serve different purposes. An example of a summative form of feedback is the grades given to the students for their writing evaluation. Summative feedback could have either positive or negative effects on the learners. Studies on the effects of feedback found that the types of feedback that come in the form of marks, which compare the scores between learners and that have limited specificity or is rather vague, tend to develop negative effects on learning (Butler, 1987; Shute, 2008; Wiliam, 2006). Weaver (2006) adds that feedback is less useful when it does not have enough information to support the students or when the students have limited ability to accurately interpret the comments given to them.

In addition, feedback that aims at improving learning is referred to by many as formative feedback (Bell & Cowie, 2001; Li & De Luca, 2012; Shute, 2008). Looking at the role of feedback formatively is to ensure that feedback is useful and informative, and it should be given to the students in a timely manner (Hamilton, 2009; Nurmukhamedov & Kim, 2010; Shute, 2008). Shute (2008) defines formative feedback as "information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behaviour to improve learning" (p. 153). According to Fluckiger, Vigil, Pasco, and Danielson (2010), formative feedback needs to be specific, simple yet descriptive for a particular task, give students an

opportunity “to set a clear expectation of themselves and to make decisions that influence their own success” (p. 137). They further suggested that in order for feedback to produce its optimum positive outcome, it has to be continuous and focusing on both the process and the product of learning.

Li and De Luca (2012) reviewed several studies that use an intervention approach namely formative feedback and grade, and one-to-one tutorial. These were used, respectively by the researchers such as Cramp (2011), Murtagh and Baker (2009) and Prowse, Duncan, Hughes, and Burke (2007) on assessment feedback. These several intervention approaches were incorporated into the process writing approach to further enhance the students’ ability to write. The examples of the intervention approach given highlight the different ways of managing feedback to student writers. Peer reviewing activity and peer feedback could also be considered as part of the intervention approach. The intervention used in the present study is outlined in Section 4.2.1.

2.5.2 Peer review and peer feedback in ESL writing classrooms

Revision of written production is required to ensure that it meets the readers’ expectations and, most importantly, it communicates well between writer and the readers. Peer review activity in the writing classrooms refers to a process of reviewing a written draft made by another member of a writing group. This reviewing process requires a reviewer to check and comment on the draft given to him. Peer review activity is commonly integrated in the process writing approach at the revision stage to encourage collaborative work between peers (Hu, 2005; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994). Liu and Carless (2006), in their study on peer

assessment suggest that the peer review or peer assessment activity allows opportunities for student writers to play a more active role in writing by “monitor[ing] their work using internal [i.e. self-] and external [i.e. peer] feedback [which is said to be] an element of self-regulated learning” (p. 280). Brill and Hodges (2011), who reviewed studies related to peer review as an instructional strategy, assert that various research revealed the benefits of peer review namely in promoting “critical and constructive collaborative dialogue” in the community of practice (p. 117). In addition, peer review activity helps to develop learner autonomy, especially in the process of negotiation for meaning-making, in the writing classrooms (Hu, 2005; i & Ng, 2000; Tsui & Ng, 2010). According to Mendonca and Johnson (1994), “peer reviews seem to allow students to explore and negotiate their ideas” (p. 766), by means of which giving them an opportunity to exercise their thinking rather than being passive students.

Various studies indicated that peer review contributes positively in the process of improving one’s written work (e.g. Liu & Carless, 2006; Topping, Smith, Swanson, & Elliot, 2000; Yangin Eksi, 2012). The input received from the reviewer is termed ‘peer feedback’ or ‘peer assessment’ (Hu, 2005; Kollar & Fischer, 2010; Paulus, 1999). The terms will be used interchangeably. Directed peer review with a standard rubric which results in the articulation of feedback is said to be useful and beneficial to the students and promotes standardization while students assess their own- and peer writing following a set of guidelines and common assessment criteria (Crossman & Kite, 2012). Nevertheless, Topping (2010), in his recent review of six studies of peer assessment, concludes that peer assessment which focuses towards grades and marks is rather less effective than elaborative feedback. This indicates that the nature of feedback does have an

effect on the students' writing performance. This also contributes to a concern on the appropriateness of feedback that is what type of feedback works on which cohort of learners.

This study also looked at how peer review activity was introduced, integrated and explored where the peer review process and feedback given and received by the students were looked into.

2.6 Research into Teachers' Beliefs and Pedagogical Practices

Borg (2003) uses the term 'teacher cognition' to refer to the cognitive dimension of teaching. According to him, studies on teacher cognition involve "what language teachers think, know and believe – and its relationship to instructional decisions" (p. 96) whereby "teachers' experiences as learners can inform cognitions about teaching and learning which continue to exert an influence on teachers throughout their career" (pg. 81). Studies on teacher cognition that either focus on the teachers' thought, knowledge, or beliefs and their relationship to the teacher's pedagogical practice have long established. In understanding the pedagogical practice, Clark and Peterson (1986) suggest two main domains in the teaching process, which are first, teacher cognition and second, teacher's actions and their observable outcomes. The effectiveness of teaching and learning are usually associated with the teacher's cognition and behaviour in the classroom.

Research on teacher cognition is necessary to identify and understand the different pedagogical choices made by the teachers towards defining and achieving effective teaching and learning as Woods (1996) asserts that classroom planning is a reflection of the teachers' set of beliefs system and knowledge structures.

Similarly, Kember (1997), who analysed 13 empirical studies between 1992 and 1994 on teaching conceptions at university level, proposed that teaching conceptions should be considered to enhance the quality of teaching.

‘Beliefs’ according to Borg (2011) are “propositions individuals consider to be true and which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and are resistant to change” (p. 370). Khader (2012) defines ‘beliefs’ as “a set of ideas rooted in the psychological and mental content of the teacher and play a central role in guiding his/her teaching behaviour” (p. 74). For the purpose of this study, both definitions from Borg and Khader are referred to. Studies on teacher cognition have pointed out several factors that contribute to teachers’ beliefs about teaching, which derive from three main sources: teachers’ general and teaching experiences, teachers’ experiences as students, and teachers’ knowledge of the course (Richardson, 1996).

Burns and Knox (2005), who researched teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about grammar teaching in relation to systemic-functional linguistics in Australia indicated several factors that contributed to teachers’ pedagogical beliefs; these included teachers’ personal theories about learning, institutional influences and constraints, teachers’ personal language learning experiences, previous teacher training, and teaching experiences. In addition, Talanquer, Novodvorsky, and Tomanek (2009), in their study of 294 pre-service science teachers to identify and classify the main factors that influence pre-service science teachers’ preferences for instructional activities through a survey and interviews with 22 pre-service teachers, found that teaching goals tend to shape teachers’ orientations about teaching.

Borg (2009), who studied the tensions between teachers' grammar teaching beliefs and practices on three practising teachers in Turkey, identified that the beliefs of the teachers were not always reflected in their teaching practices. He outlined two main factors that caused contrasts between beliefs and practices that include: student expectations and preferences, and issues related to classroom management.

Similarly, Mak (2009) in her study of EFL teachers' beliefs investigated how the teachers' beliefs developed within their teaching contexts in Hong Kong. Findings of her study revealed the factors that influence the teachers' beliefs and instructional decisions, which are the teachers' "perceived need to survive and adapt to the local teaching cultures, past learning experiences, tension between different beliefs, some culturally influenced beliefs, and exposure to teaching culture and models of language teaching" (p. 63).

In addition, Burns and Richards (2009) suggest that teachers' identity "reflects how individuals [teachers] see themselves and how they enact their *roles* with *different settings*" (p. 5 – emphasis added). This is supported by a more recent study, in which Farrell (2011) who explored the experienced ESL teachers' professional identities through reflective practice, argues that teachers' identities are a reflection of their beliefs, values, and emotions related to various teaching aspects. Hence, teacher identity is one of the factors that influence teachers' beliefs, which is also shaped by the sociocultural contexts. According to Farrell (2011), teachers' identity also could inform the factors that affect the construction and reconstruction of teachers' roles. His findings revealed that reflective practice could help teachers realize their roles, particularly on how and who have shaped their teacher identity over time. He further asserts the importance of making

teachers aware of their roles to develop change when necessary and “opportunities must be made for them [the teachers] to become more aware of their role identity” (p. 60). Most importantly, the study pointed out the notion of community of practice that is believed to have an influence on helping teachers to decide and make changes to their roles, if they want to.

Also, Borg (2011), in a qualitative longitudinal study, which investigated the impact of in-service teacher education on six English language teachers’ beliefs, in the United Kingdom asserts that teacher education could give an impact on the teachers’ beliefs. His study gave evidence that teachers’ beliefs can be strengthened and extended through education where “teachers can learn how to put their beliefs into practice and also develop links between beliefs and theory” (p. 378).

In another study, Hasim, Tunku Mohtar, Barnard, and Zakaria (2013) explore the use of metaphors among pre-service teachers in Malaysia to reflect their roles based on their 3-month teaching practicum experience. The study revealed several main metaphors associated with information transfer, fun learning, kinship, and motivation were chosen by the teachers to reflect their roles. The adopted metaphors indicated the pre-service teachers’ adopted roles which were adjusted to meet the classroom demands whereby the metaphors chosen and the illustrations given indicated that “the elements of collaborative, participatory, and cooperative learning are the key principles towards successful teaching and learning” (p. 76). This indicates that exposures from the teaching practicum experience could influence the teachers’ conceptions of teaching and learning as teachers were trying to meet the needs of their learners. It is believed that

teachers' beliefs could change over time through teaching knowledge and experiences to be translated into practice.

However, the result could not be generalized as there were also findings that revealed inconsistent relationship between teachers' conceptions of teaching with conceptions of learning. According to Borg (2003):

teacher cognitions and practices are mutually informing, **with contextual factors playing an important role** in determining the extent to which teachers are able to implement instruction congruent with their cognitions. (p. 81; emphasis added)

While various factors that shaped teachers' beliefs were identified, from the previous research, to be congruent with teachers' action, a number of research studies also reveal the inconsistency between the teachers' beliefs and their pedagogical practice. Phipps and Borg (2009), who studied the tensions in the grammar teaching beliefs and practices of three experienced EFL practising teachers in Turkey over a period of 18 months through teaching observations and interviews, argue that the teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices do not always correspond. The findings of their study revealed the tensions between the teachers' stated beliefs and their practices mainly in teachers' approach to teaching grammar when teachers were found to act differently from what they believed in. The tensions are believed to be influenced by factors such as "students' expectations and preferences, and classroom management concerns" (p. 387).

Liu (2011) who studied factors related to teachers' pedagogical beliefs and technology integration among Taiwanese teachers at Taiwan elementary schools, also identified a conflict between teachers' beliefs and their pedagogical practice.

A survey results from 1120 respondents were analyzed using a chi-square test revealed that “most Taiwanese teachers held learner-centered belief, but did not integrate constructivist teaching with technology” (p. 1012), which gave evidence on the conflict between teachers’ beliefs and teaching activities.

In a more recent study, Mansour (2013) conducted research on the consistencies and inconsistencies between science teachers’ beliefs and practice in Egypt. His study aims at understanding how teachers make sense of their teaching practices in relation to the school and classroom contexts and the extent these teachers characterize their practices in relation to their pedagogical beliefs. Results of the study indicated that the transformation of teachers’ beliefs into classroom actions depended on several contextual factors such as teachers’ experiences, learners’ needs, constraints, school environment, and personal religious beliefs. Mansour (2013) argues that contextual factors, which constrain teachers such as lack of equipment, lack of time for teaching, large class sizes, examination system, etc., may influence teachers, over time, to develop a set of beliefs that will gradually conform into personal philosophy of teaching.

The factors identified particularly those affecting teachers’ beliefs about teaching from the various studies could be classified into several categories. Boulton-Lewis, Smith, McCrindle, Burnett, and Campbell (2001) in their study of 16 secondary school teachers, to find out the teachers’ conceptions of teaching and how it influences their conceptions of learning and teaching practice, in two Australian schools, managed to categorize the teachers’ conceptions of teaching into four categories. The first category is on the transmission of content or skills where teaching is seen as imparting information or skills. The second category dealt with development of skills and understanding where the teacher directs the

learning process and students are seen as participants. The third category involves the facilitation of learning or understanding where teacher and student work collaboratively to construct meaning. Finally, the fourth category is transformation, which involves teachers giving initial stimulus for the students and later allowing them to develop their learning independently. These four categories of teachers' conceptions of teaching are found to be consistent with the teachers' conceptions of learning and their teaching strategies. These categories described by Boulton-Lewis et al. link with the sociocultural theory particularly on ZPD which will be presented in Section 2. 7.3.

Generally, empirical studies acknowledged the influence of sociocultural factors on the development of teachers' beliefs and the extent these beliefs converge with or diverge from their teaching practice. This also indicates the importance of study on the teachers' beliefs to expand understanding and knowledge of pedagogical practice and development as Kunio (2012) claims that "teachers' teaching beliefs play a critical role in their teaching practices" (p.41). Hence, a change in teachers' beliefs is needed to develop a change in the teachers' behaviour.

2.7 Sociocultural Theory: Its Relevance to Malaysian ESL Contexts

This section presents the conceptual framework for understanding the role of assessments, assessment feedback and feed forward in Malaysian second language classrooms and how assessment could be used to assist learning among ESL learners, particularly in the ESL writing classrooms. In developing this understanding, a sociocultural perspective is applied in this study. Specifically, the pedagogic intervention is conceived as a Zone of Proximal Development

(Vygotsky, 1978) - which will subsequently be explained in Chapter 5 as a zone of *writing* development - in which the learners are guided towards self-regulation, mediated by text and tasks scaffolded by the teachers.

Lev Semyonovitch Vygotsky (1978) introduced the developmental approach in the field of psychological science. Although his work is focused on psychology, I could see the relevance of his theory to be incorporated into my study in relation to process approaches to writing and the inclusion of formative assessment to promote teaching and learning development of ESL writing. In this particular section, I present the concepts behind the developmental approach which then lead to a description of sociocultural theory and its relevance to the teaching, learning, and assessing of writing.

2.7.1 Vygotsky and his developmental approach

Vygotsky acknowledged the “dialectical and historical materialism in the higher mental processes” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 6) and highlighted the importance of ‘processes’ in all occurrences of study into educational and cultural development and change in individuals. Hickmann (1985, p. 236), identified three main aspects in dialectical developmental processes: the relationship between social interactive and higher mental processes; the linguistic mediation of *both* kinds of processes; and the multi-functionality of language. Vygotsky believed that thought and words are not isolated:

A word without meaning is an empty sound; meaning, therefore, is a criterion of 'words,' its indispensable component... Word meaning is a phenomenon of thought only insofar as thought is embodied in speech, and of speech only insofar as speech is connected with thought and illuminated by it. (1986, p. 212)

In his 1986 work, Vygotsky explained his method of study and discussions on how language and thinking are interrelated and could inform processes for him. According to his translator and editor, Kozulin, “psychology was a method of uncovering the origins of higher forms of human consciousness and emotional life rather than elementary behavioral acts” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. xv). In his developmental approach, Vygotsky also recognized the act of ‘consciousness’ that refers to the act of generalization of a higher concept that is systemized and localized and thus leads to mastery of a concept. This was reflected in his work on the relation between conditioned reflexes and humans’ conscious behaviour, asserting the need to focus on ‘meaning’ in this developmental approach. He suggested that individual development should not be separated from its sociocultural context because the latter leads to meaningful links and provides additional information for and of developmental processes. This belief is associated with his concept of consciousness where “socially meaningful activity may serve as a generator of consciousness” (Kozulin, 1986, p. xxiv).

Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. This developmental approach is very relevant to the writing process and the teaching of writing to ESL learners that requires student writers to display their understanding in writing by going through several writing processes associated with invention, composition, and revision (DeLuca & Annals, 2011).

2.7.2 Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and its relevance to ESL writing classrooms

The setting of this study is an ESL writing classroom in Malaysia. The perspective of second language teaching and learning has now moved from structural

linguistics and behaviourist psychology to sociocultural perspectives. Many studies in writing have been conducted and most argue that writing is culturally and institutionally embedded (Barlow et al., 2007; Barnard & Campbell, 2005; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Shaw & Weir, 2007; Tan & Miller, 2007; Taras, 2006). This view of writing is determined by individuals' socially derived perspectives and approaches to the second language writing. Awareness to consider social contexts in language learning started decades ago and was obviously influenced by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Cole, 1984; Donato, 2000; Donato & MacCormick, 1994; Hymes, 1972, 2001; Iran-Nejad, 1990; Lantolf, 1994, 2007; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Norton, 1997; Ohta, 1995, 2005; Swain & Sharon, 1998; Thornburg, 1990; Warschauer, 1998). However, the uptake of sociocultural theory in Malaysia has been limited because cognitive theory is still dominant. I would argue that a sociocultural perspective is entirely appropriate to the multicultural educational environment of Malaysia.

Under Vygotsky's developmental approach, sociocultural theory is used to determine the influence on learning of social processes and cultural values. Sociocultural theory has also been used to design appropriate tools to explain how the functioning of the mind is linked to historical, cultural and institutional contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Sociocultural theory, indeed, focuses on a sociocultural perspective that is used to identify the role of social interaction and participation in culturally organized events with regard to psychological development. From a sociocultural perspective, learning entails the absorption of knowledge and skills from an external activity that is socially mediated to internal individual mediation control through series of processes. This is clearly indicated in Vygotsky's description of the *internalization* process where he proposed that

internalization is (1) “an operation that initially represents an external activity is reconstructed and begins to occur internally,” (2) “an interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one,” and (3) “the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one is the result of a long series of developmental events” (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 56-57). The process mentioned above leads to the notion of *collaboration*, which in my study, I consider to be essential in the writing process. Collaboration occurs within the ESL writing setting when process writing is implemented through different recursive stages in writing – pre-, during and post-writing stages. Vygotsky’s concept of collaborative interactions, with the concepts of tool and social mediation, targets guiding learners to fulfil their potential learning development (Kell, 2007).

Making the shift within educational theory and practice to sociocultural theory would provide a wider scope for the teaching, learning and assessing writing in the Malaysian ESL setting. This shift acknowledges the role of social, cultural, and historical contexts in ESL language teaching, learning, and assessment, especially in the pluralistic society such as Malaysia, which seems to be missing within the conventional cognitive development strategies. Sociocultural theory holds that the processes of cognitive development and learning are a sum total of cultural and societal influence of those raised in different societies with diverse cultural values, beliefs, normative behaviours, manners and practices. In this respect, cultures dictate behaviours and conceptions which vary from one society to another. To propose a change in the Malaysian ESL writing pedagogical and assessment practices, sociocultural theory is essential to be brought into this research because consciously and subconsciously Malaysian teachers and learners carry their sociocultural background with them in the teaching and learning

processes, and also in associating meaning through the use of sociocultural contexts.

There are various aspects discussed in Vygotsky's work with regard to learning and development. However, this research will limit these to the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in SCT, with its implications for mediation, scaffolding, and regulation.

2.7.3 Zone of Proximal Development

The concept of ZPD is developed to comprehend the society's influence on the development of a learner where learning is believed to occur through social interactions with adults or more capable peers and the social context through supervision and assistance (Barnard & Campbell, 2005; Donato, 2000; Donato & MacCormick, 1994; Kell, 2007; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Smith, Teemant, & Pinnegar, 2004). Vygotsky defined the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as:

... the distance between the *actual developmental level* as determined by *independent problem solving* and the *level of potential development* as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in *collaboration* with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86; emphasis added)

There are four important key terms in ZPD, highlighted above. First is the child's *actual developmental level* (ADL) where according to Vygotsky (1978) a child's actual developmental level refers to the end products of development where "functions have already matured" (p. 86). A child is able to complete a task independently when that maturity level has been reached. Second is the *independent problem solving* (IPS) which refers to a child's ability to solve and

conceptualize ideas on his own without any help from others. Third is the *level of potential development* or zone of potential development (ZPD) which indicates an area where functions are still on-going towards reaching maturity. Finally, the *collaboration* (COLL) between a child and his adult guidance or his more capable peers is an important aspect in the process of helping a child to reach his function's maturity. According to Vygotsky, a child's learning development progresses with the help or assistance received from adults or his more capable peers. It also acknowledges that a learner of the same age may have different mental capability which requires teachers to vary their teaching (Vygotsky, 1978). Generally, learning and development are seen as a continuous process and individual learning capability varies from one learner to another and ADL could occur either at an early stage or at a later stage of any developmental process. Vygotsky's ZPD concept is further illustrated in Figure 2.1.

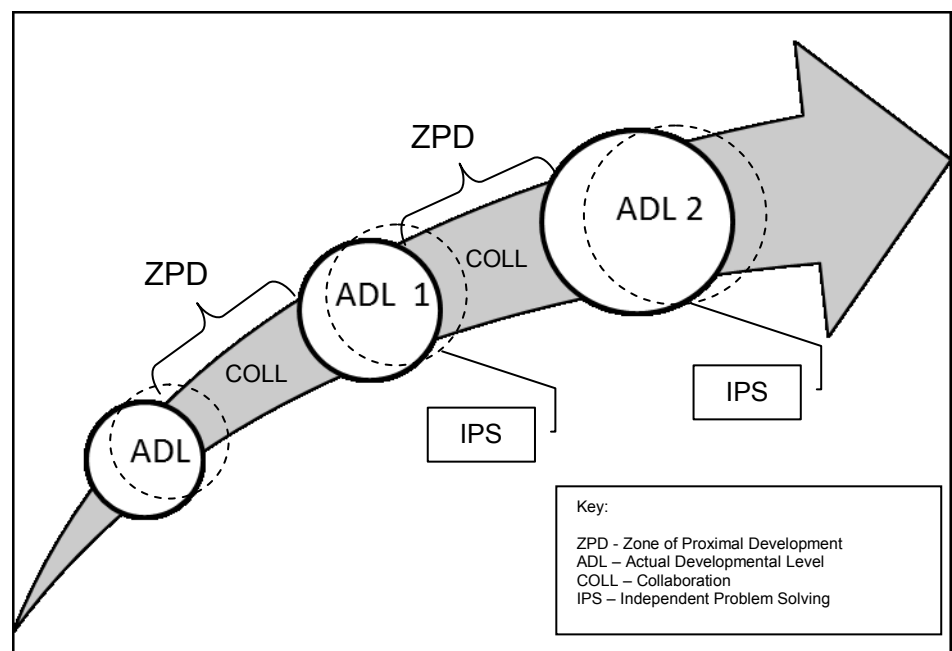


Figure 2.1: Four key elements in Vygotsky's ZPD

Although Vygotsky, in his work, directly mentioned ‘child development,’ the concept that he brought is obviously generic and can be applied to learners in general. One aspect of the greatest importance in the sociocultural theory is that it has insightful implications for education, teaching and learning where social interaction is perceived to play a major role in the learner’s development, apart from the learner’s individual life. It should also be noted that the social interactions could occur either in or outside the classrooms. The social interactions within the classrooms do not only occur between teacher and students (T-S) or students and student (S-S), but also between the classroom practices and their social context. Attention will now be turn to several other related constructs – scaffolding, mediation, and regulation.

Scaffolding

The ‘scaffolding’ concept in ZPD is used as a metaphor to illustrate the notion of assistance a child gets “to carry out a task beyond his capability” (Stone, 1993, p. 169). It refers to “those supportive behaviours by which an expert can help a novice learner achieve higher levels of regulation” (Guerrero & Villamil, 2002, p. 51). According to Van Lier (2004), scaffolding refers to assisted performance which occurs in ZPD and is temporary in nature till a taught concept is internalized and regulated by the learner. In addition, Van Lier (1996), in his work proposed six key features of scaffolding that involve a set of repeated actions or occurrences over a period of time, giving contextual support through structured activity (the principle of continuity); providing a safe, but challenging, environment for learning development (the principle of contextual support); developing/promoting mutual engagement towards the same goals to be achieved

(the intersubjectivity of attention); having an alternative principle that give room for modification of actions (the contingency principle); ensuring natural flow of interactions through synchronized actions (the flow principle); and making close observations to determine the learner's readiness to take up a task independently (the handover principle). Vygotsky observed that the development of a learner is largely supported by the peers and the adults within the learner's learning environment (Kublin, Wetherby, Crais, & Prizant, 1989). In relation to the sociocultural setting, the external environment in which a learner develops, such as participation in different activities, which require communicative and cognitive functions, scaffolds and nurtures the learner in ways that help him to develop different cognitive capabilities. In this regard, learning is described as being built within different events in the social life of the learner through the process of the learner's interaction with objects, people, environment and events (Van Lier, 1996; Wertsch, 1991).

Englert, Mariage, and Dunsmore (2006, p. 208) argue that sociocultural theory views "meaning as being negotiated at the intersection of individuals, culture and activity." In the case of writing instructions and sociocultural theory, Englert et al. have specified three aspects that should be emphasized in the writing instructions: the socio-cognitive apprenticeship, procedural facilitators and tools, and participation in communities of practice. In understanding and promoting the development and integration of formative assessment in the ESL writing classrooms, which is the main aim of this study, it is appropriate to look through the sociocultural lens as this could promote an integrative approach that tries to engage students during the teaching process so as to enhance learning. Sociocultural theory promotes interaction among students and between students

and teacher to foster the exchange of ideas during the learning process. This enables co-construction of ideas or knowledge during the learning process. According to Donato (1994), co-construction could occur by getting students to work in groups. This social aspect of language enables the student to reflect, recapture and have different perceptions of learning experience. It is also through the experiences of other people that a student is able to better his own learning and writing experiences through the process of reflection, recapture and change (Lantolf, 2007), which later lead to a process of internalization - that is when students receive feedback on the external plane, they then can process, evaluate and make sense for themselves.

Mediation

The concept of mediation is the central concept of sociocultural theory. This is further elaborated in Vygotsky's concept of mediation in human-environment communication (an extension from Engel's concept of human labour and tools) where he argues that "like tool systems, sign systems (language, writing, number systems) are created by societies over the course of human history and change with the form of society and the levels of its cultural development" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 7). Crossouard (2009) further elaborates that "our understandings are mediated and shaped by the material and symbolic tools available in the sociocultural settings of our activities" (p. 79) and it is important to acknowledge that these materials and symbolic tools are going through series of developments which are controlled by the surroundings and sociocultural settings. According to Bruner (1962, p. ix), Vygotsky and his work established an historical perspective into understanding what thought is and how it develops.

According to Lantolf (1994, p. 418), “mediation, whether physical or symbolic, is understood to be the introduction of an auxiliary device into an activity that then links humans to the world of objects or to the world of mental behaviour.” Just as physical tools (e.g. hammers, bulldozers, computers, etc.) allow humans to organize and alter their physical world, Vygotsky reasoned that symbolic tools empower humans to organize and control such mental processes as voluntary attention, logical problem-solving, planning and evaluation, voluntary memory, and intentional learning. Included among symbolic tools are mnemonic devices, algebraic symbols, diagrams and graphs, and, most importantly, language. Tools are seen as an important agent of change and development. In this research, the primary tool employed is language, the dialogue between teacher and students and among students. The development of learners’ writing skills includes the texts in which they are engaging, the writing tasks, and peer review checklist, and the writing procedures, all of which serve as the mediating tools.

Regulation

The essential learning development that Vygotsky (1978) referred to was that from the learner being dependent on the regulation of their activities by objects or other people - such as the teacher, the expert, or more able peers – to self-regulation where they can perform the specified or similar tasks independently. In other words, “what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 34). Van Lier (1996, p. 193), however, argues that in certain situations, interactions between learners with their less able peers would be more helpful than with more capable peers that allows for self-regulation. Self-regulated learning is referred to by Zimmerman (1994) as a learning process that involves learners who are “metacognitively, motivationally,

and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process” (p. 3). In the process of regulation, learners will plan, organize, monitor, and evaluate their learning process to normalize their learning strategies and practice towards successful learning (Ozdemir, 2011). The ability of learners to develop self-regulatory learning will help in developing successful learning. For example, Graham, Harris, and Mason (2005), in their study on the impact of self-regulation on students’ writing, found that “the writing performance and knowledge of struggling young writers can be improved substantially by teaching them strategies for planning and writing in conjunction with the knowledge and self-regulatory procedures needed to use these strategies effectively” (p. 238).

2.8 ESL Formative Writing Assessment in Malaysia and ZPD: Expanding the Construct

In addition to the reform imperative, there are some strongly embedded constraints that suggest, for this research study, working within the traditional process and product approaches to teaching writing that are currently in place. It is a challenge to change the long practised teaching, learning, and assessment principles in the Malaysian ESL setting. However, in promoting pedagogical and learning development, this research will be a launching pad for integrating formative assessment in the Malaysian ESL writing classrooms, particularly at the tertiary level. I have chosen ZPD as my main theoretical guide for the study due to its ideal concept of learning and development.

Vygotsky emphasized the need to focus on the processes of development in learning. As this research involves ESL learners' writing, there are some issues

related to the interference in the learning process. Interference here is in reference not only to interference from the learners' mother tongue or first language but also from the social, cultural, and historical contexts. The interference may either promote or suppress the development of learning. In his work, Vygotsky acknowledged individual differences by recognising the individual's mental capability. He noted that learners are not "mentally the same" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) so learning is performed or achieved differently between learners. In looking at integrating formative assessment into the Malaysian ESL writing classrooms, acknowledging individual differences is particularly important knowing that the learners come from various sociocultural backgrounds. There is also a need to examine the input factors that influence the ESL writing developmental process where the need to look at the manipulation of the structure and administration of instructional materials are seen as necessary. In ZPD, the role of the input for learning is important but plays a general role in language learning.

The notion of collaboration between a learner and his or her capable peers is important in learning development. However, in the Malaysian education system at tertiary level, usually when it comes to language learning classrooms, learners are grouped or streamed according to their level of competency or language proficiency level, so, help from a more capable peer would appear to be less achievable in the Malaysian ESL classroom. However, significant collaboration mostly occurs between teacher (regarded as a more capable person) and learners in the ESL context. Collaboration between learners is less significant as learners come from generally the same level of competence. Teachers have to determine when, how, and in what form collaborative work can be distributed.

In integrating formative writing assessment into the Malaysian ESL classrooms and developing understanding from the sociocultural perspective, and because of the complex scope of the study that entails both formative assessment and second language writing, I refer to the constructs of ZPD – scaffolding, mediation, and regulation - as my research framework.

2.9 Summary

This chapter has presented about Malaysian education context through the historical background pertaining to the development of medium of instruction and the educational system. The historical background of its language policy and education provide context to the status of English language as a second language in Malaysia and how teaching and learning are socially and politically influenced and conceptualized. The current situation of the ESL writing instructions and writing performance demand a focus on the writing approaches as there is minimal work found on the approaches to the teaching of writing and assessing writing. Also, a call for an assessment reform intends for assessment to be an integral part of the learning process. In promoting a shift in the perspectives and pedagogical practice, it is necessary to identify the factors behind the consistencies and inconsistencies between teachers' belief and pedagogical practice. The aim of this study is to focus on the integration of formative assessment into the teaching of ESL writing in Malaysia; it explores the product and process approaches through ESL writing interventions (assessment tasks) with sociocultural theory in view and how it could be conceptualized based on the

notions of ZPD, scaffolding, mediation, and regulation. So this research addresses the research questions outlined in the following section.

2.10 Research Questions

The overall aim of this study is to explore, from a sociocultural perspective, the beliefs and ESL writing pedagogical practices of two ESL teacher participants and to promote the development of teaching and learning of ESL writing through formative assessment and elements of process writing within the constraints of the context. Hence, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How are the teaching and assessing of ESL writing perceived by the Malaysian ESL teachers?
 - a) What is the current assessment practice of ESL writing in a Malaysian higher-learning institution?
 - b) What are the issues related to the teaching and assessing of ESL writing, in practice?
2. What are the changes explored in the process of integrating formative assessment into the current practice of teaching and assessing writing?
3. What are the immediate and the long-term impacts of integrating formative assessment and the elements of process writing approach on the research participants?
4. To what extent can a sociocultural perspective contribute to understanding the findings of the pedagogical intervention?

The methodological approach and data collection and analysis procedures which have been chosen to address these questions will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

This chapter presents the paradigmatic choices that guided my research design and assisted in the inquiry to develop an in-depth understanding from this qualitative study. It also describes the procedures and the rationale for the methodological choices for conducting this research and the approaches to data collection and analysis.

The overall purpose of this study was to develop change in the ESL writing pedagogical practice of ESL writing teacher participants so as to promote writing development among ESL student participants through the integration of a formative assessment and process writing intervention. Hence, reviewing the current practice and identifying the teachers' initial perspectives was a first phase of this research to enable a description of the teaching and assessing of ESL writing as well as to identify issues and aspects for improvement. The second phase of this research project was to develop, introduce, implement, and review a plan of action, through collaborative practice between myself and the two teacher participants, to promote changes in the teachers' perspectives and their ESL writing pedagogical practice in their classrooms, and in relatable contexts. The third phase was to evaluate the immediate impact of the intervention on both teachers and students and any long-term impact it has on the teachers' pedagogical practice and perspectives.

With an aim to better understand some features of pedagogical practice, this research adopted case study as the research style and action research as the

methodological approach. A case is seen as a bounded system that particularly refers to a specific group or situation or environment (Hood, 2009; Merriam, 1988). According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2012), when a case study is seen as a bounded system, "...it provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles" (p. 181). Case study research is widely adopted in education to explore the processes, development and underlying forces of practice (Merriam, 1988). Choosing an appropriate case is necessary to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon which is uniquely situated. Since my study focused on ESL writing within my cultural background and educational context, the case for my research was set within two ESL writing classrooms in a Malaysian university, and specifically with two volunteer teachers.

As mentioned previously in Section 1.1, action research was adopted as my methodological choice. Since the main aim of this research was to better understand some features of pedagogical practice, specifically in ESL writing classrooms, with further improvement in mind, action research was considered to be useful and appropriate, for the research aim fits within the action research methodological assumptions that will be elaborated further in this chapter.

3.1 Interpretive Paradigm

My research occurred within the interpretive paradigm where I explored the perceptions of the two Malaysian teachers in teaching and assessing ESL writing. The research specifically involved understanding the institutional requirements

and the teachers' pedagogical practices in the ESL writing classrooms, and then interpreting them from a sociocultural perspective. The interpretive paradigm has an underlying philosophy based on the assumption that "people socially and symbolically construct and sustain their organizational realities, ...the goal of theory building in the interpretive paradigm is to generate descriptions, insights, and explanations of events so that the system of interpretations and meaning, and structuring and organizing processes, are revealed" (Gioia & Pitre, 1990, p. 588). In other words, the aims of research occurring within an interpretive paradigm are to understand, describe, and develop situated explanations of a phenomenon or phenomena under study according to its or their occurrences. Heyman (1983) points out that the interpretive paradigm is "...both context sensitive and context independent" (p. 431), and addresses the question of 'What is happening?' in a particular context under study. This paradigm is very much grounded in nature where understanding is built from the perspectives of the participants and the research data are analysed through a series of coding processes (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). Context independence is facilitated by the fact that I, the researcher, was an institutional outsider (see Section 3.3.2), and thus was able to view and interpret events from a position of distance.

In this respect, the interpretive paradigm fundamentally differs from positivistic approaches to research. Positivists believe in a direct relationship between what happens around us and our perceptions, and they aim to develop a generalizable understanding of its occurrence which could be claimed as the ultimate truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Richards, 2003; Willig, 2008). Richards (2003) argues that:

...positivism is based on the fairly naive objectivist assumption that just as there is an objective world which is governed by laws discoverable by *science alone*, so there are social laws governing the relationships among individuals, institutions and society as a whole. (p. 37)

Positivistic approaches support the philosophies of scientific methods that uphold an extremely positive evaluation of natural science. Positivists seek to justify and explain statistically precise cause and effect relationships between tightly controlled and limited variables with a view to generalisation, prediction and confirmation. Viewed as reductionist, this approach restricts understanding of complex social phenomena (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Musa et al., 2012; Willig, 2008).

An interpretive approach, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), helps researchers in several ways. These include identifying different definitions of a problem, locating assumptions held by various parties, and identifying strategic points of interventions into social situations. Since the emphasis of an interpretive approach is on personal experience and its underlying meanings, it must always be mediated by and from the directly affected individuals' points of view. Very much inductive in nature, an interpretive research approach is data-driven and prior ideas are less accounted for in the earlier process of comprehending certain phenomena (Heyman, 1983; Merriam, 1988). In the inductive process, it is particularly important to avoid, or at least be aware of, bias and preconceived ideas during the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from a particular social group. If this is done, the interpretations of the data can represent the social phenomenon of the unique group under study and situated explanations derived from the data could contribute to sound theory-building in the specific setting and in relatable contexts. In addition, an interpretive approach allows the data to be

viewed from different angles to negotiate meanings and thus recognizes the inevitability of differences in interpretation (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006).

In summary, as this research seeks to understand perceptions and interpret practices rather than find objective truth, the interpretive paradigm is found to be the most suitable approach. The choice of such paradigm directly influenced the way my data were analysed and interpreted.

3.2 Action Research as a Methodological Approach

Action research is not fully acknowledged in the positivistic paradigm as it does not meet the fundamental tenet of positivism that “...in order to be credible, research must remain objective and value-free” (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003, p. 11; Tikunoff & Ward, 1983). The acceptability of action research (AR) in earlier years was minimal because positivism dominated second language acquisition research. Action research was viewed as an informal process of research and was considered a less legitimate form of inquiry because its subjective perspective was believed to give rise to unreliable and less than valid findings (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003; Gronhaug & Olson, 1999; McKay & Marshall, 2001).

However, action research has now made a significant impact in various fields of research such as marketing, information systems, education, and applied linguistics (Burns, 2003). Brydon-Miller et al. (2003) assert that action research is a form of research that could challenge and shape a practice as they believe “...the notion of knowledge as socially constructed...[and] that all research is embedded within a system of values and promotes some model of human

interaction” (p. 11). Burns (2005) also acknowledges that “...action research is seen as a means towards creating meaning and understanding in a problematic social situation” (p. 57). Over the years, action research has been elaborated and is now widely used as a research approach (Burns, 2005; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006; Mede, 2009; Pålshaugen, 2006).

Now that action research is seen as a well-established and valid research approach in education and applied linguistics, it may be used to research practical issues in order to suggest solutions to identified problems within specific organizations which could not be addressed through a positivistic scientific method of inquiry (Burns, 2000, 2003, 2005; Creswell, 2005; McNiff & Whitehead, 2002; Richards, 2003). In addition, Warrican (2006) affirms that action research is seen as one of the most suitable approaches to use among researchers who intend to bring about change in educational settings. Cohen et al. (2007b) also claim that action research “...is a powerful tool for change and improvement” in education (p. 297). In addition, McNiff and Whitehead (2002) claim that action research is “...a process of learning from experience, a dialectical interplay between practice, reflection and learning” (p. 13). Thus, in effect, the final outcome of an action research study is not fixed or predictable as beliefs and practices change over time; hence a key role of action research is to provide a systematic cycle for linking thinking and practice. Based on the various definitions and claims made for action research, I considered action research suitable for my research purposes. My present research position aligns with the claims made by the proponents of action research. I find action research quite suitable for my research purposes because my intention was to problematize common practices and suggest changes towards improvement.

From the discourse of action researchers such as those above, somewhat different approaches to action research design are suggested but four common steps within a research cycle are identified: *planning, action, observation, and reflection*. Depending on the research purpose and objectives, action researchers would adopt or in some way adapt the action research procedures - and for reasons which will be explained later in Section 3.3.3, my own investigation was an adaptation of these four common steps in action research.

3.2.1 Collaborative action research

In the case of the present study, I adopted a collaborative action research approach and particular attention was paid to how collaboration was defined and exercised along with the common principles and procedures of action research. Developing the basic action research design, Tikunoff and Ward (1983, p. 453) carried out their collaborative research in 1976 and named it “interactive research and development,” whereby the concerns of their research were with “resolving the concerns of classroom teachers.” They were interested in a collaborative approach to research due to the shortcomings of contemporary approaches to research design that were inadequate to inform classroom theory and practice that could lead to the improvement of classroom instruction. They define ‘collaborative’ as an approach that sees the teacher as an active contributor to research rather than a passive consumer of a research, where teachers and other educational stakeholders should be involved in the various stages of an inquiry process. Similarly, Gordon (2008) defines collaborative action research as a term used to describe a researcher conducting action research school-wide with a small group of teachers or with individual teachers as is the case in the present study.

Several advantages of doing collaborative action research have been identified by researchers. For example, Burns (2003) notes that collaborative action research allows teachers to share their problems or concerns and be members of the wider research community for which the findings and procedures of this collaboration could make a valuable contribution to academic and professional understanding of key issues. Burns adds that “collaborative action research is a stimulating direction for curriculum change and professional development...it integrates productively into second language curriculum and professional development programmes for many teachers” (2003, p. 53). Likewise, McNiff and Whitehead (2006, p. 136) emphasise that in collaborative action research, it is possible for a researcher to get all those involved in the research project to monitor and reflect on what they are doing with an aim of encouraging the co-construction of understanding within a particular situation or setting of a study.

According to Gordon (2008), in educational settings, collaborative action research “...can empower teachers, transform school cultures, and most importantly, dramatically improve student learning” (p. 1). This aspect of action research is particularly applicable to my research. It is useful in investigating, developing, and implementing the relevant tasks to promote formative writing processes in this specific ESL writing classroom context since “...collaborative action research processes strengthen the opportunities for the results of research on practice to be fed back into educational systems in a more substantial and critical way” (Burns, 2003, p. 13). Warrican (2006, p. 1) explains that “...a key ingredient in effecting change is the active involvement of the ‘clients’ themselves – in this case, teachers and students - in the change process” (p. 1). Similarly, Craig (2009) suggests that “...action research promotes collaboration and encourages

‘community’ among all parties involved in a specific learning situation, leading to results that have the potential to improve conditions and situations for all members of the learning community” (p. 7). However, Camarinha-Matos and Afsarmanesh (2007) emphasise that:

... the success of any collaborative project depends, to a large extent, on the effectiveness of the coordination principles and the established operational mechanisms for monitoring and assessment. (p. 65)

In the present study, the operational mechanisms mentioned above are discussed in Section 3.4.2. There is no set standard or procedure for conducting collaborative action research or for how collaborative action research should be designed. Depending on the aim of the research and how the roles of researchers and participants are perceived in a particular research study, the definition and procedures for any collaborative action research may differ from one researcher to another. Therefore, in the present project, I carefully designed the writing tasks and their procedures as an intervention informed by the data collected in the first phase of my project. The writing tasks developed for the intervention are related to the process writing activities of brainstorming activity, selecting and organizing ideas; essay outline, and the peer-review activity (see Section 2.3.2.1). These tasks and procedures for going about them were then introduced and shared with the teachers to be implemented in Phase 2 of the action research project. The intervention was carried out by the two collaborating teachers in a context-sensitive manner. In the first cycle, I formatively observed, monitored and collaboratively evaluated the pedagogical intervention with the two ESL teacher participants. Both the ESL teachers and I had discussions after each lesson to reflect and refine the pedagogical intervention. The teachers then used the

improved version in the second cycle of the action research project. Overtime through discussion and sharing, trust between myself and the teachers emerged and strengthened. I began with my design but collaboration soon followed.

In summary, promoting changes to improve the teaching and learning of writing in an ESL context was the overall aim of my research, which involved understanding the current practices of teaching and assessing writing, identifying the advantages and limitations of the current assessment practices, and observing the changes and challenges as a result of the implementation process. Thus collaborative action research was chosen for my study as I was confident that such an approach would encourage the sharing of problems and ideas between the collaborating researcher and teachers.

3.2.2 Adapting a model of action research

For the purpose of this study, a slightly modified version of the comprehensive nine-step model proposed by McNiff and Whitehead (2000, p. 204) was adopted. The original model involved the following stages: reviewing the current practice; identifying an aspect to be improved; planning a way forward; trialling a plan; taking stock of what happens; modifying the plan based on what is found; continuing with the modified action; monitoring what has been done; evaluating the modified action; and continuing the reflective cycle until it reaches a satisfactory level.

McNiff and Whitehead's action research model was adapted by dividing the nine-step model into three phases (see Figure 3.1): Phase 1 (Pre-intervention), Phase 2, (While-intervention), and Phase 3 (Post-intervention). Phase 1 of my research

was the collection of preliminary data to understand the current practice of teaching and assessing ESL writing. After reviewing the preliminary current practice, I identified issues and aspects for improvement. When issues and aspects for improvement were identified, the research moved into the next phase. Phase 2 involved the development and implementation of an action plan, followed by monitoring, reflecting on, and evaluating the plan and its execution. Under the conventional action research process recommended by most authors, a desirable third stage would be the modification of the action plan. Due to time constraints, however, only two cycles of Phase 2 were conducted for this research. Phase 3 involved collecting of data to explore the immediate and long-term impact of the intervention and the extent changes and development had occurred in the ESL writing pedagogical practice. Further description about these three phases of action research is given in Section 3.3.3.

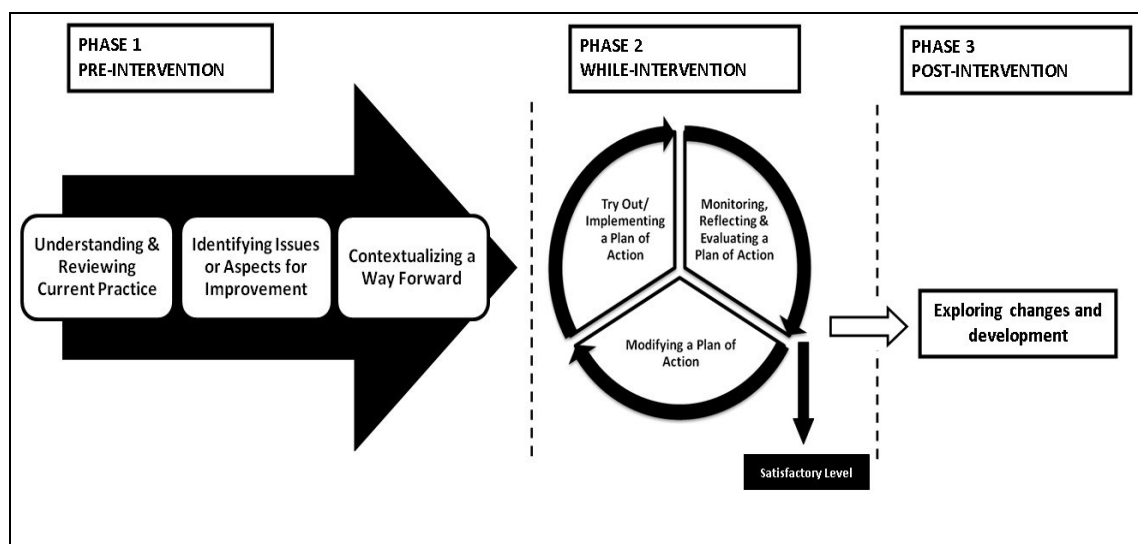


Figure 3.1: The action research processes adapted from McNiff and Whitehead's (2000) action research stages

In this adapted model, I had combined the steps of monitoring, reflecting on, and evaluating the plan as I believed these actions could occur simultaneously and continuously at the developmental level without separating them before going to the next stage of modifying a plan of action.

3.3 Research Design

This section describes the research setting, participants, and the collaborative action research procedures used.

3.3.1 Setting

The study was conducted in a higher learning institution in Malaysia. Two ESL writing classrooms were involved in this particular study. Although there are other higher learning institutions in the state of Selangor, this particular institution was selected for several reasons. First, the selected institution was looking to change their English language curriculum and syllabus. Secondly, I was familiar to the teachers, as they were my former colleagues, which potentially allowed me to be integrated into the community more fully than an unknown researcher. Having previously known the members of the institution also assisted me in developing an amiable working relationship with administrators as well as the participant teachers. Thirdly, familiarity with the education system, the curriculum, course content, and the assessment system of the selected institution allowed deeper discussion with the research participants of issues concerning the teaching and assessing of ESL writing. Fourthly, it was geographically accessible

from my home, which allowed me be at the research location frequently and in a timely manner.

3.3.2 Participants in the study

The participants of this study were divided into three groups: the two ESL teachers, a total of forty-eight ESL students that belonged to the two ESL teachers' writing groups, and the researcher (myself).

a. ESL teachers (also as collaborators)

In selecting the collaborating teachers, I used purposive sampling, which "...is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most" (Merriam, 1988, p. 48). Thus, before selecting the actual participants for my research, I set certain criteria to ensure that I could access the most appropriate participants within the research context to involve "...knowledgeable people...by virtue of their professional role, power, expertise, and experience" (Cohen et al., 2007b, p. 115).

Two ESL teachers working in the context were selected for the study based on the criteria that they:

- had at least five years teaching experience of ESL writing;
- were key personnel in the institution;
- were involved in teaching ESL writing skills in Semester 1 of the 2008/2009 academic year when the research took place;
- had taught the selected ESL writing course for the past five years; and
- were willing to participate in this collaborative action research;

- had high competence in English language.

The role of these two ESL teachers was to work collaboratively with me and share experiences, practices and ideas which were relevant to the study. For the purpose of this study, I had developed formative writing assessment tasks as a result of the understandings I had gained from Phase 1 data of the action research. The two teachers as collaborators used the interventions over two cycles. In the first cycle the teachers followed the researcher-led intervention. In the second cycle of the action research, teacher participants took a more leading role using a collaboratively developed intervention.

Among other collaborative activities the two teacher participants engaged in were monitoring and reflecting on the use of the researcher developed intervention in Cycle 1 of the action research of their own, and each other's classes; participating actively in discussions to review and improve the researcher-designed-intervention; negotiating the final version of the intervention; and providing feedback on the implementation of the intervention. The revised intervention was collaboratively developed whereby ideas and reviews resulting from the negotiation process were used to improve the intervention. The two ESL writing teacher participants in effect acted as critical friends by giving constructive criticisms in a collegial atmosphere. This constructive criticism is one of the strengths of the collaborative approach because it adds to the validity of the action research:

...one of the advantages of working collaboratively in action research teams is that team members can analyse and critique one another's data collection plan, all the while surfacing additional questions and issues for

consideration. [This discussion]also benefits from the introduction of a third party...a critical friend is just what the name implies [she] has your interests at heart when she gives you constructive criticism ...[she is able] to see your weaknesses better than you can...in a positive way. (Sagor, 1993, p. 46)

All the activities that involved teacher participants and their students were conducted in English throughout the study.

b. ESL students

In selecting this group of ESL student participants, convenience sampling was applied. This particular group of participants was chosen on the basis that they were the students in the ESL writing classes of the two teachers who involved in this study. A total of forty eight (48) student participants, who were in the first semester of the first year (2008/2009) in an Architecture Degree Programme, participated in this study. These students were allocated by the institution into two groups as shown in Table 3.1. Each of the students had scored between grade ‘B’ and grade ‘C’ in their English Placement Test.

Table 3.1: Distribution of students according to writing group, teacher and gender

Writing Group	Major	No. of Students		Total
		Male	Female	
Salmah’s	Architecture	20	3	23
Mazlina’s	Architecture	2	23	25
Total No. of Students		22	26	48

The unbalanced gender distribution of the students was because students were grouped in alphabetical order by the Admission & Record Department according

to their major of study. Salmah's Writing Group had more students whose name began with 'M' and the majority were Malay male students who have 'Muhammad' or 'Mohd' as their first name. In Mazlina's Writing Group, the majority of the students were Malay females so many of them had names starting with 'N' for 'Nor' or 'Nur.' Nevertheless, gender distribution was not included in this study.

During the study, students followed the writing syllabus and were taught for the usual number of contact hours (9 hours per week over a period of 14 weeks) required by the institution. They were also exposed to the specifically designed intervention for the purpose of integrating formative writing assessments into their ESL writing classroom.

c. Researcher

My role as a researcher was to work closely and collaboratively with the two ESL teachers to gather their views and understanding of the current practices of the teaching and assessing ESL writing (Phase 1), to collaboratively design and integrate formative writing activities assessment into their usual ESL writing classrooms (Phase 2), and to explore the immediate impact of the intervention on the teachers and students and the long term impact on the teachers' pedagogical practice and perspectives (Phase 3). As a researcher and a colleague, I presented myself as a critical friend who posed questions, initiated discussions, opened myself to comments and criticisms, and provided suggestions on introducing and integrating formative ESL writing assessment into the current practice plus its related issues. Working collegially allowed me to not only work closely with the

teachers but simultaneously, in Phase 2 – the Developmental Stage - to carry the role of a “facilitator, guide, formulator, and summarizer of knowledge” (Weiskopf & Laske, 1996, p. 132).

As researcher, I had control over my research design, which involved planning the collaborative action research study and contextualizing ways forward for the pedagogical intervention. Although I initially designed the intervention and controlled the research, the intervention was collaboratively refined through a series of discussions, feedback, and negotiation sessions with the two ESL teacher participants.

3.3.3 Action research procedure

The framework in Table 3.2 was developed to guide me through the whole process of my data collection, based on the research objectives and on the adapted action research model described in the earlier section (see Section 3.2.2). The following described the phases involved for the action research project.

a. Phase 1 (Pre-intervention): Data collection

Mills (2009) has structured data collection techniques under the action research paradigm into three dimensions: the ‘enquiring’ dimension which refers to ‘asking people for information;’ the ‘experiencing’ dimension which refers to ‘observing and taking field notes; and the ‘examining’ dimension which refers to ‘using and making records. This study was guided by these three components of action research data collection.


In Phase 1, data were gathered from documents and interviews that fall under examining and enquiring dimensions as categorized by Mills (2009).

Documents

One way of assessing pedagogical and assessment practices is by analysing the documentary data. According to Burns (2003), documents gathered during the inquiry processes can describe various aspects of practice. She further suggests that:

...examining documents can help researchers to complement other observations by building a richer profile of the classroom or institutional context for the research. They can also give insights into how theoretical and practical values connect and the degree of 'fit' between organisational and curricular concerns. (p. 140)

Table 3.2: A framework for the action research procedure and data collection

Phase	Stage	Objective	Research Question
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand & review current practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a description of the current ESL writing assessment practices at a selected local higher learning institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are the teaching and assessing of ESL writing perceived by the Malaysian ESL teachers? What is the current assessment practice of ESL writing in a Malaysian higher learning institution?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify issues/ aspects for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify issues/ aspect for improvement in ESL writing assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the issues related to the teaching and assessing ESL writing, in practice?
Contextualize a way forward			
			
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try out/ implement a plan of action Monitor, reflect, & evaluate a plan of action Modify a plan of action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore, from a sociocultural perspective, the changes and challenges of integrating formative assessment in the pedagogical and learning processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the changes explored in the process of integrating formative assessment into the current practice of teaching and assessing writing?
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the impact of the intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To evaluate the immediate impact of the intervention on the teachers and students and the long-term impact on the teachers' pedagogical practice and perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the immediate and the long-term impacts of integrating formative assessment and the elements of process writing approach on the research participants?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify the extent sociocultural perspective could contribute to understanding of the findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent can a sociocultural perspective contribute to understanding the findings of the pedagogical intervention?

For the first phase of this collaborative action research project, I obtained the course pro forma and the writing assessment materials from the ESL Writing Course Coordinator. I developed and used a document analysis protocol (see Appendix A) for these documents to gain an overview of the requirements for this ESL Writing Course and to further understand the pedagogical and evaluation processes involved. A document analysis protocol – also known as a ‘document summary form’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994) - serves the same basic purpose as an interview schedule. It guides a researcher to collect the appropriate and useful information from the selected documents, and to summarize, clarify, and determine the significance of the data gathered from the documents.

Interviews

Interviews are widely used for collecting qualitative data (Burns, 2003; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007a; Creswell, 2005). I chose semi-structured interviews as the inquiring technique to gather the two collaborating teachers’ views on assessment and to explore the existing/current practices of teaching and assessing ESL writing. A semi-structured interview format was used due to its flexibility in allowing the researcher to have a series of general questions related to the research objectives and to vary the sequence of the interview questions (Bryman, 2008). The advantage of using semi-structured interview is that it allows participants to “...voice their experiences and create the options for responding” (Creswell, 2005, p. 214) and gives room for the researcher to anticipate logical gaps in the data (Cohen et al., 2007a). The use of a semi-structured interview also allowed me to construct new questions based on, and in relation to, the interviewees’ responses.

Interviews with the teachers were conducted in the first phase of the study. For this purpose, I developed an interview schedule, which consisted of 16 open-ended guided questions and was used as my instrument (see Appendix B: Interview schedule). The guided questions focused on the teachers' perceptions and personal experiences in the teaching and assessing of writing to ESL learners. Questions were designed to gather relevant data to answer the research questions outlined in Table 3.2 above.

At the initial stage of this research, a web blog was used as a platform to interview my ESL teacher participants. According to Hasim, De Luca, and Bell (2011), a web blog is a platform that allows users to upload journal entries that can be shared with anyone or any specified group of readers and is considered as a collaborative platform. Firstly, the interviews with Salmah and Mazlina were initially conducted through web blogs because, among other reasons, the researcher and the ESL teacher participants were geographically separated and it would have been prohibitively expensive to conduct the two face-to-face interviews. Additionally, the web blogs allowed a less formal setting to reduce the level of anxiety and rigidity, and, through web blogs the interviewees and I could privately discuss and share related ideas more freely. Another reason for choosing the web blog as the platform for interviews and discussions was to develop flexible collaborative ways of working in which the ESL teacher participants and I could respond to, view and reflect on the ideas given by everyone involved in the interview sessions and discussions could occur at any time and for any duration. In addition, the use of web blog had the advantage of having written interview responses from the interviewees. This would eliminate the transcribing process and avoid having researcher's views and interpretation

while transcribing the interview data. Hence, the use of the web blog was seen as the most suitable medium of communication for the purpose of this research. However, due to constraints, additional methods for interviews such as Yahoo Messenger Chat Room and Telephone were also used (see Section 3.4.2 (a) for further details about these constraints).

b. Phase 2 (While -intervention): Data collection

Phase 2 of the action research project focused on the processes of planning, administering, implementing, reviewing, and planning ways forward. Specifically, Phase 2 involved the process of implementing and trying out a plan of action; monitoring, evaluating and reflecting the implemented plan of action; modifying the plan of action; and repeating the cycle to achieve particular goals (see Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2: Diagram for Phase 2 of action research

The processes in Phase 2 are represented by the three segmented pie-chart in Figure 3.2. These processes are a continuation from Phase 1. However, Phase 2 was cyclical where, ideally, researchers could repeat the cycles as frequently as possible till they reached a satisfactory level, as indicated by the arrows at the outer circle of the pie-chart. I conducted only two cycles of Phase 2 to develop, implement, and evaluate the intervention for ESL writing that focused on integrating process writing (see Section 2.3.1.2) and formative writing assessment (see Section 2.4.2) into the existing ESL writing course. The intervention aimed at refining the pedagogical approach through introducing elements of formative assessment and process writing tools to develop students' writing. In this phase, multiple data were collected. The data for this phase of the research were gathered through documents, briefing sessions, discussion sessions, and observations.

Documents

Documents gathered in the phase 2 of the study were students' learning outcomes, which comprised 48 sets of students' written work based on the writing tasks given (researcher-developed intervention for Cycle 1 and researcher/teachers collaboratively-developed intervention for Cycle 2). The writing tasks included in Cycle 1 were: researcher-developed worksheets for brainstorming, selecting and organizing ideas; the compare and contrast essay outlines; the peer-review checklist; and the essay writing (essay 1). The writing tasks in Cycle 2 were: the compare and contrast essay outlines; and peer-review checklist, which was collaboratively revised and the essay writing (essay 2). Table 3.3 below summarizes the types of documents collected from the student participants.

Table 3.3: A summary of documents collected in phase 2 of the action research study

Documents	Group 1	Group 2	Total
Worksheets on brainstorming	23	25	48
Worksheets on Organizing Ideas	23	25	48
Essay Outlines: Essay 1	23	25	48
Essay Outlines: Essay 2	23	25	48
Peer Review Checklist: Essay 1	23	25	48
Peer Review Checklist: Essay 2	23	25	48
First Draft: Essay 1	23	25	48
First Draft: Essay 2	23	25	48
Second Draft: Essay 1	23	25	48
Second Draft: Essay 2	23	25	48
Total	230	250	480

Briefing and Discussion/Feedback Sessions

I conducted face-to-face briefing and discussion/feedback sessions with the two teacher participants to explain the procedures of the writing tasks which I developed (for Cycle 1) as part of this action research project for the target group. In briefing sessions, I informed the teachers about the learning objectives and then introduced the writing tasks. I explained to the teachers how to go about the tasks. I used a general briefing/discussion guide to facilitate my discussions with both teachers (see Appendix C: Briefing & Discussion Guide). The data gathered from the briefing and discussion/feedback sessions were used to evaluate, modify and improve the intervention to be used in Cycle 2 of the action research project and for the collaborative reflection on the intervention. This source of data allowed me to gain immediate feedback and suggestions for improvement. It also helped to validate relevant research claims by giving evidence and support from the data findings (McNiff, 1988).

Observations

Observational data allow the researcher to gather real data from actual situations or events (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Gibson and Brown (2009), observation usually is conducted due to the interest in understanding a practice and the rationale for that practice. Sometimes an observation is conducted to see what is happening in a classroom, merely to describe a classroom event, without any particular interest in understanding the meaning associated to the event (Gibson & Brown, 2009). For this research, observations were carried out to gather the teachers' and students' reactions to the pedagogical change in the classrooms and to evaluate the practicality of the formative writing assessment tasks.

During observations, I adopted a non-participant observer's role; there was a complete detachment between participation and observation, and in this way I did not interrupt the interactional flow in the ESL writing classrooms. The main focus of this observation was to answer the basic general question: What happened to the teaching and learning of writing when sets of formative tasks of writing intervention were used? There were altogether sixteen observations: eight for each writing group. Table 3.4 below summarizes the distribution of observations made for the study. To be more focused during the observations, observation checklists were used as an instrument (see Appendix D: Observation Checklist). Though it was planned from the beginning to video-record the observations, the teacher participants personally requested not to be recorded.

Table 3.4: A summary of observations made according to writing group and research cycles

ESL Writing Group	Number of Observations according to Research Cycles		
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Total
Group 1	4	4	8
Group 2	4	4	8
Total	8	8	16

c. Phase 3 (Post-intervention)

Survey

Immediately after the intervention, questionnaires were given to a total of forty-eight students from both ESL writing groups to gather the students' perceptions of the researcher-developed intervention for formative writing assessment and to identify the immediate impact it had on the students. Questionnaires were used because they are viable to administer to a large group of students (Bryman, 2008; Dawson, 2009). A pilot study of the questionnaires was conducted on five students, who were doing the same writing course, but coming from a different writing group. The survey instrument was piloted to ensure that the instructions and questions were clear and could be understood by the students. Containing both closed- and open-ended questions, the questionnaires were divided into six sections (see Appendix E: Survey questionnaire). Section 1 sought to gather the students' demographic data. Section 2 was designed to gather information on the use of English language among students, and Section 3 focused on the students' attitudes and interest in learning English language. Questions in Section 4 were intended to discover the students' experience of and opinions on the current ESL writing classes which were conducted under the action research project in which

the newly created intervention tasks were included in the curriculum. In Section 5, students were asked about their previous learning experiences, specifically in the ESL writing classrooms. Finally, Section 6 focused on the students' perceptions of the intervention used as formative writing assessment tasks.

To complete the questionnaires, all the students were gathered in a lecture hall and sat in their respective ESL writing groups, but were given individual seats, similar to exam-like conditions. Both Salmah and Mazlina were present to help the researcher in distributing the questionnaires to the students. Prior to the distribution of questionnaires, I explained to the students the different sections included in the questionnaires so that they understood what they were supposed to do. The student respondents were given an hour to complete the questionnaire and they were not allowed to talk to the person sitting next to them. This was to ensure that the responses given on the questionnaires were only from individual respondents. The respondents were allowed to ask questions at any time while completing the questionnaires if they need further clarification regarding questions or statements in each section of the questionnaires.

Post-intervention interviews

Post-intervention interviews (I2) with individual ESL teachers were carried out immediately after the completion of the second action research cycle. The ESL teachers were separately interviewed to gather the immediate impact of the intervention on their perspectives of the process writing and the formative writing assessment in the form of peer-review activity. The findings from these interviews were used to add further information to the feedback received from the teacher participants on the researcher's intervention.

Follow-up interviews

Two follow-up interviews (I3A and I3B) were conducted in 2012. The first follow-up interviews (I3A) with individual teachers gathered information about the development in the teachers' pedagogical practice, over time. The second follow-up interview was a paired interview to revisit the teachers' perspectives on peer review. The main purpose of these follow-up interviews was to discover any long-term effects of this collaborative action research on the ESL writing pedagogical practice and curriculum development. While it was difficult to see vast changes or development occurring within a semester when the action research was conducted, revisiting the teacher participants was used to explore their subsequent teaching practices, specifically on the teaching of writing to ESL learners. For these follow-up interviews, an interview guide (see Appendix F) was also developed to ensure that appropriate questions were asked to encourage these teachers to disclose the situations currently in place. The various data sources, gathered for this collaborative action research, are summarized in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: A summary of data collection sources relevant to each research objective

PHASE	OBJECTIVE	RESEARCH QUESTION	DATA SOURCE
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain a description of the current ESL writing assessment practices at a selected local higher learning institution To identify issues/ aspect for improvement in ESL writing assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are the teaching and assessing of ESL writing perceived by the Malaysian ESL teachers? What is the current assessment practice of ESL writing in a Malaysian higher learning institution? What are the issues related to the teaching and assessing of ESL writing, in practice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview (I1) Document
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore, from a sociocultural perspective, the changes and challenges of integrating formative assessment in the pedagogical and learning processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the changes explored in the process of integrating formative assessment into the current practice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document Briefing and Discussion/ Feedback sessions Observations
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To evaluate the immediate impact of the intervention on the teachers and students and the long-term impact on the teachers pedagogical practice and perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the immediate and the long-term impacts of integrating formative assessment and the elements of process writing approach on the research participants? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey Post-intervention interviews (I2) Follow-up interviews (I3A) (I3B)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify the extent sociocultural perspective could contribute to understanding of the findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent can a sociocultural perspective contribute to understanding the findings of the pedagogical intervention? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings from Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3

3.4 Research and Data Collection Procedures

This section describes the data collection procedures involved in conducting my collaborative action research project and the data analysis approach.

3.4.1 Access to participants and ethical considerations

The two ESL teachers were selected based on the recommendation of the head of the department, who had been provided with the pre-set criteria. Subsequently, a formal letter of invitation to participate in the research (see Appendix G: Letter of invitation) was sent to each of the selected ESL teachers to inform and invite them to participate in this collaborative action research study.

When ethics approval was formally obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the School of Education of the University of Waikato, an application letter requesting to conduct the research in Malaysia was sent to the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) in Malaysia (26 February 2008) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) (30 March 2008). This procedure was necessary for any research that would take place in any of the Malaysian government bodies or institutions. Approval was received from the EPU on the 30 March 2008 and the MOHE on the 14 April 2008. I then approached the Vice-Chancellor of the selected institution by letter and email on the 14 April 2008 to ask permission to conduct the research at his institution. Consent from the Vice-Chancellor was received via email on 21 April 2008.

To gain access to the participants, I approached the head of the department (HOD) of the selected institution on the 15 April 2008 by informing her in writing about

the research and at the same time asking her to recommend two appropriate ESL teachers, who matched the pre-set criteria to participate in this collaborative action research study.

3.4.2 Data collection process

a. Data collection process in Phase 1

The interviews with the ESL teachers in Phase 1 of the study were initially conducted through a web blog. The initial plan was to have five interview sessions spread over five weeks which would address the two main research questions set for the first phase of data collection. The rationale for this was to ensure that the discussion could be asynchronous, so that the researcher and the teachers could log into the web blog at a time of the day and of the week convenient to them. This would promote flexibility in the discussion and accommodate the participants' time and space. Additionally, the web blog was available at any time to post ideas and discuss related issues. This web blog was monitored by the researcher and the ESL teacher participants were made aware that they were expected to log into the discussions at least once a day. Two identical private web-blogs, www.zhasim.blogspot.com and www.zhasim2.blogspot.com were created for this purpose and were accessed separately by Teacher 1 (Azlin) and Teacher 2 (Mazlina) respectively. This was the arrangement to ensure that participants' anonymity and privacy were protected and to ensure that the responses given by Mazlina were not influenced by Azlin's responses, and vice versa.

The blog was fully developed on the 2 April 2008 and made accessible to both teacher participants after consents required were received by all parties and it was finally launched on Wednesday, 7 May 2008, when I received consent from the Vice-Chancellor of the institution (21 April 2008), and should have ended on the 12 June 2008 (5 weeks duration). However, a delay occurred as respondents did not log into the web blog at the start because of unfamiliarity with the web blog. I then wrote guidelines on how to join and access the web blog (see Appendix H).

Two weeks after the blog was launched, the original teacher labelled as Azlina withdrew from the project. This left me with Mazlina as my only participant. With the help of the head of the department, on 21 May 2008, I found another teacher who was willing to participate and identified her as Salmah. Finding and recruiting another person took a week of the allotted time for the interview session. Because of the time lost by the withdrawal of the original teacher from the study, I used telephone and Yahoo Messenger chat room as alternative modes of communicating with my ESL teacher participants. I contacted both ESL teachers and informed them that the interviews would be carried out through these two modes.

b. Intervention development

Upon receiving information from Phase 1 of the study, the teacher participants and I identified specific areas of teaching and assessment to improve. I then constructed the formative writing tasks which include writing activities such as brainstorming, selecting and organizing ideas; writing a compare and contrast essay outline; the peer-review activity; and the essay writing. For the purpose of

improving the intervention, I worked collaboratively with the ESL teachers on adoption, monitoring, reflection, evaluation and refinement of the tasks designed. Further description of the intervention is elaborated in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.2.1).

c. Data collection process in Phase 2

Adoption, monitoring, reflection, evaluation and refinement were carried out in Phase 2 of the study in early July 2008 at the start of Semester 1, 2008/2009. The second phase of the study was carried out over fourteen weeks, of which the first week was spent meeting the head of the department and the ESL teacher participants as well as conducting a workshop for the two ESL teachers selected.

An hour-long meeting briefed and explained to Salmah and Mazlina the types of assessments and introduced the researcher-developed intervention (designed from a review of the data collected in Phase 1) that would be incorporated in their lessons over ten two-hour writing class sessions. During the meeting, both teachers were also briefed about obtaining their students' consent to participate in the study. Salmah and Mazlina were also informed of their role, and the need to work collaboratively with me.

For the process of implementation and trialling the intervention, 10 sessions of a two-hour writing period for each writing group were allotted for this action research. On the first day of the second week of the semester, I conducted a briefing session for both Salmah and Mazlina, which took place in Mazlina's office. This briefing was conducted to advise my collaborators about how they could implement the intervention. A briefing session was also held at each of the

writing stages to explain the tasks and general procedures. There were ten weeks of classes and thus there were ten briefing sessions. After every writing class period, we gathered in Mazlina's office for discussion and feedback sessions. Discussion sessions were conducted on Thursdays at 10am; there were ten discussion sessions altogether. In these sessions, Salmah and Mazlina worked with me collaboratively to discuss and reflect on the use of the researcher developed intervention. I used the input received during the feedback sessions to find ways to improve the intervention and identify the usefulness of the tasks for formative writing assessment. For the purpose of this research, Salmah and Mazlina were asked to teach using their course syllabus together with the researcher-developed intervention.

At each lesson where interventions were trialled, I sat in a corner at the back of the classroom and carried out observations using the observation checklist (see Appendix D). The interventions in process writing and formative assessment (i.e. peer-review facilitates formative assessment) were carried out over ten of fourteen weeks of the semester. As a researcher, I initiated and facilitated the briefing and discussion sessions before and after each writing lesson.

Cycle 2 of the study began in Week 6 of the ten weeks allotted for the study. Based on the input received from the observations and discussion sessions, I made some adjustments and improvements to the intervention. The intervention in the form of writing tasks were then shared with Salmah and Mazlina and used in the second cycle of Phase 2 of the research. The second cycle followed the same process as Cycle 1, in which the teachers trialled and I observed and monitored. We then had discussion/feedback sessions to reflect on and evaluate the intervention.

d. Data collection process in Phase 3

After the completion of Phase 2 (end of Week 10), I distributed a questionnaire designed to identify issues and gather overall feedback from the students on the use of formative writing tasks.

The survey was conducted in a hall where both groups were gathered together. I briefed the students on how to answer the survey and the two teachers, Salmah and Mazlina, helped me in distributing the questionnaires and monitoring the survey session. Input from the students was necessary to ascertain the students' perceptions and responses to the writing assessment tasks that had been given to them in their writing classes.

Post-intervention interviews with the teachers were also conducted immediately after the completion of Phase 2 of this action research to gather the teachers' perceptions of the formative writing assessment approach and how it had impacted on their understanding and perspectives on writing assessment and approaches to the teaching of writing. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. A summary was also sent to the teachers to confirm and verify the description gathered from the interviews.

In June 2012 (four years later), two follow up interviews (I3A and I3B) were conducted. The first follow-up interviews (I3A) were conducted with individual teachers. Each teacher was interviewed at a separate setting and location to discover their current practices in the teaching and assessing of ESL writing and to gather information about the development in the teachers' pedagogical practice, over time. The second follow-up interview (I3B) was a paired interview to revisit

the teachers' perspectives on peer review. The aim was to explore the impact of, if any, the collaborative action research on the teachers' perceptions and practice particularly on the peer-review. The main purpose of these follow-up interviews was to discover any long-term effects of this collaborative action research on the ESL writing pedagogical practice and curriculum development. Each follow-up interview lasted for about 15-20 minutes.

3.5 Data Analysis

Action research establishes a specific way of collecting, organizing, analysing, and reporting the data findings. Data analysis in action research is not a discrete component but often works as a stimulus for formative reflection in addition to summative interpretation and evaluation (Burns, 2003; Gilles, Wilson, & Elias, 2010; Marlow, Spratt, & Reilly, 2008; McDonough, 2006). As in any other research approach, data analysis in action research requires a systematic process of data analysis whereby "...a rational understanding of practice can only be gained through systematic reflection on action by the actor involved" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 189).

Bradley, Curry, and Devers (2007) argue that there is no single appropriate way of conducting qualitative data analysis but they do agree that analysis should be ongoing throughout the research. Dawson (2009) also claims that in qualitative analysis, "...the researcher might analyse as the research progresses, continually refining and reorganizing in the light of the emerging results" (p. 115).

Choosing the appropriate approach for analysing data needs to be properly addressed and usually is influenced by the different methodological standpoints

(Corbin, 2009; Dawson, 2009). In this particular research, I adopted both deductive and inductive approaches to analysing the qualitative data.

3.5.1 Thematic analysis of qualitative data

In generating findings from the qualitative data collected in Phase 1 of the study, thematic analysis was used as a technique for data analysis. This was done deductively by having research questions as the key determinants to determine the patterns or categories, developing themes, and sub-themes from the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Yardley and Marks (2003) suggest that “...thematic analysis is similar to content analysis, but pays greater attention to the qualitative aspects of the material analysed” (p. 56). Thematic analysis allows researchers to look at the “frequency of codes with analysis of their meaning in context” (Yardley & Marks, 2003, p. 56). The analysis method used in this research involved content coding of the interview transcripts by highlighting sections of texts relevant to the research objectives and research questions. The preliminary findings from this process were then used to guide the researcher for the development of formative writing intervention (see Section 4.2.1) and the next phase of action research.

3.5.2 Grounded analysis approach

In analysing the data gathered in Phase 2, I employed an inductive grounded analysis approach in order to see the way patterns emerged from the data. This involved several processes of reviewing the data and coding them manually, by which is meant “...the analytic processes through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory” (Bjørn, 2005, p. 3). I used this

approach to analyse the data coming from Phase 2 of my study, specifically the students' written work.

In the first instance, I gathered the students' essay marks given by their respective class teachers through the formative assessment of the students' essays at the end of Cycle 1. I then arranged the marks in descending order. This gave me a table of students' essay writing performance. From this tabulated data, I then chose three top scores and three bottom scores of essays. This was my starting point to develop my conceptual analysis – essays written by top performers and essays written by low performers. Based on the scores, I then visited the written essays, from six student writers in total. Continuing the analysis under the grounded analysis approach, I went through the selected work: consisted of two sets of essay writing which comprised two first drafts, two peer-review checklists, and two final drafts for each student. I looked at each student's work, twelve pieces of writing at a time, constantly making comparisons of the written works. As I discovered that not much could be gathered from the brainstorming and outlining ideas, comparisons were made between the first draft and the final draft and the peer-review checklists to identify the patterns in the students' writing development. This was done back and forth to identify categories from these data and to make notes of what I observed from this process. Charmaz (2006) points out that in the stage of early coding, some basic questions need to be asked to help in understanding the data. While making the comparisons, I asked questions such as: What can I gather from these writing outcomes? What can I tell from the first draft? What can I tell from the final draft? What are the similarities and differences between first draft and final draft for each essay?. I then wrote the answers to my basic questions in my reflection notes. The reflection notes were

made based on my understanding from reading and comparing the essays and peer review checklists of each student several times without having pre-conceived categories and without being concerned with the research questions.

Following the line coding suggested by Charmaz (2006), I read through my reflection notes for each set of essays and started to categorize the codes. For example, some of the codes developed were: practice, feedback, views, attitudes, writing procedures, etc. This process also allowed me to think of what further data was needed or could be looked for. This process also led to recognizing patterns from the coding process and gave cues to moving on. Based on the categories developed such as beliefs about teaching, pedagogical practice in ESL writing, development of learning, and views and practices of writing assessment, a further analysis was made to merge or group similar categories. Based on the newly merged categories, connections between categories were made and themes were developed.

3.5.3 Analysis of survey data

The analysis of the data gathered using the questionnaires was carried out at a later stage, when the two action research cycles had been completed. Descriptive statistics were used to show the percentages of each item response (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). The survey data could further support the findings based on the qualitative data, specifically on the students' responses related to the integration of the formative writing assessment intervention (see Table 4.6) particularly on the inclusion of peer review activity into the ESL writing classroom.

3.6 Warrants/Trustworthiness in qualitative research

Trustworthiness is important in qualitative research. According to Creswell (2005), in qualitative research, validating findings refers to the act of determining “...the accuracy or credibility of the findings through strategies such as member checking or triangulation” (p. 252). To achieve the trustworthiness and validity of the research claims, data were obtained from multiple sources: documents, one-to-one interviews, discussion sessions, focus group interview, observation, and survey questionnaires. These various data sources allow for triangulation in gaining research credibility (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The documents gathered were analysed and presented in a form of document protocols - that refers to the analysis template containing several questions following Miles and Huberman’s (1994) example - which were then shared with the two ESL teachers who participated in this study. Member checking is another way to maintain the validity and accuracy of the data gathered (Creswell, 2005). In terms of one-to-one interviews and focus group interview, the completed transcripts of the interviews and interview matrix (a table consists of interview questions) were shared with the interviewees to check, correct and confirm the responses recorded. Observations were recorded on the observation checklists and the relevant information on the observation checklists was used and discussed with the teacher participants during the discussion sessions.

Also, to achieve valid results, the same guiding interview questions were used for the two teacher participants. These guiding questions were reviewed by the research supervisors. In terms of survey data, the same set of survey

questionnaires were distributed to the student participants. These survey questionnaires had been piloted to ensure that instructions were written clearly and no ambiguous questions were formulated that would cause confusion and lead to invalid responses (Cohen et al., 2007). The survey was administered in a hall where all students involved were gathered. This survey administration session was conducted by the researcher, assisted by the two ESL teacher participants. Assistance from the ESL teacher participants was needed particularly on distributing and collecting the questionnaires.

3.7 Summary

A collaborative action research project was carried out in three phases with an overall aim at integrating and promoting change in the teachers' perspectives and their ESL writing pedagogical practice in their ESL writing classrooms. The three phases of the action research project were carried out to gather several relevant data through several stages (see Section 3.3.3). Cohen et al. (2007) assert that choosing an appropriate approach and method for the research would determine the validity of the findings. The notion of validity in action research is not similar to that for experimental research. Burns (2003) argues that in action research, researchers seek to describe and explain activities and situations in specific contexts rather than to "...establish relationships between variables or to isolate causes and their effects" (Burns, 2003, p. 161). As action research focuses on specific participants, settings, and phenomena, making generalisations to a larger population contradicts its purpose. However, validity and trustworthiness in action research could be accomplished by having multiple perspectives on the situation under study. This refers to triangulation of data gathered by comparing

multiple sources or data, responses from the respondents, and the different methods (Burns, 2003; Cohen et al., 2007). In the case of this research, collaborative action research was chosen due to the purpose of this research. In this chapter, the rationale for adopting this interpretive paradigm was discussed, and the methods of collecting the data for this research purpose were described. The action research was carried out in three phases following an adapted action research model of McNiff and Whitehead (2000). The chapter also describes the types of data collected that reflected the research objectives and the methodology chosen and how the data were analysed. The findings of the study will be presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 of the action research project (see Figure 3.1 below).

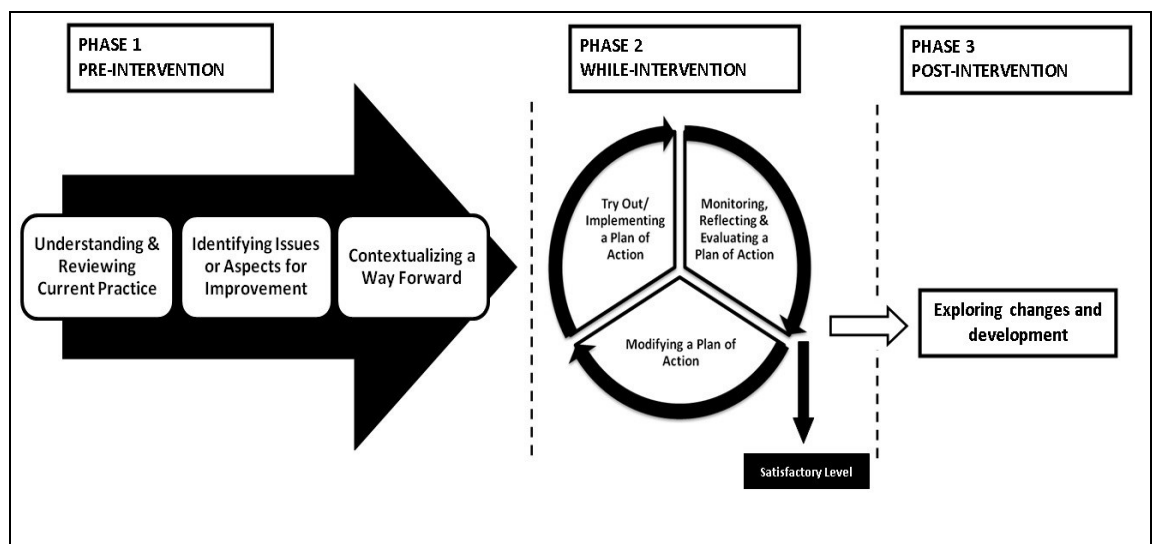


Figure 3.1: The action research processes adapted from McNiff and Whitehead's (2000) action research stages

This chapter is organized in three main sections. The first section presents the ‘Intervention: Phase 1’ findings wherein data from Phase 1 of the action research are presented. The main purposes of the study in Phase 1 were to gain a description of the current ESL writing pedagogical and assessment practices at a selected public higher learning institution in Malaysia and to identify issues and aspects for improvement in the teaching and assessing of ESL writing. The findings from this phase served as the preliminary data for the action research.

The second section presents the ‘Intervention: Phase 2’ findings: data derived from the two action research cycles. The third section, ‘Intervention: Phase 3’ findings, describes the findings of phase 3 of the research, which was completed, immediately and over time. Data from this research are presented according to themes developed from the analysis that aimed at answering the following research questions of the present study.

1. How are the teaching and assessing of ESL writing perceived by the Malaysian ESL teachers?
 - a. What is the current assessment practice of ESL writing in a Malaysian higher learning institution?
 - b. What are the issues related to the teaching and assessing of ESL writing, in practice?
2. What are the changes explored in the process of integrating formative assessment into the current practice of teaching and assessing writing?
3. What are the immediate and the long-term impacts of integrating formative assessment and the elements of process writing approach on the research participants?
4. To what extent can a sociocultural perspective contribute to understanding the findings of the pedagogical intervention?

4.1 Intervention: Phase 1 Findings

In planning for an intervention to introduce and integrate process writing and formative assessment into the existing system, it was important to look at the pre-existing conditions and institutional requirements of the LCM4000 course. This process helped in identifying gaps in the ESL pedagogical practice, finding ways

for formative assessment to be integrated into the current system, and providing guidelines for implementing assessment for learning in the usual ESL writing classroom settings through process writing. Data for this stage of the study derived from the course documents of LCM4000 writing course and the preliminary interviews with the two ESL teachers to address the first main research question: *How are the teaching and assessing of ESL writing perceived by the Malaysian ESL teachers?* The purpose of addressing this question was to find the gaps or issues in the ESL writing pedagogical practice. Hence, in presenting Phase 1 findings, Section 4.1.1 presents the findings related to issues in the ESL writing pedagogical practice. Section 4.1.2 presents issues in the ESL writing process. Next, Section 4.1.3 presents issues in assessing ESL writing. Finally, Section 4.1.4 summarizes the findings of the pre-intervention stage (Phase 1 findings) of this action research project.

4.1.1 Issues in ESL writing pedagogical practice

The first issue is that the pedagogical practice is very much related to the teachers' beliefs, perspectives and understanding of teaching and assessment. These have affected their pedagogical choices and emphasis. In this section, sub-themes that emerge from the data in relation to the issues in pedagogical practice include examination-oriented teaching; classroom size, time and practice constraints; and teaching emphasis in the ESL writing classroom.

Examination-oriented teaching

Having had long experience in this examination-oriented education system, both teachers were focused mainly on how their students performed academically at the

end of the semester. Teaching was geared towards achieving the criteria-referenced learning outcomes and meeting the course objectives, which thus had the backwash effect of teaching to the test whereby both teachers concentrated their teaching on the language aspects and the structure of the essay. These components seem to be the main focus of the essay assessment as indicated in their essay marking distribution presented in Table 4.1. It can be seen in the table below that each criterion carries different weight with the strongest emphasis given to the ‘Language Use’ component (DP/SchemeOfWork)¹.

Table 4.1: LCM4000 Marking Scheme

LCM4000 Marking Scheme	
Component	Weighting
Content	5
Organization	5
Vocabulary	5
Language Use	8
Mechanics	2
Total	25

When students were assessed for their writing, the teachers would follow a standard marking scheme designed for the course. This marking scheme was distributed with the course module at the beginning of the semester. Salmah explained that:

... for writing, students are given topics to write an essay of compare/contrast. The essay is assessed according to a very detailed marking scheme... looking into content, language, mechanic, vocabulary and organization. Each item has its own allocation of marks. (I1/E1/Q4c)²

In addition, Salmah clearly indicated that in her writing class she focused on:

¹ DP=Document Protocol

² This is a coding use to indicate the source of the data (I1= Interview 1; E1=Salmah; E2=Mazlina; Q4c=Question 4 sub-question ‘c’)

the structure or organization of the essay, and also the language aspects - sentence structure, grammar items like transitions, SVA [subject verb agreement], tenses and others. Normally students are trained in small groups or pairs, especially for the brainstorming process, before they attempt to write the whole essay on their own. (I1/E1/Q2t)

The pedagogical approach adopted by the two teachers was influenced by how assessment was perceived and expected. The writing tasks or activities given were merely for the students to practise and to prepare them for the examination.

All the activities done in class are geared towards preparing students for the final essay... Teachers prepare them systematically, show them the step-by-step process of producing the essay and also highlight on certain grammar items that can help students in their writing. (I1/E1/Q5a)

... teachers should prepare students to be able to perform well for the final exam... The tasks teach students the fundamentals, the product elicits students' understanding of the teaching, feedback given reinforces students' correct application of the things taught. (I1/E2/Q5a)

According to both Salmah and Mazlina, they usually taught towards the examination and towards achieving the objectives of the course; that was, by the end of the course, students should be able "to produce a compare and contrast essay" (I1/E1/Q3i; I1/E2/Q3i) and this should be reflected during the final examination. Salmah also added that, "the ultimate objective is for them [the students] to be able to produce an acceptable level of essay in terms of language and organization" (I1/E1/Q3m). Again, the emphasis was on the end product and towards the examination; no mention was made of a progressive or collaborative process of writing. Although it would be difficult to practise rote learning in the teaching of writing to ESL students, the teaching of writing appeared to be so structured and product-oriented that students had to follow a standard writing structure to meet the examination requirement.

Teachers' conceptions of a good piece of writing

Findings also revealed how the ESL teachers perceived and conceptualized a good piece of writing, and this of course influenced the teaching emphasis. What determined a good piece of writing was actually embedded in the assessment requirement that consequently influenced the teaching approach in the ESL writing classroom. During the interviews, the teachers kept highlighting 'language use', particularly the correct use of grammar, as an important factor in good writing. The following are excerpts from the interviews conducted in Phase 1 of the action research project:

If the students are placed at the higher level, their writing skills are good, meaning they are able to produce grammatically good sentences and even the choices of vocabulary used are varied and more specific. However, if the students are placed at lower levels, they cannot even produce grammatically good sentences, their sentences will be full with tenses, SVA and many other errors. They cannot even use suitable vocabulary to describe what they mean. (I1/E1/Q1c)

Yes, because that's the only way we can see whether the students have mastered the grammar and structure of the language. (I1/E2/Q1f)

Zooming in to their weakest point which normally would be grammar. So that would be the emphasis. (I1/E2/Q1m)

Comments that direct students' attention on their grammar errors, sentence structures and vocab. (I1/E1/Q1r)

In addition, the criteria for essay writing assessment indicated 'language use' as having the highest weighting, carrying 8 marks and if vocabulary was included as part of the language use, that would make a sum of 13 marks out of a total of 25 marks for the essay (see Table 4.1). This directed the emphasis of the writing

assessment onto formal accuracy, and this was also demonstrated in the teachers' responses when they were asked about the activities that might help students in their writing. Both Salmah and Mazlina mentioned that grammatical accuracy (I1/E1/Q31; I1/E2/Q31) might help students in their writing. Salmah elaborated further on the tasks that she felt might be useful for her students:

Vocab enrichment activities, grammar activities, using pictures or any other forms of input that can help to give clearer examples, and editing exercises that can make students aware of the mistakes and also the reason for the mistakes. (I1/E1/Q3o)

The teachers' conception of good writing was very much influenced by the course objectives of LCM4000. Since these teachers had been teaching writing for more than five years, they felt it was the way ESL writing should be taught and evaluated. What they were exposed to and believed in had regulated their daily teaching practice: to write a good piece of writing was to write and to use grammar accurately. Thus, the language component, grammatical accuracy in particular, had become the main focus of teaching ESL writing. In fact, it was clearly set out in the learning outcomes that at the end of the course, students would be able to "employ and control a variety of grammatical structures" and "demonstrate knowledge of a range of appropriate vocabulary and transitional words or phrases" (I1/E2/Q3b).

The teachers also revealed that the students were given little opportunity to practise their writing. They claimed that the writing tasks given to the students were not enough to help students improve their writing. Salmah clearly stated that:

We probably need emphasis on the writing process and more tasks before we could actually assess the students' writings and it seems that students have little chance to practice the writing process – brainstorming, outlining, drafting, and editing [sic]. (I1/E1/Q3n)

Mazlina also suggested that more tasks were needed to help students in their writing and focus should be given to both “process and product” (I1/E2/Q3o). The teachers really felt the need to focus on the writing process, which they believed could give the students adequate writing practice. This indicates a contradiction between their beliefs and their actual pedagogical practice where focus in the ESL writing classroom seemed to be based entirely on a product-oriented approach and summative assessment.

Classroom size, time, and practice constraints

Classroom size significantly affected the pedagogical approach of these teachers in their ESL writing classrooms. Having between 23 and 25 students in a class influenced the teachers' pedagogical choice and the way students were taught. According to the teachers, due to the class size they had little time to go through every student's draft (I1/E1/Q2p; I1/E2/Q2p) and students were given only short feedback that emphasized the common errors made by the whole class (I1/E1/Q2r; I1/E2/Q2r). Due to the number of students in the writing class, giving more practice to the students would have required teachers to spend more time in giving them individualised feedback on errors common to all students. According to Salmah, “students seem to have little chance to practise the writing process” due to time constraints (I1/E1/Q3n).

The course schedule indicated that the LCM4000 ran for 14 weeks: in total, 16 contact hours for the whole LCM4000 course. Within those 16 hours, only six were given to the writing component per week. These six hours were further divided into two blocks in which each block was three hours of writing class (DP_SOW/CourseSchedule)³. In other words, the students would meet twice a week for the writing class. Having 25 students in a class and with two meetings a week, it was rather difficult for the teachers to manage more writing tasks for the students as well as the writing feedback. There would be implications for the teachers' teaching load. So teachers would focus on the course structure provided in the course schedule (see Appendix I) and were inclined to adjust their teaching according to what students were expected to perform in the examination.

Having limited time to practise writing was an issue for the students. For instance, based on the timetable and the course outline (see Appendix J), there was only a week's gap between practice and the timed, in-class graded essay. Students had limited time and little practice as they could produce only one essay draft before submitting their final draft for graded assessment. This phenomenon was referred to by both teachers. Salmah mentioned that the writing tasks given in the class were "not really enough because students still do not know how to correct their errors and come up with good sentences" (I1/E1/Q2v). Further, Mazlina said that the writing tasks given "should be [enough], but ... it requires a lot of practice and if the students don't do it on their own, then they will never improve" (I1/E2/Q2v). The teachers' claims indicated that there seemed to be lack of writing practice given and little opportunity to improve the students' writing in the ESL classroom. The statements above made by the two teachers

³ SOW = Scheme of Work

also revealed that they were aware of the need to emphasize the writing process by giving out more tasks to the students before they were assessed; however, this could not be realized due to time constraints.

Teachers' perceived roles

With the set requirements and marking standard, these teachers felt it was part of their role to ensure that they:

... train students to develop content, teach students grammar rules and sentence structures, make students aware of their mistakes and able to identify the mistakes and later correct the mistakes – in general...to facilitate students. (I1/E1/Q4h)

Mazlina believed that her role in an ESL classroom was also to facilitate, “to teach and guide students in producing essays that are acceptable” (I1/E2/Q4h). Apparently, teachers perceived their role as a facilitator that could guide the students to develop their writing skills and both teachers did value writing as a process. However, the need to focus on the final results and the emphasis on language use in the marking scheme, and the constraints that have been identified, made the teaching of writing more of a product oriented undertaking.

4.1.2 Issues in the ESL writing process

In the LCM4000 writing course, the students focused specifically on a comparison and contrast essay, which was specified in the course description. From the learning outcomes and the teachers' excerpts in the previous section, it is clear that a product approach to the teaching of writing was dominant. In addition, it

was stipulated in the scheme of work that the aim of the course was “to guide students in the language acquisition process one step at a time by providing input and giving them ample opportunity to practice” (DP_SOW/CourseObjectives). The teaching of writing was carried out in phases to help students acquire the specified language skills through practice so that they could meet the assessment requirement. Issues pertaining to the approach to writing are identified and presented in this section: the writing phases, the students’ participation, the nature of feedback.

The writing phases

Both process and product approaches to writing involve several phases of writing. In LCM4000, the phases involved brainstorming, outlining, writing a first draft, and writing a final draft. These phases were noted in the course outline (see Appendix J) and in-class timed essay procedure (see Appendix K). The teaching of writing for this course closely followed the product approach whereby the students had to write to fulfil the course requirement: a timed in-class essay and the final graded essay. This approach followed several phases. For example, for the timed in-class essay, students were given a topic to write on; they were required to produce an outline followed by a draft essay to be written in the writing class; and, at the end of the class, students had to submit the essay outline and the first draft. This indicated the teachers’ focus was on the product outcome. Students were expected to have a series of drafts. This was indicated in the writing assessment document:

Essays are assessed by class teachers. Topics are given by the teachers and final drafts are assessed by the class teacher. Series of drafts are expected to be written before the final drafts. (DP_SOW/Writing assessment)

However, due to time constraints and the number of students in a class, they were limited to producing only one first draft and one final draft of their writing for the timed in-class essay for teachers to mark. Tension between process and product approaches appeared at this stage when ample practice and opportunity for the students could not be realized due to time constraints and the need to adhere to the procedures given as stipulated in Table 4.2 (DP_InClassTimedEssay). According to the procedure described in the document for the timed in-class essay, three periods of three hours of the writing class for the purpose of the timed in-class essay writing, was inadequate for teachers to give extra practices, to develop more interactions with the students and to provide formative feedback.

Table 4.2: Timed in-class writing procedures indicated for LCM4000 course

Meeting	Procedure
Meeting 1 (3 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic given to the class • Students to produce outline and write essay • Students to submit their outline and first draft at the end of the class
Meeting 2 (3 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st drafts and essay outlines returned to students • Teacher discusses common errors • Teacher conducts consultation sessions • Teacher collects all outlines and drafts
Meeting 3 (3 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher returns the first draft sets to the students • Students are to write their final drafts • Students are to submit their outlines, first drafts, and final drafts at the end of the class.

When asked for elaboration on the timed in-class essay, Mazlina stated:

[the] timed in-class essay is like a test where the students were asked to write an essay of about 300-350 words within two hours. The topics would normally be given and they would have to come up with an outline and then proceed to the first draft of the whole complete essay of about 5 paragraphs. (I1/E2/Q1k)

The procedures were structured as such so that at the end of the given period, students were able to produce essays to be evaluated. This revealed that though the procedures imitate the process approach to writing, the procedures indicated were in linear sequence and hence could not be claimed as constituting a process approach. The practice was more oriented to a product approach. The expression ‘like a test’ by Mazlina in the excerpt above clearly indicated that the focus was on the product outcome.

In addition, from the procedures stipulated, teachers would be expected to give feedback on the students’ first drafts in the form of general written comments to individual students. Teachers then were to return the drafts to the students for in-class review where teacher-student consultation or teacher-student conferencing, as indicated in the timed in-class essay document, would be conducted in class:

Teacher is to mark the first drafts (collected in the 1st meeting) by: using symbols to indicate errors in students writing. For example: Sp for Spelling; T for Tense; SS for Sentence Structure, etc...Provide comments on content and organization...Check the length of the essay... Using a standard essay marking scheme...General written comments are given on the students writing...Discussion session...Consultation: One-to-one. (DP_Timed in-class essay)

Once the drafts were revised by the students, teachers would again collect all the outlines and the drafts to make sure that no one took their outline and the draft

outside the class. This indicated that students did not have an opportunity to work on their writing outside of class time. The restriction seems to suggest an emphasis on examination-like conditions. For the purpose of completing their timed in-class essay, students would meet again in their usual ESL classroom. In this meeting, teachers would return the outlines and the first drafts to the respective students. Based on the comments given by the teachers on the students' essays, they would then write their final drafts. Once the final drafts were completed, they would have to return the entire work - the essay outline, the first draft, and the final draft - to their writing teachers, who would then mark and grade them, based on the standard marking scheme provided by the course coordinator. The procedures described gave further evidence of examination-oriented and product approach to writing.

The writing procedures described in the document was also articulated by the teachers. However, there was no indication of in class teacher-student conferencing based on the teachers' response, which reflected their practice. It could also be inferred that teacher-student conferencing was not carried out by the teachers:

1st class- students are given a topic, they have to come up with the outline and 1st draft in 2-3 hours, then teachers mark by giving general comments, 2nd class - teacher returns the 1st draft and students write final draft. The essay should be 300-350 words...Then, teachers mark according to a standardized marking scheme, the breakdown is content - 5, organization- 5, vocab- 5, language- 8 and mechanics- 2. (I1/E1/Q2n)

1st session, students are given a topic, they have to come up with an outline and 1st draft in 3 hours, then teachers mark by giving general comments, in the 2nd meeting teacher will return the drafts and student will make corrections and write final draft. The essay should be between

300-350 words...The final product will be marked descriptively according to the marking scheme. (I1/E2/Q2n)

According to the prescribed procedures, the general comments given by the teachers were to be read in class together with the teacher-student conferencing. If that was so, the students reading the comments and revising the draft were limited to less than three hours. Teachers possibly felt they had inadequate time, hence, could be the reason for no teacher-student conferencing practice in the classroom being mentioned in the two extracts above.

Salmah and Mazlina confirmed students were given only very brief written feedback that focused on the forms and structure of the essay and emphasized only the common mistakes (I1/E1/Q2r; I1/E2/Q2r):

Let's say it's a tense error, so, they [teachers] just underline the word and put 'T' on the word, or if something is not right with the organization, then maybe teachers can write the feedback on the organization. (I1/E1/Q2q)

....an example of the extent the comments or feedback is given to the students... SVA [subject verb agreement], points need further elaboration, tenses. (I1/E2/Q2q)

Furthermore, there was no peer learning mentioned or evident in any of the descriptions. In the writing phases, there was no indication that students could discuss problems related to essay writing with their peers particularly in the reviewing process.

Throughout the description of the procedures, peer-review activity was not present. Writing activity was seen as individualised and just between the students

and their teachers. Table 4.3 below summarizes the timed in-class writing procedures that teachers were practising in the LCM4000.

Table 4.3: A summary of the timed in-class writing procedures as described by the ESL writing teachers

Step	Writing Process
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic given to the students: they produce an outline and a first draft
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers mark and give comments on students' writing drafts
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafts returned to students who make corrections/ improve their writing based on the comments given by teachers
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised draft regarded as a final draft and is sent to teachers for grading purposes.

From the writing procedures, it is understood that students were expected to work individually. At this stage, the procedures indicated in Table 4.3 did not demonstrate that writing was a collaborative process as the students had to work individually. This implied the absence of sharing or co-construction of understanding among the students in the writing process.

Although procedures similar to process writing were chosen as a pedagogical approach, the reviewing phase only involved the students and their class teacher. The students would review their first draft once they received feedback from their writing teacher. Peer-review activity, although provision was made in the form of a supplementary checklist, was not carried out in these ESL writing procedures as it was given as a supplementary material. The use of the peer editing checklist depended on the teacher's prerogative. On this matter, Salmah added that:

... teachers are actually given the peer editing checklist for the students in the file at the beginning of the semester. However, it is not listed in the scheme of work as it is not actually compulsory. It is just a supplementary material and they can decide whether to use or not... (I1/E1/Q3d)

Mazlina pointed out that in the writing process, peer-reviewing was not practised. Based on previous negative experience, she was frank in her opinion that peer editing or peer-reviewing was not effective and thus she chose not to use it:

peer editing is not compulsory and does not work well. Students are not sure and they sometimes make more mistakes. So, I don't use the checklist. (I1/E2/Q3d)

Another limitation identified in the procedures is that students had to complete the essays in the class within the given time. They were not allowed to continue writing outside the classrooms, which gave limited opportunity for the students to explore and work with their peers on their essay writing. The only time they could improve their writing was when they got the feedback from their respective teachers.

Students' participation

It was mentioned in the scheme of work that active participation from students was expected and thus a student-centred classroom was encouraged: "students are to take active role in learning the language" (DP_SOW/CourseObjectives). However, from the writing procedures described by the teachers, student-centeredness seemed to mean only an individual student working on his or her own writing tasks. There was no collaboration between peers, which was

observed from the teachers' description of how LCM4000 writing process was generally conducted:

During the first class, students are given a topic, they have to come up with the outline and first draft in two to three hours, then teacher marks by giving general comments... second class, teacher returns the first draft and students write the final draft. The essay should be between 300-350 words. Then teacher marks according to a standardized marking scheme, the break down is content-5, organization-5, vocab-5, language-8 and mechanics-2. (I1/E1/Q2n)

First session, students are given a topic, they have to come up with an outline and first draft within 3 hours class, then teacher marks by giving general comments...in the second meeting teacher will return the drafts and students will make corrections and write final draft. The essay should be between 300-350 words. The final product will be marked descriptively according to the marking scheme. (I1/E2/Q2n)

Limited collaboration between peers indicted that students had less interaction in their classrooms which might impede the development of writing.

Peer evaluation and feedback

Peer evaluation and peer feedback in the LCM4000 classroom were not practised although it was emphasized in the course objectives that students should be able to reword their writing drafts based on the feedback from others:

...students should be able to distinguish different formats of compare and contrast essays; construct writing by generating and organizing ideas and by considering purpose and audience; produce a thesis statement; prepare drafts; **modify writing at the word, sentence, and paragraph levels using feedback from others**; distinguish strong from weak thesis statements; categorize ideas; compile information; set goals; evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their writing; and revise and rewrite [emphasis added]. (DP_SOW/Course Objectives)

According to Salmah and Mazlina, self-evaluation and peer-review were not a standard procedure in the ESL writing class for all the levels of English course (I1/E1/Q1zz; I1/E2/Q1zz). Also, the peer review activity using the peer editing checklist was not favoured as it focused more on the content and organisation of the essay, where teaching emphasis was more on language forms. Mazlina shared her reason for not incorporating peer review activity in her writing class:

I do feel the usual peer editing activity is rather ineffective as the students were not able to see what they are really doing. Most of the time they don't know how to respond. (I1/E2/Q3n)

This indicates that Mazlina's experience overcame what she believes about what works and what does not work in the classroom. Although Mazlina said that peer-review was ineffective and not used as a standard writing task in the classroom (I1/E2/Q3d), she did acknowledge the notions of self-reflection and peer-evaluation could assist learning development:

I feel that students should be exposed/given the opportunity to review their friends' essays. Give students more exercises that focus on their ability to edit their own work. By doing this, they somehow could share ideas and apply the grammar or language rules as well. (I1/E2/Q4o)

Salmah believed in the usefulness of having pair and group work aside from individual work: "all the tasks like brainstorming, outlining and editing can be done in pairs or groups" (I1/E1/Q3c). She also believed that providing practice of how to review the students' own essay and the peer essay would help in the learning process. Generally, the two teacher participants believed in the effectiveness of collaborative learning; however, the collaborative element was not present in their pedagogical practice possibly due to two factors: teaching load

constraints and course requirements. These two aspects need to be highlighted when formative assessment and collaborative writing are integrated into the usual writing process.

Nature of feedback

In the LCM4000 writing course, the in-semester essays were marked by the class teachers whereas for the final examination, the essays were marked and inter-rated by two different teachers of LCM4000, that is, teachers other than the class teachers. In terms of marking and giving feedback procedures, there was no specific or standard way of marking or giving feedback on the students' writing, although the marking and feedback was usually parallel with the criteria indicated in the essay marking scheme designed for the course. Summative feedback to the students was given based on the ratings in the marking scheme categorized into "Excellent to Very Good, Good to Average, Fair to Poor, [and] Very Poor" (See Appendix L for a sample of the marking scheme). Students were expected to be given a copy of this marking scheme to assist them with their essay writing and for further essay writing development.

In terms of feedback in the classroom, both teachers answered 'Yes' when they were asked whether feedback was given to their students with regard to the completed writing tasks in the classroom (I1/E1/Q4d; I1/E2/Q4d). The teachers believed that assessment could enhance learning provided appropriate feedback or comments were given to the students (I1/E1/Q1q; I1/E2/Q1q). According to Salmah, "comments that direct students' attention on their grammar errors, sentence structures and vocabulary" (I1/E1/Q1r) were the kinds of comments that

promote learning. She added that “if students don’t know their mistakes, they won’t be able to work on their own” (I1/E1/Q1y). Likewise, Mazlina agreed that “to a certain extent I do believe it [assessment] enhances the students learning” (I1/E2/Q1q) and “comments that highlight their [students’] errors and problem areas” can promote learning (I1/E2/Q1r). She added that “if they [the students] understand what they did wrong then it will be easier for them to rectify them [their errors]” (I1/E2/Q1y). In the case of in-class writing practice, particularly when students wrote their first draft of an essay, Mazlina asserted:

...feedback is always given to students and to check the students' understanding as to what has been taught in the class. (I1/E2/Q5a)

The excerpts given clearly indicate that these two teachers recognized the importance of feedback and that they believed feedback could assist learning.

In the case of how assessment feedback was given to the students during the writing class, Salmah emphasized that grammar and language uses were the main focus: “comments that direct students' attention on their grammar errors, sentence structures and vocab” (I1/E1/Q1r). Mazlina generally made “comments that highlight their [students’] errors and problem areas” (I1/E2/Q1r). Findings on how feedback was given to the students clearly indicated that comments mostly emphasized the correct use of language and grammatical structure, that is, they were form-focused. Also, the teachers claimed that only short feedback in the form of both oral and short written comments were commonly given to the students (I1/E1/Q2r; I1/E2/Q2r) because they had little time to go through the drafts (I1/E1/Q2p; I1/E2/Q2p). According to Salmah, general oral feedback was

given to individual students and general discussions with the whole class, only during the timed in-class essay sessions:

Teachers normally write simple comments on the essay for content and organization, underline grammar mistakes, general discussion in the class... (I1/E1/Q4e)

Mazlina, however, only indicated giving only written feedback to the students and no consultation with the students was mentioned. This implies that feedback to the students was dealt with differently by individual teachers. Mazlina noted that:

Written [feedback] – once they've written the assessed essay, instructors will give their essays with short comments as to what to improve, especially their grammar. (I1/E2/Q4e)

In addition, feedback given to the students was focused on form and on the essay organization. Apparently, feedback was given only on the areas that students had most difficulty with (I1/E1/Q2r; I1/E2/Q2r). Salmah and Mazlina each provided an example of how feedback was given to their ESL students:

Let's say it's a tense error, so, they [teachers] just underline the word and put 'T' on the word, or if something is not right with the organization, then maybe teachers can write the feedback on the organization. (I1/E1/Q2q)

SVA [subject-verb-agreement], points need further elaboration, tenses. (I1/E2/Q2q) [and] written [comments] – once they've written the assessed essay, instructors will give their essays with short comments as to what to improve, especially their grammar. (I1/E2/Q4e)

With regard to the standardized and graded assessments (graded timed in-class essay and final examination), both teachers revealed that there was no formative feedback given to the students. The only information given to the students was

their grades (I1/E1/Q2x; I1/E2/Q2x). For the teachers, grades were not regarded as feedback in this situation as they were given for the summative purpose of assessment. According to Salmah:

...students are only given the grades, A, B, C... and they aren't told of what these grades indicate, they don't really know their strengths and weaknesses. (I1/E1/Q2y)

When she was asked further whether the students were given additional input or feed forward, as part of feedback based on the assessment results to improve learning, Salmah again said: "No, only the grades...[the] class will move on according to the syllabus" (I1/E1/Q2z). Mazlina also mentioned that students were not given extra input or feedback to indicate the strengths and weaknesses in their graded essays. This indicates that formative feedback and feed forward were not given to the students when the timed in-class essay was conducted. This is because the timed in-class essay is regarded as continuous summative assessment. It is conducted and assessed during mid-semester and marks from the in-class essay assessment are accumulated with final examination marks for grading purposes (see Section 2.4.3).

Overall, these findings indicated that the teachers acknowledged the importance of feedback in process writing and were aware that assessment information was useful and could feed back into their teaching. Nevertheless, due to the various constraints that have been identified, formative feedback was not fully translated into their pedagogical practice.

4.1.3 Issues in ESL writing assessment

In this section, the following issues with regard to assessment are presented: teachers' perspectives and understanding of assessment; teachers' involvement in ESL writing assessment; assessment requirement and practice.

Teachers' perspectives and understanding of assessment

The teachers' understanding of assessment was partly influenced by the long-practised summative assessment approach as part of the institutional requirement, which contributed to their limited exposure to formative assessment. They were not aware that those class activities or tasks given to the students were also part of the assessment, that is, formative assessment. This was revealed during the interview with Salmah where she believed that the class activities "are not part of the assignment/assessment. It's merely a practice for their writing" (I1/E1/Q2u). The same response was given by Mazlina: class activities are "just a form of practice and language learning" (I1/E2/Q2u). In this case, the teachers understood assessment as formal and graded tasks. Hence, it was important in my research to develop awareness for the teachers to understand the different types of assessment that serve different purposes.

This meant that neither teacher understood the actual practice of providing formative feedback. Salmah said that she had not heard the term 'formative assessment' (I1/E1/Q1s), which required me to define the terms 'assessment for learning' and 'assessment of learning' to enable her to differentiate the different purposes between the two types of assessment. To confirm her understanding of the terms, Salmah added:

meaning that ‘assessment for learning’ is for the ongoing process during the semester and ‘assessment of learning’ is just to know the end result, is it? (I1/E1/Q1t)

Salmah had not been exposed formally to the specific term ‘formative assessment’. Nevertheless, with the definition I provided, she added that assessment could motivate and enhance learning. She mentioned that “it [assessment] will give them [students] the drive to improve their writing skills” (I1/E1/Q1e). She may have subconsciously known the different purposes of assessment through her past teaching practices rather than had formal exposure to training on assessment. This was discovered when she further said she had been using:

‘assessment for learning’ during the semester and ‘assessment of learning’ is for the formal requirement of the university. (I1/E1/Q1u)

[and]...for the students' advantage and benefit, ‘assessment for learning’ is important but for the university, then it's ‘assessment of learning’, so that they [the institution/stakeholders] have the data. (I1/E1/Q1v)

This could also be due to formative assessment not being the main focus. Rather, summative assessment was too dominant in her pedagogical practice and was an institutional requirement to which teachers had to adhere.

Mazlina too was not sure of the term ‘formative assessment’ but she knew that ‘assessment for learning’ was used to enhance learning. To help clarify her understanding of assessment, she further elaborated that:

for the formal assessment (timed in-class essay), teachers should prepare students to be able to perform well for the final exam. For exercises done in class – feedback is always given to students and to check the students' understanding as to what has been taught in the class. (I1/E2/Q5a).

In her comment, Mazlina differentiated the two purposes of assessment. According to her understanding, formal assessment referred to the summative purpose while the in-class exercises served the formative purpose. Unlike Salmah, Mazlina indicated that she was familiar with the concept of ‘assessment for learning,’ only because she was involved in the Testing and Measurement Unit (TEMU) in her previous years (I1/E2/Q1s). However, the limited need for formative assessment had led to limited opportunity for teachers to practise formative assessment. This was emphasized in her statement:

I only remember summative. Our assessment is basically summative because we based our tests on items taught in class and we assessed towards the final grade. (I1/E2/Q1u)

Generally, the interview comments from both Salmah and Mazlina indicated that they had little knowledge about formative assessment and its practice due to emphasis given to summative assessment. However, they did have a general understanding that one of the roles of assessment was to improve learning – assessment *for* learning. These teachers perceived that formative assessment only differed from summative assessment in the way that formative assessment would require teachers to give feedback to the students about their learning progress. What was missing in their understanding was that formative assessment does not only provide feedback but also the kinds of feedback given to the students matter together with providing a way forward, which was not apparent in the teachers’ responses when they were asked what they knew about formative assessment.

With regard to combining both formative and summative assessment in teaching and assessing writing, both Salmah and Mazlina perceived the idea positively.

Mazlina believed that “it [the combination] would be good for the students” (I1/E2/Q1bb) and Salmah claimed:

...they [formative and summative assessment] are both useful for teachers and students especially. What we concern most are the students’ progress and performance. And, of course, to ensure that they would successfully go to another level or pass the course. (I1/E1/Q1bb)

Both teachers felt that assessment was necessary, in particular, to find out whether or not learning had taken place. Salmah and Mazlina agreed to the need for writing assessment:

[assessment] will give them [the students] the drive to improve their writing skills. (I1/E1/Q1e)

... So that they know how much they've improved and what should they do to improve more. (I1/E1/Q1g)

...they [the students] need to be assessed for their writing. (I1/E2/Q1e)

... because that's the only way we can see whether the students have mastered the grammar and structure of the language. (I1/E2/Q1f)

... [and] to determine their proficiency level. (I1/E2/Q1g)

Salmah said she would frequently use assessment results to inform her teaching plan, whereas Mazlina said she would use assessment at an early stage of her teaching with a diagnostic purpose:

at the initial stage, I would start off by asking them to write a paragraph just to see their language and then proceed to the actual teaching... then, when we have the timed in-class essay, then if there are still some problems, especially in terms of elaboration of points, then the student would have to make some amendments recommended. (I1/E2/Q1j)

Salmah believed that assessment could benefit both the students and the teachers. She felt that assessment was part of motivational function, which is formative in nature, where she claimed that:

[students should be assessed for their writing [because] it will give them the drive to improve their writing skills...thus preparing themselves to be able to perform for their undergraduate courses, which require lots of writing. (I1/E1/Q1e)

...but the assessments should be in the form of continuous assessments and lots of feedback (I1/E1/Q1f)

... so that they know how much they have improved and what should they do to improve more. (I1/E1/Q1g)

Information from the assessment was used to guide teachers on what should be followed up in the next class and help teachers in planning their lessons. When they were asked how assessment information was used, Salmah and Mazlina replied:

By looking at what type of errors or what the students haven't mastered, I focus on what aspect to be emphasized in class. (I1/E1/Q1m)

I would sometimes use the information to plan my teaching especially at the beginning of the semester. (I1/E2/Q1n)

Even though writing assessment was generally carried out for summative purposes, these teachers were aware of the benefits of assessment. Despite the lack of exposure to formative assessment, these teachers believed that ongoing assessment was useful for tracking the learning progress and for record keeping as well. According to Salmah, it was necessary to have continuous assessment "to show a record of the students' progress" (I1/E1/Q2l) and similarly Mazlina

mentioned that with continuous assessment “we can keep track of their [the students’] learning” (I1/E2/Q21). These comments indicate that both teachers perceived both ‘assessment of learning’ and ‘assessment for learning’ as being useful in their own way. However, the need for formative assessment was found to be rather insignificant. Since continuous summative assessment and final summative assessment were the main requirement of the institution, these forms dominated as the main form of assessment overall, which had influenced the approach to the teaching of writing.

Though the teachers were positive about formative assessment, the need to fulfil the institutional and course requirements would cause them to be unlikely to adopt formative assessment in their writing classrooms. For them, the obligation to focus on the summative led them to neglect the formative side of assessment. Both teachers were very familiar with summative assessment in practice and so their teaching had always been geared towards preparing their students for the final examination. This had indirectly impacted on their views, knowledge and use of formative assessment. At this stage, there was no evidence of formative assessment practice in the LCM4000 writing. However, having a positive attitude among the teachers would help bring the formative aspect into the existing pedagogical practice for ESL writing.

Teachers’ involvement in the assessment of ESL writing

The analysis of the pre-intervention data revealed that in this particular institution there was a special unit in charge of developing and evaluating the assessment tasks for all levels of English language courses: the Testing, Evaluation, and

Measurement Unit (TEMU). Collaboration occurred only between the unit committee and the course coordinator and the final decision would be made by the committee. This was clearly indicated by Salmah:

Yes. [I am involved in setting the tasks for ESL writing assessment]...The curriculum development unit...the testing and measurement [unit][determines of what and how to be assessed] and they'll ask for the course coordinator's opinion. (I1/E1/Q2c & I1/E1/Q2f)

Mazlina mentioned that teachers were not directly involved in the setting of the assessment tasks (I1/E2/Q2c). She further indicated that those directly involved with task settings were TEMU and the course coordinator (I1/E2/Q2f) but, she suggested, maybe teachers were allowed to provide suggestions or contribute ideas (I1/E2/Q2g). No matter whether the ordinary teachers were involved or not, TEMU was responsible for deciding and finalizing the assessment tasks (I1/E1/Q2g). Limited participation from ordinary teachers consequently contributed to the issue of awareness and understanding of assessment purposes and practices.

Assessment requirements and practice

LCM4000 assessment was divided into two parts: continuous assessment marks (CAM = 60%) and the final examination (40%). All the skills – Listening, Speaking, Reading, Grammar, and Writing - were assessed in isolation. Also, the weighting or the percentages for the skills assessed were not equally divided. Table 4.4 shows the division of the marks for each LCM4000 teaching component (DP_SOW/Assessment).

Table 4.4: LCM4000 Assessment schedule

LCM4000 Assessment Schedule			
Skills	CAM (60%)	Final Examination (40%)	Total (%)
Listening	15	-	15
Speaking	20	-	20
Reading	10	20	30
Grammar	5	10	15
Writing	10	10	20
Total	60	40	100

Noticeably, only Reading, Grammar, and Writing had a Final Examination. Listening and Speaking were conducted only as CAM. CAM was conducted by the class teacher, whereas the final assessment was administered by internal examiners who were randomly selected among the teachers teaching the course. The final examination was centralized and conducted in a big hall where all the LCM4000 students were seated according to allocated seats and seat numbers.

As indicated in the Scheme of Work (DP_SOW/Assessment) and Table 4.4above, the writing component of LCM4000 was assessed twice over a semester: one CAM essay and another essay in the final examination, each of which was weighted at 10%. The CAM for Writing was a ‘timed in-class’ essay, which was marked by the writing class teachers. For the CAM, students were expected to produce a series of completed writing tasks following the phases in the writing process: brainstorm, outline, first draft, and final draft.

Fairness was the emphasis in designing and writing the assessment tasks. According to Salmah, among the various factors considered to ensure that students were fairly assessed, were the students' background, the topic, and the time factor. From the teachers' point of view, the students' background included the language proficiency aspect and the students' learning ability. Choosing the right topic for writing also became the teacher's concern. Salmah believes that giving a right topic would assist students in writing:

...length of the essay, time given, can the topic be elaborated without doing research first? ...the phrasing of the topic - clear enough or not? (I1/E1/Q2e)

...students' learning ability and language proficiency are taken into account, we are actually assessing their language ability, thus, we try to avoid coming up with topics that are too difficult, that students have to spend a lot of time thinking about the content only, not language ability only, but the emphasis is on the language aspects. (I1/E1/Q2k)

Time is another factor that affected fairness in assessment. Mazlina believed it should be addressed when planning assessment tasks. Determining how long an essay should take to write correlated with the time given to the students to complete their essay writing. According to Mazlina:

Normally, when I plan to give a task to the students, I make sure that they have been taught and have the necessary input before completing a task. (I1/E2/Q2k)

That time is a factor that needs to be considered when planning for assessment was also confirmed by Salmah and the TEMU. However, the time factor was regarded and defined differently by different stakeholders. The assessment task developer considered time as the length or duration of time to spend on a task but

class teachers considered both the duration and the situation of when should be the right time to assess their students.

The influence of the institutional prerequisite on the current assessment approach was another issue, where summative assessment was regarded for grading and placement purposes - part of the institutional requirement was for the students to pass the course successfully in order to proceed to the next level. The institutional requirement affected the teachers' pedagogical conceptions and practice and what was expected for the students' learning. In this case, the teachers were always seen to teach writing towards assessment, precisely towards the final examination. Salmah felt that the students had not been fully assessed for their writing as they were assessed only on the final product of their writing. At this point, she believed that graded continuous assessment at every step of the writing phases should be included. According to Salmah:

...10% is too little for the amount of work that students have to do for the writing class, and also the process of writing like brainstorming, outline and first draft should also be awarded with marks. At least, could motivate the students to learn. (I1/E1/Q4o)

The findings of this phase of the research indicate that ESL writing assessment was conducted "to see [the students] progress and grade their achievement" (I1/E1/Q2a) and "to check students' level of competence, for grading purposes" (I1/E2/Q2a). This shows that assessment was used for obtaining the end results.

It was also clearly stated in the Scheme of Work that:

LCM4000 is a compulsory course and is offered to students who have successfully completed LCM3000 course. The course is also offered to those students who are placed in Level 4 based on their EPT (English Placement Test) result...This course is a **prerequisite requirement** for

the students to take their major papers. Thus, it is a must for them to complete the course **successfully**. Students need to **pass** English courses before they can actually take their major subjects. This is to prepare them well as all the major courses are conducted in English [emphasis added]. (DP/ SOW/Analysis, p. 1)

As indicated by this statement, teachers perceived ‘performance’ and ‘grading’ as the main focus of assessment. According to Mazlina:

[assessment is needed] because that’s the only way we can see whether the students have mastered the grammar and structure of the language. (I1/E2/Q1f)

... to determine their proficiency level. (I1/E2/Q1g)

... to see how they can relate ideas to their readers. (I1/E2/Q1h)

... zooming into their weakest point which normally would be grammar. (I1/E2/Qm)

Salmah further added that:

... for the students' advantage and benefit, ‘assessment for learning’ is important **but for the university, then it’s ‘assessment of learning’**, so that they have the data (I1/E1/Q1v) ... both are meant to give teachers ideas on the progress of the students [emphasis added]. (I1/E1/Q1w)

The teachers were positive about formative assessment. However, since it was obligatory for teachers to focus on summative assessment as a way to evaluate students’ performance, this caused them to be unlikely to adopt formative assessment. Nevertheless, Salmah and Mazlina personally agreed that assessment *for* learning would be chosen if their only focus was to enhance learning (I1/E1/Q1x; I1/E2/Q1x). With regard to their personal preferences in using

assessment, the teachers were asked whether they would consider using both formative and summative assessment. Salmah responded:

Yes, because they [formative and summative assessment] are both useful for teachers and students especially. What we concern most are the students' progress and performance. And, of course, to ensure that they [the students] would successfully go to another level or pass the course. (I1/E1/Q1bb)

Likewise, Mazlina also agreed that she would consider using both types of assessment because "it would be good for the students" (I1/E2/Q1bb). At this stage, the teachers' responses indicate their awareness of the different purposes of assessment and they positively perceived assessment for enhancing learning. Through the interview in Phase 1, it was observed that teachers, towards the end of the interview, had developed their awareness of the different purposes of assessment - summative and formative - although at the beginning the teachers' understanding of the concept behind formative assessment was considered very basic as their pedagogical practice was overshadowed by the needs for summative assessment.

4.1.4 Summary of Phase 1 findings

The examination culture was deeply embedded and had become part of the institutional and assessment practice where summative assessment was valued, thus giving less opportunity to practise formative assessment. Generally, the findings suggest that teachers had limited input about, minimal chances of using, and therefore limited practice in using formative feedback. Although they seemed to be interested in formative assessment, due to time constraints and the need to

fulfil the institutional and course requirements where summative assessment was still dominant, their use of formative assessment was hindered. Nevertheless, I would argue that formative assessment could be integrated into the current practice although the institutional requirements and the current practice focused merely on the students' end results.

Although "formative assessment is hard to implement in most circumstances" (Carless, 2011, p. 91) particularly due to barriers such as background knowledge and socio-cultural experience, it is not impossible to consider formative assessment being integrated into the ESL writing classroom. Nevertheless, the integration process would require understanding and dealing with the possible issues discovered in the teaching and assessing of ESL writing. By doing so, it is believed that formative assessment could be introduced in a subtle way and could eventually become an integral part of teaching and learning of ESL writing in the Malaysian setting.

In the next section, I will present the findings from Phase 2 of the action research project. Considering the issues identified from Phase 1 findings, several arguments were developed for the purpose of this research: a) writing tasks could be combined with formative assessment approach, thus developing a notion of progressive writing; b) teachers' involvement in the integration of formative assessment and process writing, through which they developed, disseminated, evaluated, and adapted assessment tasks and procedures, could cultivate their awareness on the concepts of formative assessment and process approach to writing as a progressive writing practice; and c) teachers becoming involved in the process of assessment reform would develop different perspectives and thus a process of change would potentially follow.

4.2 Intervention: Phase 2 Findings

Phase 2 of the intervention focused on developing and integrating the writing intervention for writing assessment of a formative kind in the ESL classrooms. At this stage, I wanted to see the possibilities of integrating a writing intervention that would include process approaches and elements of formative assessment and to explore the changes and challenges faced as a result of the integration process. Hence, the findings presented in this section addressed the second research question: *What are the changes explored in the process of integrating formative assessment into the current practice of teaching and assessing writing?*

Findings for this phase of study were developed from the analyses of data from briefing sessions, classroom observations, students' written tasks and peer review checklists, and discussion sessions with the teachers. Section 4.2.1 gives an overview of the tasks given over the intervention period. Section 4.2.2 presents the intervention that was intended to scaffold the students' writing. Section 4.2.3 presents a description of the briefing sessions, followed by Section 4.2.4 that indicates the findings from the integration stage of the intervention, focusing on the pedagogical practice. Section 4.2.5 focuses on the findings related to the learning development, and Section 4.2.6 presents the findings on task feasibility and acceptance. Finally, Section 4.2.7 summarizes the findings of the while-intervention stage (Phase 2 findings) of this action research project.

4.2.1 The writing intervention

Using the findings of Phase 1, I designed a unit of work based on the LCM4000 learning objectives, which I modified and arranged according to different phases of the writing process. Based on these learning objectives, several tasks related to the writing process were designed as formative assessment to be incorporated into the current ESL writing classroom. The purpose of this intervention was to restructure the teaching of writing for the LCM4000 course so as to promote a change in the teaching and learning practices and to give more opportunity for the students to practise their writing. In addition, the focus of this intervention was to divert the attention from product-oriented writing to a process-product oriented and formative assessment approach to teaching and learning in the ESL writing classroom. A product approach was retained to the extent that the teachers evaluated students' writing summatively. After completing the pre-planning, I briefed the two teacher participants, but as the project progressed, their reflections, reactions and suggestions shaped the ongoing intervention that became a collaborative action research project.

I developed descriptions of the tasks that were intended to achieve the course objectives. These were given to the two teacher participants as a unit of work for their writing class at the beginning of the semester as outlined in Table 4.5 and a summary of the formative assessment tasks and process-product approach to writing procedures is presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.5: Unit of work and formative assessment tasks

Category	Description of Purpose					
	Formative	Formative	Formative	Formative	Formative	Summative
Course/ Learning Objectives	At the end of this course, students will be able to: 1. understand the format of comparison and contrast essays	At the end of this course, students will be able to: 2. apply skills and strategies in writing	At the end of this course, students will be able to: 3. analyse information	At the end of this course, students will be able to: 4. synthesize information	At the end of this course, students will be able to: 5. evaluate their writing progress	At the end of this course, students will be able to: 6. write compare & contrast essay
Learning Outcomes	At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to: 1. understand the format of comparison and contrast essays 1.1 distinguish different formats of compare and contrast essays	At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to: 2. apply skills and strategies in writing 2.1 consider purpose and audience 2.2 generate and organize ideas	At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to: 3. analyse information 3.1 distinguish strong points from weak points 3.2 categorize ideas	At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to: 4. synthesize information 4.1 compile information 4.2 expand ideas	At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to: 5. evaluate their writing progress 5.1 set goals 5.2 evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their writing 5.3 evaluate strengths and weaknesses of peer essay writing	At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to: 6. write compare & contrast essay 6.1 combine paragraphs 6.2 develop coherence in writing 6.3 revise and rewrite

Table 4.6: A summary of formative assessment and process-product writing procedures

Category		Genre & Activity				
		Compare & Contrast Essay				
Purpose	Activity1:	Activity 2:	Activity 3:	Activity 4:	Activity 5:	Activity 6:
	Students will differentiate the different types of compare and contrast essay formats.	Students will generate ideas related to the topic given. Students will analyse and identify weak and strong points. Students will categorize selected ideas into main ideas and supporting details.	Students will analyse and organize their ideas. Students will develop selected ideas into complete sentences (thesis statement and topic sentences).	Students will write a draft of 350 - 400 words compare and contrast essay.	Students will evaluate and analyse a piece of their peer writing. Students will negotiate with their peers and teacher.	Students will write a draft of compare and contrast essay. Students will use feedback from others in reviewing their essay.
Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spot the difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venn Diagram Mind-mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing an outline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing a first draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay
Task sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task sheet 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task sheet 2 Task sheet 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task sheet 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task sheet 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NA
Expected Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback and feed forward by teacher for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback and feed forward by teacher for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback and feed forward by teacher for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback and feed forward by teacher and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback and feed forward by the teacher and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record and report
Assessment	Formative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No grading No recording Feedback Feed forward 	Formative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No grading No recording Feedback Feed forward 	Formative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No grading No recording Feedback Feed forward 	Formative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No grading No recording Feedback Feed forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim or indicative / band grade No recording 	Summative evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grading Recording

4.2.2 Scaffolding the students' writing

The following tasks were intended as a progressive scaffold (Van Lier, 1996) in a collective Zone of Writing Development (ZWD), leading the students from routine activities with challenging variations, to a flow of feedback and feed forward - by teacher and peers - to the eventual individual task fulfilment

Activity 1: Spot the difference

Activity 1 was called 'spot the difference' intended to meet the first objective of the LCM4000, that is to understand the format of comparison and contrast essays. The task was developed to help students in distinguishing the different formats of compare and contrast essays and to differentiate the different types of compare and contrast essays: block format and point-by-point format. For this task, students were asked to read two model texts (see Appendix M) and try to identify the format that each text was complying with. Once they had identified the format of each model text, the students then were required to identify the main ideas and supporting details in each model text and transfer the information into the appropriate essay outlines given. Thus, a routine was set.

Activity 2: Venn diagram & mind mapping

Building on the previous task, the tasks designed for Activity 2 were to help students with the process of generating, selecting, and organizing ideas for a comparison and contrast essay using Venn-diagram and mind mapping strategies as graphic organizers. This activity was part of the writing process and useful to help students generate, organize and expand their ideas related to any given writing topic for a compare and contrast essay.

Activity 3: Writing an outline

Activity 3 focused on selecting, organizing, and expanding ideas. The students were required to select three main ideas from the brainstorming activity that could be expanded for the purpose of their essay writing. Once the main ideas were selected, the students had to expand their ideas by providing supporting details for each main idea. This was to be completed in Task Sheet 4 (Selecting and Arranging Ideas). For this activity, students were required to write a point-by-point outline of a compare and contrast essay on the topic given. Students were to use the ideas gathered in Activity 1 and Activity 2 (see Table 4.6) to complete this particular task. At this stage, students were allowed to alter their ideas whenever they felt it necessary and they could always go back to the brainstorming activity if they found that their ideas were not adequate or suitable. As in the previous activity, the teachers' role was to check on the students' progress and provide contingent feedback and feed forward. This activity was expected to be completed in 30 to 40 minutes.

Activity 4: Writing a draft

Activity 4 extended the three previous activities where the students used their writing outline from Activity 3 to write a first draft (about 350-400 words) of their essay (see Table 4.6). Students were given between 40 to 60 minutes to complete the task. As part of formative assessment, teachers were encouraged to continuously check on the students' progress, provide positive feedback and feed forward to help the students to complete the task successfully. At this stage, teachers were also expected to be able to identify issues or problems that students encountered in completing the task. All feedback on and discussions about students' writing took place in class sessions.

Activity 5: Peer-review activity

The aims of this activity were to promote self-review and peer-review activities in the ESL writing classrooms and thus develop a measure of student autonomy in the writing process. In a formative assessment process, students' work would not only be assessed by their teachers but also, a further step, by their peers. The process would train the students in cautiously thinking about their learning and the progress of their writing. For this activity, I developed a peer-review checklist (Appendix N) in which the criteria listed were based on the basic requirements of the LCM4000 essay writing assessment criteria.

Activity 6: Writing a final draft

The final draft was written after considering the comments and feedback gathered from the peer-review activity and the teacher's feedback. The final draft would then be handed to the class teacher and the essay would be graded based on the marking scheme designed. The marking scheme was based on the band system (See Appendix O) with a focus on informing the students on their progress rather than grading them summatively. However, at the end of the semester, teachers were to mark the essays according to the standard marking scheme designed for the LCM4000 summative assessment.

4.2.3 Briefing sessions

Immediately, each time, prior to implementing the intervention in the ESL writing classrooms, both teacher participants and I had briefing sessions where general procedures on delivering the tasks were explained. Although the tasks were pre-planned by me, both Salmah and Mazlina were allowed and encouraged to give

comments or ask questions. At this briefing session also, teachers were advised to discuss and give feedback - either orally or in writing - to the students during the lesson. They also were encouraged to use any approaches that they felt suitable for teaching their students, as different groups of students would have different needs and only the class teacher would know what would be best for their students.

Above all, they were encouraged to share ideas with each other and work collaboratively with me, the researcher. Collaborating with the teachers was valuable for me for it helped in the process of integrating, evaluating and improving the formative assessment tasks and the writing procedures. Although responses from the teachers were minimal during briefing sessions, their presence and willingness to understand the tasks prior to implementing those tasks in their ESL writing class were seen as part of the collaboration. Agreement from the teachers about the writing tasks to be carried out was also needed to ensure the ease of teaching and implementing them.

In the next section, the main findings from the Phase 2 of the intervention are presented and addressed.

4.2.4 Pedagogical practice

Three main categories were developed based on the analysis of the Phase 2 intervention data: pedagogical practice, learning development, and the feasibility and acceptance tasks. To facilitate understanding of the excerpts and transcripts presented in this section, the following conventions are used.

Obs	Observation
BS	Briefing session
FBS	Feedback session
#1, #2	Number of document from which an excerpt was taken
E1	Salmah
E2	Mazlina
R	Researcher
L	Refers to line number in the transcripts where the extracts were taken

Several concerns over changes and challenges in the process of integrating the formative assessment and process-product writing intervention into the usual ESL writing classroom teaching arose through the briefing sessions, observation data, the feedback sessions with the teachers, and the analysis of the students' completed writing tasks. The findings are presented in the following sub-sections.

Establishing the routine for student-centeredness

Teachers were observed to take up the role of an information provider and a facilitator. For example, in the extracts from the field notes below (Obs #1), teachers conducted the lesson on differentiating the types of a compare and contrast essay format by introducing their students to what they were expected to do in that particular lesson. Once instructions were given, teachers let the

students complete the writing task although both teachers assisted their students whenever they found that they had difficulty in completing the task.

Observation extract 1

Teacher assisted the students by adding more information for the students to use. (Obs #1/E1)

Teacher found the text did not match with the criteria set. She further explained to students based on her understanding of how compare and contrast essay structure should be. (Obs #1/E2)

From the two extracts, it can be identified that the teacher focused on helping the students to do a particular task. Assistance from teachers could be seen to provide a scaffold by providing clearer explanations or further information to promote students' understanding. In this case, for example, when Mazlina felt that the model text did not fully meet the criteria of a compare and contrast essay, she explained to her students that in this type of essay, the ideas and supporting details should be equally distributed between the paragraphs in which each paragraph should have one main idea and "one main idea should have two supporting details" (Obs #1/E2) and "which [the supporting details] could be elaboration or example" (Obs #1/E2).

In another observation, teachers used the same strategy where instructions were given to the students. Students then worked in groups of three or four to accomplish the given task. Teachers assisted students by responding to the questions posed by the students and by giving extra information to help the students in completing the tasks.

Observation extract 2

Teacher instructed the students and gave a topic for students to brainstorm using the tasks given... students have difficulty in finding points for the essay topic given...Some students asked the teacher seeking clarification...Teacher responded to the questions by giving one or two examples and let the students continue their discussion in class. (Obs #2/E1)

Teacher explained to the students of the task for the day... Teacher divided the students into groups of 4... Students managed to complete the tasks given with little guidance from teacher... Teacher helped students in the area where students had difficulty. (Obs #2/E2)

By taking up the role of a facilitator rather than direct instructor, the teachers indirectly allowed the students to use their inner resources and do the thinking on their own before seeking the help of others. This indicates that the intervention managed to set a context for student-centredness through a change in teachers' pedagogical practice. The targeted change was established through the procedures for the writing activities (see Section 4.2.2) where focus was directed on what students had to do for the activities.

Most of the activities conducted in the first cycle of the action research project were observed to be done individually (see Observation extract 3) except for the activity on 'generating of ideas using graphic organizers' and 'peer-review activity' where group and pair work were implemented. However, in the second cycle of the research, a shift from individual-focused to a more collaborative approach was observed (Observation extract 4).

Observation extract 3(Cycle 1)

Teacher expected learners to be able to complete the task. Student-centred. Students were able to complete the task individually but have difficulty with transferring of ideas from Model Text 1. (Obs #1/E1)

Teacher continued the lesson by asking students to write a first draft of their essay based on their essay outlines. Teacher asked students to work individually. Students were working on their own and discussions with the group members were not apparent. (Obs #3/E1)

Observation extract 4(Cycle 2)

Teacher explained to students of what to be done in class... Teacher asked students to get into their groups and complete the task given. (Obs #7/E1)

Teacher made students to recall of their previous activity... Students were asked to work in the same group that they worked before. (Obs #7/E2)

Teacher introduced the lesson to the students... Students were asked to work in pairs ...Student seemed to have difficulty in completing the gap filling exercise...Teacher assisted students with the cohesive devices exercise. (Obs #8/E1)

Teacher taught students on cohesive devices and the use of punctuations... Students worked in pairs to complete the tasks given... The class seemed to be able to complete the tasks. (Obs #8/E2)

The shift in approach observed from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 indicated that collaborative learning came into place when teachers realized the need for students to work with their peers. The teachers began to realize that collaboration between peers gave positive outcomes compared to working individually. This was observed in one of the teacher's comments during the discussion session:

Discussion extract 1

- R Okay, how was the lesson?
- E1 It went well...
- E2 Yeah (agreement) because (the lesson) it is group work.
- R Hmm... so I noticed also during the observation. In our meeting before the class, we have actually identified certain areas to be...
- E1 ...amended.
- (Source: FBS#2)

Also, the change and awareness were most likely triggered by the briefing sessions when the researcher continued to encourage the teachers to get their students working in groups:

Briefing extract 1

- (R) : Okay...mmm...Now that we have come to the second round of using the intervention, I've made some changes that we may want to use in the class. So in the second round, topic of the essay will be on 'the different modes of communication and what we're going to do for today's class is that we will ask the student to go to the resource centre and find materials on the types of communication that we have either in the past or at present. So they will make comparison between the mode of communication. ...And so that's what we are going to do in today's class. **Basically get them into groups of four, and ask them to search for materials** [emphasis added]. They are supposed to photocopy any materials that they feel are relevant to the topic [emphasis added]. (BS #6/R/L9-22)

Briefing extract 2

(R): For today's lesson, ... we need to **ask them to sit together again in their groups** and write down their ideas on a mahjong paper, a piece of mahjong paper. That means they need to actually select three main ideas and come out with their own thesis statement [sic][emphasis added]. (BS #7/R/L8-13)

(R): Once they have presented and get feedback from their peers and their teacher, **they may sit together again** and try to improve their outlines before they start writing their draft [emphasis added]. (BS #7/R/L37-39)

Teacher willingness

The teachers' willingness and positive attitude to adopting and adapting materials for teaching influenced the integration process of formative assessment and a process-product approach to writing. The results of the study indicated that both teachers were positive towards implementing the intervention within their usual practice. Their contributions in the briefing and discussion/feedback sessions indicated their willingness to adopt and adapt the materials given to them. This is indicated in the following excerpts gathered from the briefing sessions and discussion sessions:

Briefing extract 3 (trying to understand)

R The activity for today which is the very first activity... the learners have to differentiate the different types of compare and contrast essay. So the task is named as *Spot the Difference* in which the materials that I have provided are Model Text 1, Model Text 2, plus essay outlines. So what we need to do in this class today is...

E1 Like for example the outline here...ok...aaa...must they write everything in complete...in full sentences or...

E2 ...point forms?

R Yeah...point forms, like introduction may be just point forms...for *the purpose* – they just mention compare and contrast essay...

(Source: BS#1)

Briefing extract 4 (trying to adapt)

R ...And, Stage 3, each student has to write a point-by-point outline of compare and contrast essay. They have to actually make an outline for compare and contrast essay on the topic: 'Women in the past and women at present.'

Students are to use ideas gathered in Stage 1 and Stage 2...that means from Task Sheet 1 and Task Sheet 2 to write their outline for the compare and contrast essay. Again, at this stage, students are free to alter their ideas, whenever they feel it.

Students are given 40 minutes to complete the task. I think Stage 3 can be carried out in the next lesson. So, for today's lesson, we may want to focus on Stage 1 and 2. The use of Venn-diagram and the task sheet 2.

E2 See...like for example, you have like main ideas (referring to the task sheet), supporting detail 1, supporting detail 2...so should it be such as that supporting detail 1 – will be the elaboration? And supporting detail 2 – will be the example? Can it be as such? (suggesting)

R Yes, it is possible.

E2 Because normally if we were to write more than two elaborations, it will be too long... it would exceed the word limit of 300 to 350.

(Source: BS#2)

Briefing extract 5 (trying to understand)

R Today, we will do Activity 4, to help learners evaluate their piece of writing and their peer writing. In this particular activity, learners will negotiate with their peers and also teacher...and the task is to evaluate and complete the peer review checklist. So, I have provided a peer review checklist at the back. Let's take a look at the peer review checklist... So they need to negotiate...meaning that they need to look back at their essay and negotiate on which part that is not clear and they need to write the response in the box given.

E2 So this negotiation session, do we interfere?

R Yes, if they ask question...

E2 Oh if they ask question then we need to attend to it.

R Yes. All right, hmm any questions regarding the review checklist?

E1 No.

E2 No.

E1 No...Should be clear.

(Source: BS#4)

Discussion extract 2

R Yes, we just ask them to highlight whether the essay is point-by-point or in block format. Is that okay?

E2 I think that should be fine.

R So based on the students' response gave in the negotiated response column. I feel that the negotiated response column is not really helpful...

E2 Hmm (agreement).

- R ... And maybe we can just take it out?
- E1 Yes that can just be excluded and find ways on how to improve on that.
- R Hmm...What about the criteria? On organization and paragraph development, I noticed that some students were asking questions because they feel that it's quite similar...in the second criteria.
- E1 They feel that it's redundant.
- E2 Ha a...
- R Shall we combine that paragraph 'development' and 'organization.'
- E1 Hmm...the organization no. 4 is like similar to criteria under 'development' no. 5. These are very much similar...in terms of arrangement...right?! Maybe we can combine these.
- E2 Hmm...Yeah.

(Source: FBS#4)

It was observed that the teachers adjusted their teaching or the materials during class time to enable their students to proceed with the tasks. Their flexibility in providing input and extra information that were needed to accomplish the tasks was seen as a major change that helped to make the integration of the task manageable. This behaviour was observed more in Salmah's (E1's) than in Mazlina's (E2's) lessons:

Observation extract 5

Teacher expected learners to be able to complete the task individually... Students were able to complete the task but have difficulty with transferring of ideas from Model Text 1... Teacher assisted the students by adding more info for the students to use. (Obs #1/E1)

Teacher found the text did not match with the criteria set. She further explained to students based on her understanding of how compare and contrast essay structure should be. (Obs #1/E2)

Student seemed to have difficulty in completing the gap feeling exercise...Teacher assisted students with the cohesive devices exercise. (Obs #8/E1)

Data from the discussion session also gave evidence and supported the observation data in which a teacher, namely Salmah, had a concern over her students' difficulty in completing a task. She further mentioned her strategy to help her students.

Discussion extract 3

Well, at first I thought... you know when I first look at the... you know... these exercises... you know... I thought it will be like a breeze to the students but then somehow... when they tried to do it in class, they couldn't manage to identify and answer... yeah, they couldn't fill in the blanks... So, it's quite difficult for them... I guess maybe they couldn't really understand language, maybe it's like a bit difficult for them...I don't know... **So, what I did was... I highlighted... you know... what are the cohesive devices that we can use for comparisons...** I had to spend like...10 minutes, 15 minutes... [emphasis added]. (FBS8/E1/L17-28)

It could be inferred that Salmah's action – highlighting the cohesive devices - in the classroom was object-regulated by the reactions she received from her students when completing a task. At this stage, ZPD (see Section 2.7.3) came into place when with the teacher's assistance, by means of teaching the students to highlight cohesive devices as one of the strategies that allowed students to complete the task given.

Extending learning beyond the classroom

It was noted on many occasions in Cycle 1 that students had difficulty completing the tasks within the allocated lesson time:

Observation extract 6

Teacher instructed the students and gave a topic for students to brainstorm using the tasks given. Student took quite some time to complete the tasks. Students have difficulty in finding points for the essay topic given. (Obs #2/E2)

When this was observed, I suggested the teachers take their students to the resource centre where they could have an opportunity to explore ideas in related topics.

Briefing extract 6

(R) ...we will ask the student to go to the resource centre and find materials on the types of communication that we have either in the past or at present. So they will make comparisons between the modes of communication... And so that's what we are going to do in today's class. Basically get them into groups of four, and ask them to search for materials. They are supposed to photocopy any materials that they feel are relevant to the topic...And then, once they have collected the materials, they are to sit in groups. In their own group, they brainstorm of the ideas. The brainstorming session will be just like the previous lesson. It is just that... it is not rigid for them to use the Venn diagram. We want to see the variety of how they brainstorm, and after that in the next class, we're going to do a video viewing session...

E2 It's just that we don't have a resource centre...just the library.

R Okay, then we go to the library and hopefully, mmm...I'm sure you can arrange...make some kind of arrangement...

E2 For them to get the access to the internet?!

R Yes...

E1 That could be done...The different type of the mode of communication, meaning we are focusing on anything specific or...?

R Anything related, for the moment, just for the brainstorm stage.

E1 So they can just bring in anything?

R Yeah...anything related to communication.

E1/2 Yeah...Right...Okay.

(Source: BS#6)

In relation to this, Salmah and Mazlina commented:

They [the students] browsed on the internet...came out on a lot of things and.... during that brainstorming session, I asked them to sort of like focus on three ideas so they can choose what they want to talk about communication and they know they are comparing communication in the past and the one available now right? So basically, it was... it was successful. (FBS6/E1/L 11-16)

As for my class they've got a lot of information like...kind of like they didn't really know which one to choose, so they were like asking me which one is most suitable...what point of view is most suitable... (FBS6/E2/L 17-20)

Allowing the students to get resources from the library or use the internet resources gave them an opportunity to explore ideas on the essay topic and also created an environment conducive to learning.

Feedback and feed forward

The extent of feedback and feed forward from both teachers was generally limited to verbal response. The following field notes serve as evidence of the nature of feedback in the writing classroom.

Observation extract 7

Teacher gave feedback in the form of praises: okay, good, good job to learners. No written feedback given. (Obs #1/ E1)

Students presented their work in groups [groups of four]. Teachers comment on the points presented. Teacher ensured that every group

presented their work. Presentation went well and students displayed their ideas clearly and relevant to the topic. (Obs #7/ E2)

Written corrective feedback from teachers focused on forms and was provided only when essays were graded. This is shown in the very light annotations on the following extracts of three students' final drafts of Essay 1 (Cycle 1) and Essay 2 (Cycle 2).

Essay extract 1

Secondly, the difference between these two modes of communication is in terms of efficiency. Nowadays, people can send a lot of messages anywhere and anytime. This is because network coverage nowadays is wider than in the past. On the other hand, people in the past sent the message only at certain time and depend on weather. They could not send the message during rainy day and thunderstorm. In brief, the mode of communication in the past was is less efficiently compared to nowadays.

(Final Essay 2/ E1/ #8)

Essay extract 2

The most notable difference between these two women is ~~an~~ education. Nowadays, education is a very important thing around the world. This is because education will determine ~~our~~ our future jobs and ~~life~~ lives. This give the reasons why women nowadays work hard on their studies and value education very much. Most of the university in Malaysia indicate that 90% students are females and males students ~~are~~ minority. This statistic proved that women nowadays are successful as well as men ~~they~~ ^{fragment} only educated themselves until ~~at~~ secondary schools.

(Final Essay 1/ E2/ #4)

Essay extract 3

	Based on <u>article</u> in Cosmic Magazine, the mode of communication is defined as the development of activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving people information. In 1991, when Malaysia and Japan combined to exist a diplomatic relationship in both countries, there are many improvements in Malaysia's technology from that year. Malaysia started to receive <u>benefits</u> from this diplomatic relationship. Recent research in Cosmic Magazine has proved that statistic of the usage of <u>technological products</u> especially in communication technology, has increased from 30% to 82% in 8 years. It reflects that Malaysia brings a lot of changes in communication technology compared to the past. The purpose of <u>communication technology</u> the essay is to compare and contrast between the mode of communication in the past and now. The three main differences are <u>size</u> , <u>availabilities</u> , <u>costs</u> and functions.
--	---

(Final Essay 2/ E2/ #17)

The types of comments given by the teachers were described during the first interview:

Comments that direct students' attention on their grammar errors, sent structures and vocab. (I1/E1/Q1r)

Comments that highlight their errors and problem areas. (I1/E2/Q1r)

Moreover, in the course of the research, the nature of this feedback and feed forward showed no significant development. It could be seen in the three extracts above that teachers underlined, crossed, circled the errors and gave one-word comments on the students' essays. The same forms of corrective feedback from teachers were found on all 48 students' essays. This could be due to the fact that feedback focusing on form had been a customary practice over the years, and so it was hard for teachers to change their practice to give more comprehensive written feedback. This became obvious during the briefing sessions. The following field notes provide instances of the nature of feedback the students received in their writing class.

Observation extract 8

Teacher responded to the questions by giving one or two examples [verbally] and let the students to continue their discussion in class. (Obs #2/ E1)

Observation extract 9

Teacher went through the checklist together with the students and explained [verbally] every single item in the checklist. (Obs #4/ E2)

Observation extract 10

Student seemed to have difficulty in completing the gap feeling exercise... Teacher assisted students with the cohesive devices exercise by explaining to the students of when and how to use the cohesive devices... Students seemed to be able to move on with the task. (Obs #8/ E1)

Observation extract 11

Teacher helped students in the area where students had difficulty by giving further explanation to the students... Students managed to complete the tasks given with little guidance from teacher. (Obs #2/ E2)

In the first cycle, there was little peer feedback as most of the activities were carried out individually. The situation changed in the second cycle of the research when more pair and group work occurred in both classes, and thus more feedback was gathered from student peers. It was evident from the observation that teacher started to have students work collaboratively with their peers.

Observation extract 12

Students were asked to work in groups of four. Teacher took the students to the library and gave out a new topic for the students to brainstorm. (Obs#6/E1)

Observation extract 13

Teacher made students recall their previous activity. Students were asked to work in the same group that they worked before. Students were very cooperative in completing their task. Students presented their work in groups. Teacher comments on the points presented. (Obs #7/E2)

Observation extract 14

Teacher explained to students what was to be done in class. Teacher asked students to get into their groups and complete the task given. Teacher selected groups in random to present their work. (Obs #7/E1)

4.2.5 Learning development as indicated in the students' written work

The absence of formative assessment of writing was noted at the beginning of the course when summative assessment appeared to be the main objective to be achieved. However, the intervention introduced had helped to develop a formative assessment and process-product approach to writing particularly in the second cycle of the research, which indicated that self-regulation was present as a result of scaffolding introduced in the first cycle. It was observed that students benefited more from the activities as mediating tools similar to those they had during the first cycle. It could be concluded from the findings that the different approaches to the teaching and managing of activities by the teachers seemed to influence the students' learning development

The students' written work also marked a progression in their writing performance – see Table 4.7 below. Results taken from the two graded essays (a total of 24 essays) of the top three and bottom three scores revealed an increase in

marks, except for one student (T1 from Group 2) who retained the same marks for both essays written.

Table 4.7: Top three students' and bottom three students' essay scores

Group	Top 3 Students	Final Essay 1 Score	Final Essay 2 Score	Bottom 3 Students	Final Essay 1 Score	Final Essay 2 Score
1	T1	14.5	18	B1	8.5	15.0
	T2	14.5	18	B2	8.0	15.0
	T3	13.5	18	B3	6.5	14.5
2	T1	15.0	15	B1	9.0	16.0
	T2	13.0	17	B2	9.0	17.0
	T3	13.0	17	B3	8.0	12.0

Based on the analysis of these students' written tasks, it can be suggested that the process of using the peer review checklist (see Appendix N) was a factor in helping the students to go through their own essays and to identify mistakes or errors. Having peer-response and self-response columns in the peer review checklist was found to be a positive step in promoting the formative writing process as it helped to developed critical thinking in reviewing both peer and students' own essays.

It was found that students' attitudes towards criticism did influence the peer reviewing process and writing development. Some writers did not put their trust in the feedback given by their peers in the peer-review process. Although many peer reviewers managed to make some suggestions on simple grammatical errors, spelling and words replacement/ choice, there were parts where suggestions were not taken into account and the writer would either retain the original sentences or rephrase their own sentences. It was observed that in the first draft of essay 1,

sentence-level language use was the main focus in the peer-review activity. As such, there was not much focus or feedback given on organization and paragraph development. Nevertheless, in the final draft of essay 1, some reviewers managed to focus on essay structure and language use at the inter-sentence level. There were instances where reviewers looked at the paragraph development, looking for topic sentences, and ideas. This indicates that peer-review activity triggered the thinking and reflective process among some of the ESL writing students.

In the case of one student (T1) who did not show any progress in the writing performance, it was found that the form of peer reviewer feedback could have affected the way the writer approached his/her writing revision:

Essay Analysis #1:

abbreviations were not used to indicate errors but the peer reviewer crossed out the incorrect and provided the substitutions. Feedback was given on sentence structure, vocabulary and flow of ideas. (Grp2/Ts1/Essay1/Peer reviewer)

Seemed to accept all the suggestions given by the peer reviewer including the inaccurate responses or suggestions given. (Grp2/Ts1/Essay1/Peer writer)

It was indicated in the peer review checklist that “the essay was not written in consistent order when making comparison between ideas”, this could be related to the comment given in the draft on flow of ideas. Peer reviewer had used the negotiated response column to further elaborate on his response and the writer seemed to easily accept the feedback given as there was no disagreement noticed between the peer-response and the self-response column. (Grp2/Ts1/Essay1/Peer review checklist)

Essay Analysis #2:

In the second essay, there was less comment or mark indicated in the first draft of essay 2. Errors identified: spelling, missing words, articles, and appropriateness of the written phrases (topic sentences). (Grp2/Ts1/Essay2/Peer reviewer)

Most apparent changes were made to the spelling and the topic sentence. Generally since there was not much of comment received/indicated in the first draft, writer seemed to just review what was needed to be reviewed. (Grp2/Ts1/Essay2/Writer)

In the peer review checklist, the feedback received was that writer met most parts of the criteria in the checklist. The only points highlighted were on paragraph development related to concluding sentence where writer did not give a concluding sentence for her paragraphs. Another two points were on inadequate use of vocabulary and occurrence of spelling mistakes. With regard to spelling mistakes, the writer indicated in her self-response column that she had no problem in spelling. (Grp2/Ts1/Essay2/Peer review checklist)

From the extracts above, it could be inferred that the reviewer's feedback on the first and second essays was quite superficial, focusing on basic forms and spelling where there were few, if any, additional comments given to the writer.

In most instances, peer reviewers managed to make some suggestions on simple grammatical errors, spelling and words replacement/ choice. Peer reviewed essay 1 extract 1 and extract 2 indicated that peer reviewers identified errors and provided suggestions or alternatives to the writer.

Peer reviewed essay 1 extract 1

Men will not ^{be} complete without women. Women are ^{generated} from our God to complete men's life. But, ^{times} make women ~~nowadays~~ different than women in the past. What is the contrast between women in the past and women at present? They are different in terms of manners, knowledge and appearance.

(First draft essay 1/ E1/ #2)

Peer reviewed essay 1 extract 2

The most obvious difference between women in the past and women at present is the age for them to get married. Women in the past are married at the ~~age~~ ^{young age} ~~while~~ ^{while} women ~~at~~ ⁱⁿ the present ~~are married~~ ^{are} at the age between thirty to ~~fourty~~ ^{spelling} years old. Women in the past also ~~are~~ ^{focused} on their marriage while women ~~(in the) present are focusing~~ ^{at} on their ~~(study)~~ ^{education} to have a better life in future.

(First draft essay 1/E2/#6)

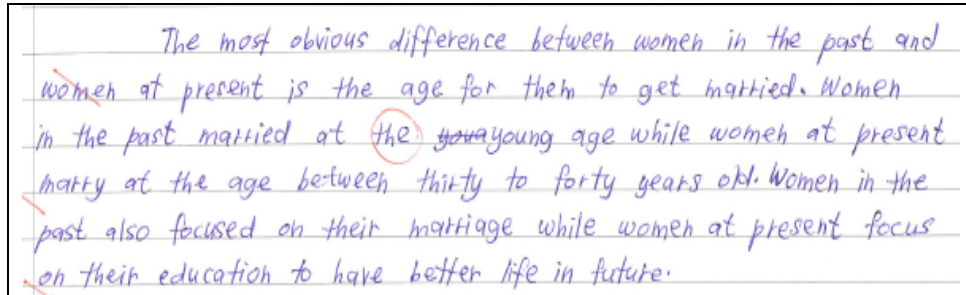
The suggestions were taken into account by the writers in writing the final draft, as is shown in the following extracts.

Final draft essay 1 extract 1

Men will not be complete without women. Women are generated from our God to complete men's life. But, ^{times} make women nowadays different than women in the past. They are different in terms of manners, knowledge and appearance.

(Final draft essay 1/E1/#2)

Final draft essay 1 extract 2

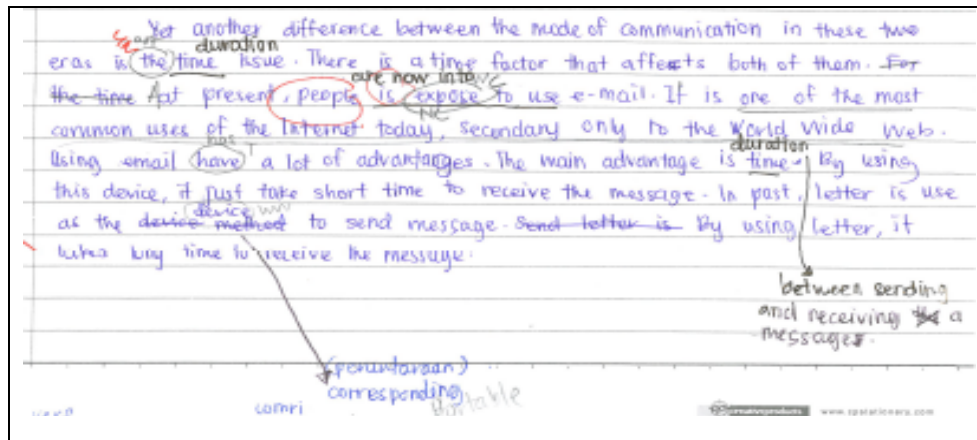


The most obvious difference between women in the past and women at present is the age for them to get married. Women in the past married at ~~the~~ you young age while women at present marry at the age between thirty to forty years old. Women in the past also focused on their marriage while women at present focus on their education to have better life in future.

(Final draft essay 1/E2/#6)

Highlighting or giving constructive remarks would make the students feel positive and motivated. This encouraged them to make an effort to improve and do better in their next writing. It is evident that the reviewing process encouraged the writer to not only improve the draft by correcting the identified errors but also to review the entire draft. This is presented in the following extract (Final draft essay 1 extract 1) where the student writer had deleted a sentence, "What is the contrast between women in the past and women at present?", which was thought unnecessary by the writer although there was no apparent suggestion made by the reviewer. In addition to considering the peer review comments as formative feedback, writers often made their own revisions where they thought changes were necessary. Such self-regulation - the application of inner resources stimulated by other regulation (i.e. peer feedback) - may lead to independent learning within the ZPD through a social process – where learning developed through interactions with peers. Extract 1 of first draft essay 2 gives an example of self-regulated learning developed from the peer review activity.

First draft essay 2 extract 1



(First draft essay 2/ E2/ #5)

It can be seen in the extract that the writer was reflecting on the feedback given through the peer-review process by adding and/or substituting words which the writer felt appropriate. The corrections made by the writer are represented by the darkest black and included word substitutions, additional information and pointed arrows.

In the first essay and during the first reviewing activity, students mostly focused their comments and feedback on the language use. A focus on the sentence structure and coherence was not so apparent. This perhaps reflected their first-time experience of peer reviewing and their level of confidence (focusing on the easiest item to identify and the basic level of reviewing). However, as the second cycle proceeded, peer reviewers not only identified errors but also highlighted them by underlining the errors and indicating the word categories by using abbreviations they were exposed to during the proofreading exercise. These acts contributed formatively to the process writing. According to Salmah, among the activities that she might adopt for her class were:

... the peer editing and proof reading exercises because it helped students to be more critical of their work, thus enabling them to produce better essays. (I2/E1/Q1e)

Extract 1 of the peer reviewed essay 2 below is an example of the progress made by one of the reviewers in reviewing a peer essay.

Peer reviewed essay 2 extract 1

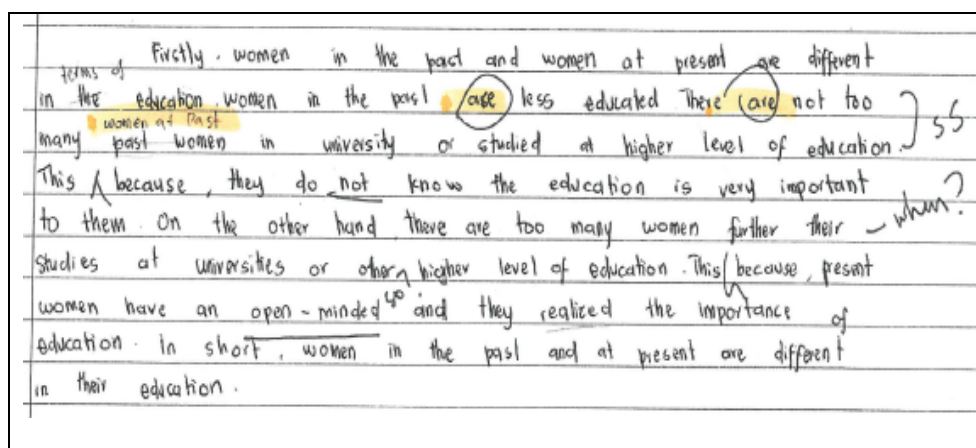
Date	No
<p>"Technology ^{at} on your fingertips," the famous quote that is used nowadays in ^{now} expressing the development of technology. From the past until now, people ^{action of expressing} keep working non-stop to develop the technology ^{either} in commuting or communicating. The mode of communication between now and then can be differed in terms of announcement, sending in information and conversation.</p> <p>Firstly, the mode of communication ^{between} th those era ^{vary} was in terms of announcement. In the past, the announcements that were made ^(v) limited for those in a certain area. For example, the drumbeats were used to announce or warn were limited ^{for} for certain villagers. In contrast, nowadays, the announcements can be spe spread ^{out} unlimitedly. The terrible disasters that are detected can be warned easily through ^{PLL} newspapers, radios or televisions for the whole country. On top of that, it can also be spread out to the whole world. In brief, the mode of communication ^{is} are between now and then are different in terms of announcement.</p>	

(First draft essay 2/ E1/ #22)

In the extract above, it is noticed that the reviewer had focused on errors beyond language forms. Rather, the peer reviewer highlighted a good point on the structure of how the writer's ideas were presented – parallelism (PLL). However, it was also observed that some error identifications were less accurate. The potentially mistaken identifications could be a reason why some writers decided not to amend their writing based on the peer feedback received. This was also an issue raised by the teachers in the discussion session.

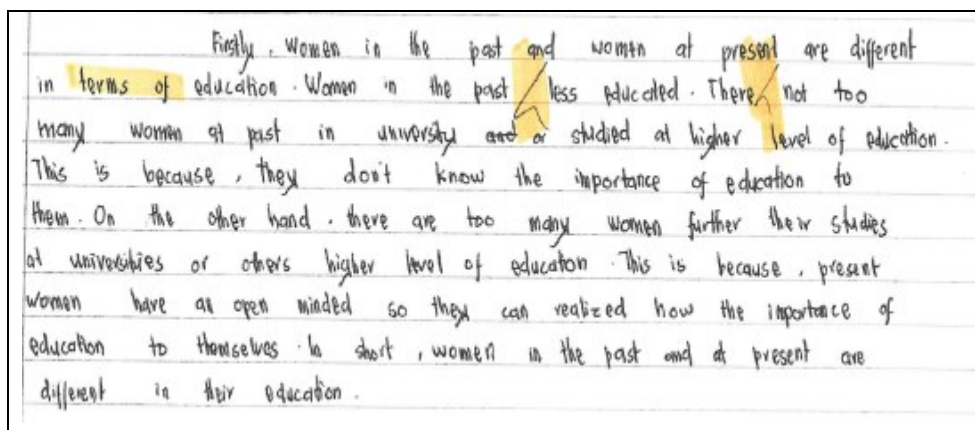
In addition, the teachers' way of marking or indicating errors in the writing drafts also affected the students' progress in their writing. Highlighting or giving encouraging comments would make the students feel positive and motivated to achieve the same approved criteria in their next writing. In the case where a teacher had marked using only symbols without giving suggestions, it is most likely that students would not be able to correct their errors or improve their drafts. For example, giving markers like 'SS' '??' in the students' drafts without giving suggestions or explanation were found to be not really helping the weak students. The weaker students tended to ignore the markers and rewrite the same sentences/words/verbs again in their final draft. This is shown in the following extracts.

Essay extract 4



(First draft essay 1/ E1/ #18)

Essay extract 5



Firstly, women in the past and women at present are different in terms of education. Women in the past less educated. There not too many women at past in university and or studied at higher level of education. This is because, they don't know the importance of education to them. On the other hand, there are too many women further their studies at universities or others higher level of education. This is because, present women have an open minded so they can realized how the importance of education to themselves. In short, women in the past and at present are different in their education.

(Final draft essay 1/ E1/ #18)

In addition, circling the errors without giving substitution/explanation could confuse the writers and could lead to many interpretations. Weaker students required clearer indicators of what the errors were in their writing in order to benefit from the peer review activity.

The different style of giving feedback to the writers had positive and negative effects in the revising process. Positive outcomes happened when writers received useful feedback from reviewers and managed to think about the possible mistakes and possible corrections. On the other hand, a negative outcome would result if short and inaccurate responses caused the writers to make less change to their writing drafts and to make further mistakes in their sentences. In this case, peer review activity is seen as object-regulation. Collaboration that occurred from this activity appeared to be as other-regulation that helped students to be able to move towards self-regulation.

4.2.6 Task feasibility and acceptance

Familiarity

In the process of implementing the intervention during Cycle 1, it was observed that teachers largely carried out the lessons using the writing tasks given as briefed. Tasks or materials that matched or were similar to what teachers were familiar with were found to be easily accepted and adopted by them. However, teachers and students faced difficulty using the tasks developed for the intervention when the tasks did not match their essay writing expectations (Obs #1/E2). This was confirmed through the discussion or feedback session with the collaborators when Mazlina noted that she and her students had difficulty in Activity 1:

they did have problems of identifying which points...which elaboration should be put in which point... (FBS1/E2/L99-103)

It's just that probably, they would have problems in 'security' can it be reflected or can it be categorized under 'safety of the staying'...that was one of the question asked... 'Can I put like...the security here...as elaboration of the point?' (FBS1/E2/106-109)

In her teaching, Mazlina expected students to fill up all the blanks with information found in the text, but when the text had some missing ideas, they were not able to fully complete the blanks. Therefore, she concluded - and explained to the students - that the model texts did not match with the criteria set for a compare and compare and contrast essay. To ensure that students completed the task of Activity 1, Mazlina then explained to her students how comparison and contrast essay should be - for example, subject of comparison should be explicitly

presented (FBS1/E2/L99-103) and statements of main ideas should be specific (FBS1/E2/106-109). Her explanation allowed her students to complete the task successfully.

Salmah's students were also observed (Obs # 1/ E1) to have difficulty with the tasks. As she explained in a post-lesson discussion session, this was due to:

the conclusion doesn't actually reflect in what... hmm... doesn't really state in the thesis statement. (FBS1/E1/L22-24)

The conclusion is maybe like a bit of being wordy without really emphasizing the thesis statement... the points. (FBS1/E1/L93-94)

Salmah, with regard to the model texts given, explained in the discussion session that:

The elaboration is okay. It follows the format that we like... introduce to the students... the elaboration for the body paragraph... okay... it follows the three items insert in the thesis statement. (FBS1/E1/L88-91)

... the elaborations are relevant so they manage to identify all the ideas. (FBS1/E1/L104-105)

Familiarity with the task and materials influenced the task acceptance and flow not only by the teachers but also by the students. This is revealed in the following extracts related to the peer-review activity (in Cycle 2):

they already know what we want in that essay you know... in terms of organization, in terms of the flow... and this time around they are able to do like... I don't know... like they enjoy doing it... because they know already of what to look for. Unlike the first time around. (FBS9/E1/L21-25)

They were okay with this one [the revised peer-review checklist] as they were not obligated to do that 'response' thing. The 'negotiated comments.' (FBS9/E1/L17-18)

...And they were very much... how to say... they are more aware...of what they are supposed to look for. Haa... So I think that went well. (FBS9/E2/L26-28)

When teachers experienced difficulties carrying out particular tasks, it was necessary for them to collaborate with the researcher to find a way of making tasks achievable by students while also meeting course expectations. This process allowed negotiation between the researcher and teacher and is an important element in collaborative action research.

Topic selection

Gender related topics were found to either assist or hinder the writing process of the ESL students:

for my students...most of them are boys...so I think that they did have problems, because they just don't know, like they came up with over generalized statements...like you know... things like 'women last time like very polite, domestic and what not...and today women like are more sexy...you know like vocal.' And then they came up with... aaa... something like... 'similarity, both of them are women.' (FBS2/E1/L22-28)

Hmm... they didn't ask much questions... hmm probably the topic is easy, not difficult for them to digest so they can actually compare different generation within the family ... Hmm... maybe because they are boys, but mine is like there are more girls... even though there are only about two boys, but in group, the other two are girls, so they can or they are able to share their points... yeah. (FBS2/E2/L19-35)

In this case, Salmah's students were found to have difficulty in getting ideas on the topic 'compare and contrast women in the past and women at present.' Male

students formed the majority of the class and they were found to have limited ability to generate ideas and provide concrete details for the essay topic. In contrast, Mazlina's students did not face any problem in the topic and it was assumed that because they were mainly female students they were able to relate the topic to their background knowledge. The findings contributed to the knowledge in selecting the second topic for essay writing where teachers and I collaboratively worked and decided upon the second essay topic that was then introduced in Cycle 2 of the action research.

4.2.7 Summary of Phase 2 findings

In summary, Phase 2 findings revealed several changes and challenges faced in the integration of formative writing assessment and process writing strategies into the existing ESL writing classrooms. Changes in the teachers' beliefs and principles were observed in Phase 2 of the intervention. At this stage, particularly in the second cycle of the action research, teachers were seen to carry out their role as a facilitator and also an input provider as opposed to being an instructor, where they were observed to respond to the students' questions and provide extra information to help students understand better. Teachers' positive attitudes, mainly in adopting and adapting the intervention into their classroom teaching, also contributed positively to the process of change. Their contributions in the discussion sessions with the researcher in the form of comments and feedback regarding the use and workability of the writing tasks were indicative of their willingness and flexibility to change. A change was also observed in the teachers' pedagogical practice in which it was observed that student-centred practice had taken place in Cycle 2 of Phase 2 of this research. Teachers' pedagogical practice

progressed from having students working individually to working collaboratively with their peers. An obvious change observed was in the peer review and peer feedback practice. Students seemed to benefit from the peer interactions when more exercises or tasks were carried out either as pair work or group work. In addition, the change of environment or teaching setting had an impact on students' learning because it allowed students to have access to various sources for their writing purpose. The different setting also allowed the students to work closely and collaboratively with their peers.

Positive changes were seen in the students' learning development. A formative assessment and process-product approach for writing developed in the second cycle when teachers changed their approach by assigning group work instead of individual work. Students were seen to benefit from this change whereby they showed positive attitudes towards the change and displayed constructive learning development, which somehow contributed to their motivational level to learn writing. Peer review activity, which included formative assessment by peers, seemed to contribute most to the process writing intervention. The peer review activity gave students the opportunity to read and revise their own work and the work of others. However, the developmental process relied on the students' decision making, language competency and trust. There had been a development in terms of focus on forms to both forms and paragraph structure and development. The activity managed to develop a critical and reflective process of writing among the ESL learners.

The Phase 2 findings also revealed some challenges faced during the integration process. The first challenge was in the pedagogical practice where there was a lack of written feedback and feed forward given to the students. Teachers

preferred to give oral and impromptu feedback to the students throughout both cycles of the research project. Though it was seen as a challenge to develop change in the way feedback was practised, students seemed to benefit from this kind of feedback, which they valued as positive, relevant, and helpful. In addition, superficial and inaccurate comments made by peer reviewers contributed to insignificant development in the peer writing. It was also found that acceptance of the tasks was dependent on the practicality and viability of the tasks designed. The findings indicated that teachers' and students' familiarity with the tasks was an important factor in accepting change and promoting development in teaching and learning. Hence, changes in the intervention occurred to match the teachers' expectations and beliefs. A challenge also was seen in the selection of a gender related topic which could either promote or delay the learning process.

It is notable that the intervention was positively accepted and the participants found the formative assessment tasks for writing were useful in helping the students to go through the writing process. The integration process also managed to change from an individualistic focus to a collaborative culture between teachers and students, which was apparent in the observation data where activities were carried out in group or pair work. Collaborative learning was apparent among students particularly during the peer reviewing process. In addition, a collaborative culture was also developed between the teachers and me as researcher in which teachers were very open and cooperative in giving their opinions and making suggestions for task improvements. This collaborative culture managed to change the teachers' perspective on the use of peer-review activity as part of the process writing.

Also, the reviewing process as a form of other regulation, regardless of the way feedback was given raised awareness among student writers to not only revise what had been reviewed, but also to reflect on and extend the review process to self-reviewing. This seemed to promote a positive development in their writing. Essays were improved following the process - modelling + feedback + exploring + reflecting + conceptualizing - which can be perceived as potentially effective scaffolding within a zone of proximal development.

4.3 Intervention: Phase 3 Findings

This section describes the findings of the surveys completed by the ESL students and the interviews with the two ESL teachers (see Table 3.5). In this Phase 3, two types of interviews were carried out: post-intervention interviews (coded as I2) and two follow-up interviews (coded as I3A and I3B) (see Section 3.3.3 and Section 3.4.2). Post-intervention interviews were carried out immediately after the completion Cycle 2 of the action research, while, follow-up interviews were carried out much later (2012). The findings from the survey and the two interviews are presented in this section in relation to the third research question: *What are the immediate and the long-term impacts of integrating formative assessment and the elements of process writing approach on the research participants?*

In this chapter, Section 4.3.1 presents the findings related to the immediate impacts of the intervention on the students. Section 4.3.2 focuses on the findings about the immediate impact of the intervention on the teacher participants. Section 4.3.3 presents the findings on the long-term impact the intervention has on

the teachers' beliefs and practices, task feasibility and acceptance. Finally, Section 4.3.4 summarizes the findings of the post-intervention stage (Phase 3 findings) of this action research project.

4.3.1 Immediate impact of intervention on students

As noted in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.3.3), immediately after the pedagogical intervention, a questionnaire was administered to the students, and subsequently analysed using SPSS software for descriptive statistics. The following subsection presents, and comments on, some of the key results.

Perceptions on feedback received

From the survey results, it could be inferred that students had positive perceptions of the feedback received in their writing classes during the intervention period. Table 4.8 summarizes the findings.

Table 4.8: Students' responses on feedback received from teachers

Statement	Response	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Teacher always provides positive feedback	Strongly Agree	15	31
	Agree	27	56
	Neither agree/disagree	5	10
	Disagree	1	2
	Strongly disagree	0	0
Verbal response helps students in writing	Strongly Agree	11	23
	Agree	33	69
	Neither agree/disagree	4	8
	Disagree	0	0
	Strongly disagree	0	0
Feedback given by teacher helps improve writing	Strongly Agree	20	42
	Agree	26	54
	Neither agree/disagree	2	4
	Disagree	0	0
	Strongly disagree	0	0

From Table 4.8, it may be understood that students appreciated and valued teacher feedback on their learning ESL writing. A total of 87 per cent of the respondents said they received positive feedback from their teachers. Over 90 per cent of the respondents agreed that the teacher gave relevant input in helping and improving their writing; and 92 per cent of the students also indicated the usefulness of verbal response received from their teacher. The responses were a strong indication that feedback and feed forward given by the teachers in the form of verbal response were useful and informative, which could be regarded as formative. It is important to note that there were no disagreements to any of the propositions, except that one student disagreed that the teacher always gave positive feedback

Peer collaboration and feedback

Table 4.9 shows the students' responses concerning the value of peer collaboration and feedback.

Table 4.9: Students' responses on peer collaboration and feedback

Statement	Response	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Activities allow interactions between friends	Strongly Agree	20	42
	Agree	24	50
	Neither agree/disagree	3	6
	Disagree	1	2
	Strongly disagree	0	0
Peer reviewing allows students to exchange ideas with their peers	Strongly Agree	15	31
	Agree	26	54
	Neither agree/disagree	6	13
	Disagree	0	0
	Strongly disagree	1	2
Peer review activities allow students to discuss and	Strongly Agree	15	31
	Agree	25	52
	Neither agree/disagree	7	15
	Disagree	1	2

negotiate with their peers	Strongly disagree	0	0
Students were able to get oral feedback through group presentation	Strongly Agree	4	8
	Agree	32	67
	Neither agree/disagree	11	23
	Disagree	0	0
	Strongly disagree	1	2

It is noted that, again, the responses were very positive overall. The vast majority (92%) indicated that the writing activities in the second cycle of the research allowed them to interact with their peers, although a small minority (2%) disagreed, and 6 per cent were neutral. This positive response was possibly related to the teachers' approach to managing the activities in terms of pair and group work. About 85 per cent of the students agreed that peer review activity allowed them to exchange ideas with their peers and 83 per cent of the students agreed with the idea that peer review activities allowed them to discuss and negotiate with their peers. Most (75%) agreed that they received oral feedback from their peers during their oral presentations, which were carried out in the second cycle of the study: students were to present their ideas (during the pre-writing phase) with their respective group in front of the class and members of the class would comment on their ideas and presentation. Once again, the overall level of agreement was exceptionally high, and it is interesting to speculate whether the few who disagreed or strongly disagreed with each of the four statements were the same students in each case; it is, of course, impossible to find out.

Perceptions on intervention and learning development

Table 4.10 below reveals the students' perceptions of the activities conducted and their relation to their learning development, in the second cycle of the action research project.

Table 4.10: Students' perceptions of the ESL writing intervention and their learning development

Statement	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
I enjoyed my writing classes	44	92
Ample practices were given to improve my writing	43	90
Essay outlines given made me aware of the writing formats	44	92
Model texts helped me in understanding how compare and contrast essay is written	46	96
Mind mapping helped in generating and organizing ideas	41	85
Venn diagram helped me to see the ideas clearly	38	79
I am now clear about how a good thesis statement should be	41	85
The tasks during pre-writing activity helped me a lot	43	90
Tasks given really improved my writing	43	90
I now feel more confident to write an essay	37	77
Peer-review activity enabled me to identify the characteristics of good essays	38	80
I am really motivated to learn writing	38	80

It could be inferred from Table 4.10 that students valued the writing intervention and found that it helped their writing development. Once again, the extremely high satisfaction level is to be noted. Peer review activity, again, was found helpful where the students scored higher marks in their second essay. This was evident and indicates the writing progress through this activity among other pre-writing activities. The second essays were well-written compared to their first essay. The survey results for students' perceptions of using the peer review checklist indicated that 80 per cent agreed that peer review activity in their writing class enabled them to identify the characteristics of a good essay.

In addition, more than 70 per cent of the respondents gave positive feedback on the intervention used in their ESL writing class, which implies the acceptability of the tasks of the intervention. Most importantly, more than 90 per cent found that the tasks and materials given, the activity of organizing main ideas and supporting details and the peer review checklist were useful and easy to follow. Table 4.11 below shows the results of the survey of students' perception of the writing tasks developed for the intervention.

Table 4.11: Students' perceptions of writing intervention

Statement	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Tasks given were really helpful	45	94
I liked the use of Venn diagram to classify ideas	38	79
I was given enough practice to write	41	85
Activities on organizing main ideas and developing supporting details were useful	45	94
Topics for writing were interesting	34	71
Topics allow me to relate my background knowledge and culture	36	75
Peer review checklist was clear and easy to follow	44	92
Materials given were relevant and useful	44	92

Collaborative culture

The peer-review activity was seen as the major contribution to the collaboration process and the formative process of writing where a majority (85%) of the students indicated that peer-review activity ‘had allowed them to exchange ideas with their peers’ and 83% ‘had allowed them to negotiate and discuss with their peers.’ Table 4.12 below summarizes the findings on collaboration among students in their ESL writing classrooms that was developed during the action research project.

Table 4.12: Collaboration among students

Statement	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Activities in the English language classroom are usually conducted in groups.	41	85
The activities allow interactions between friends.	44	92
The peer reviewing task allows me to share and exchange ideas with my friends.	41	85
The peer-reviewing activities allow me to discuss and negotiate with my partner on the comments given.	40	83

However, these very positive findings need to be viewed with considerable caution. Even though the questionnaires were completed anonymously, and the students were assured of their confidentiality, the possibility that they gave socially acceptable responses, rather than completely honest answers, cannot be ruled out. This possibility is mitigated, to some extent, by the one or two students who disagreed with the statements in Tables 4.8 and 4.9, as well as those who remained neutral. In addition, with regard to learning development, the findings

from the questionnaire corresponded with the findings in Section 4.2.5 of Phase 2. Nevertheless, the conventional attitude of respect for teachers, held by and expected of Malaysian students, throws the overall reliability of these data into question. Therefore, although they have been reported here, such self-report data cannot provide firm evidence of changes of attitudes, or of behaviour.

4.3.2 Immediate impact of intervention on teachers

Post-intervention interviews with individual teacher participants were conducted to discover the usefulness of the intervention. The interviews were carried out at the end of the semester, 2008 (held immediately at the conclusion of the intervention). The findings from this interview provided further input on the teachers' perceptions and the development of process writing as part of the formative assessment approach.

Acceptability of the writing intervention

The findings from the post-intervention interviews with the individual teacher participants indicated that they were satisfied with the way that the action research project's writing intervention was integrated into their normal ESL writing classrooms. The following excerpts provide evidence for such a claim.

Venn diagram for brainstorming activity, mind-mapping for the brainstorming activity, generating and selecting main ideas, developing supporting details, outline format ... All those activities helped in giving students input for the development of their essays. (I2/E1/Q1b-c)

Yes, they were very useful and easy to follow, and guide students in the writing process... Overall the intervention was very helpful, the activities chosen were very well thought... (I2/E2/Q1b, Q1d)

Salmah was quite certain she would adopt the activities, especially the peer-review activity, into regular practice.

The most beneficial activities for me were the proofreading and peer editing because I could see that students were able to produce better essays grammatically and with better sentence structures when they knew how to analyse their work. (I2/E1/Q1d)

Similarly, Mazlina was also positive when asked whether she would adopt any of the activities from the intervention.

Yes, as the Venn diagram, peer review, and marking rubrics are useful... in fact I am using some in my writing classes at present. (I2/E2/Q1e)

Change in perspectives

The collaboration between the teachers and the researcher managed to change teachers' perspectives on the peer review activity, especially Mazlina's, who had indicated in her earlier interview, during Phase 1, that:

Peer editing is not compulsory and does not work well. Students are not sure and they sometimes make more mistakes. So, I don't use the checklist. (I1/E2/Q3d)

However, she asserted during the post-intervention interview that the peer-review checklist and activity were useful. She said:

Yes, they [peer-review checklist and activity] were very useful and easy to follow, and guide students in the writing process... Venn diagram...- Peer review/Proofreading activity... Marking rubrics. (I2/E2/Q1b)

Similarly, Salmah also indicated a change in her perspective particularly about the peer review activity.

Yes [I would adopt], especially the peer review and proof reading exercises because they helped students to be more critical of their work, thus enabling them to produce better essays. (I2/E1/Q1e)

When teachers were asked what kind of changes they wanted to bring into their ESL writing classrooms, Salmah mentioned that among the changes that she would like to have were:

A lot of exercises on sentence structures and also grammar exercises... And, also peer or self-editing exercises are made compulsory – because I believe that if students do not know how to detect their errors, they won't be able to write grammatical sentences. (I2/E1/Q1a)

Both teachers clearly indicated that they would adopt some of the activities introduced in the intervention.

Collaborative culture

Peer review was found to be a useful component of writing practice, and one that provided a focus on process. This activity promoted collaborative practice in the ESL writing classroom. Other activities and the teachers' approach to managing the distribution of tasks into pair and group work also contributed to the collaborative culture through a student-centred approach.

Collaboration occurred, not only between students and teachers but also between teachers and researcher. Mazlina indicated that there was a collaborative network

between the researcher and the teachers where she felt appreciated when the ideas she contributed to improve the writing tasks as part of the writing intervention were considered.

Overall the intervention was very helpful, the activities chosen were very well thought and most of all, **the researcher took our recommendation seriously** [emphasis added]. (I2/E2/Q1d)

Thus, collaborative activity occurred not only within the ZWD in the writing classes, but also established a ZPD between the two teachers and the researcher.

4.3.3 Development in teachers' pedagogical practice over time

In July 2012, two follow-up interviews (I3A and I3B) were conducted to discover any long-term effects of this collaborative action research on the ESL writing pedagogical practice and curriculum development. The first follow-up interviews (I3A) with individual teachers gathered information about the development in the teachers' pedagogical practice, over time. The second follow-up interview (I3B) was a paired interview to revisit the teachers' perspectives on peer review. The main purpose of these follow-up interviews was to discover whether there had been possible effects on the teachers' beliefs and practices since the researcher first introduced her intervention on process writing tasks as part of formative assessment, back in 2008. The interviews also sought to discover how their ESL writing courses had been conducted more recently. This would enable the researcher to make comparisons between the past and the present nature of the writing course and at the same time to identify the changes developed over time.

Based on these follow up interviews, findings pertaining to the teachers' beliefs on the process of teaching and assessing ESL writing were discovered and are

described in three sub-sections. The first sub-section comprises themes related to the teachers' pedagogical approach in the ESL writing classrooms. The second sub-section covers themes related to the teachers' perspectives on feedback. The third sub-section contains themes related to the teachers' views on peer review activity as part of formative assessment for writing.

Revisiting the teacher participants' pedagogical approach in ESL writing classrooms (2012)

The findings from these interviews revealed that both teachers were still teaching the writing subject for the 2012 semester. Salmah had been teaching the same ESL writing course, LCM4000, continuously since 2008. However, at this point, she had used a different approach as there was a change in the writing genre. Her focus this time was on teaching an opinion-based essay instead of a compare and contrast essay. Even so, she believed there would be elements of compare and contrast in writing the opinion-based essay. Salmah said:

...we focus on writing the opinion based essay. So the format is something like the IELTS where you know whatever it is the students have to give their opinions... based on the stimulus given to them. (I3A/E1, line 14-17)

... but in the opinion based essay the students did write or use the compare and contrast or the cause and effect, right, it is just that we prepare or teach them the opinion based essay. (I3A/E1, line 19-21)

Salmah emphasized a process-product approach in her ESL writing class where she followed through the pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing procedures. In her pre-task activities, emphasis was given to teaching the students with relevant grammar items and vocabulary as required by the course and stipulated in

the course outline. She believed that the grammar items were useful and relevant in preparing the students to write the opinion-based essay. This was then followed by setting a context for the students by giving them some readings as input or ideas for their essay writing. In the while-writing phase, emphasis was given to writing an outline and a draft for the essay itself.

Salmah adopted a teacher-centred classroom at the beginning of her writing course and focused on language skills prior to writing an essay. She believed that her learners needed the teacher's guidance at the beginning, as her students' level of proficiency was at the average of between low and intermediate level.

The focus... more focus would be on the language itself. Okay... the content, as long as we can understand the language, then we would think the students as being able to write. (I3A/E1, line 69-71)

...for them to pass the examination they need to have certain level of language accuracy, language proficiency so that is what I focused in the class. (I3A/E1, line 226-228)

Although the teacher's role was quite dominant at the early stage of the course, Salmah did allow her students to work with their peers by introducing peer review activity in her ESL writing classroom. This was apparent in her statement:

... okay, normally before they [the students] submitted their writing product all right, I would ask them to check first, okay... and then they would also check their own work and also at the same time they check their friends' work for the grammar and the content. (I3A/E1, line 85-88)

The use of peer review activity in the teaching of writing, since the intervention was introduced, had been normalized in her teaching practice.

Mazlina, on the other hand, was teaching academic writing instead of the general ESL writing course. This means that she taught the advanced ESL learners (3rd and 4th year graduates) on writing a project paper or a research project. Although she taught a different writing course, I could still discover more of her beliefs in the teaching and assessment of students' writing. For this academic writing course, Mazlina employed independent learning where she facilitated her students' learning by giving them the reading materials and monitored the students' progress by giving the learners necessary advice related to their academic writing project. Mazlina admitted that her approach to teaching writing was directly influenced by the course objectives. In order to ensure that her students would be able to achieve the set aims of the course, she would determine the best approach to help her learners. This indicates that the intervention introduced to her was not relevant to her current beliefs and practices.

Revisiting the teacher participants' perspectives and practice on ESL writing feedback

In terms of feedback, Salmah explained that feedback for her ESL writing class focused not only on the language items but also on the content, the organization and the coherence of the essay. She said that:

In the class, normally, I focus on the content and the coherence part, all right, because we only have like two hours of class, so it is not enough for students to come out with one essay. So, in the class, they have to do the outline, the draft so, normally the feedback would focus only on the content part, the organization, the coherence part... and then after they have done with the writing then only my feedback would focus on the language part. (I3A/E1, line 231-237)

Written feedback became the main choice for Salmah in giving feedback on her students' writing. Oral feedback would only occur after written feedback was given. According to Salmah:

...after the written feedback, I would call them up and I would give them an oral feedback as further explanation. (I3A/E1, line 93-94)

It seemed that oral feedback was given to provide further explanation to the ESL students but it was only given at the beginning of the semester, simply to familiarise the students with the kind of written feedback given on their written work. This was illustrated in the comments given by Salmah:

I normally did that [giving oral feedback] at the beginning of the semester... towards the end even with only the written feedback, they would understand already the errors that they made. (I3A/E1, line 96-98)

The oral feedback is for them... it is to make them understand what I meant in the written feedback. Further explanation... (I3A/E1, line 101-102)

So after one or two sessions of oral feedback... after that they could understand. So even with written feedback only, they would be able to correct their errors and they would be able to understand the concept of whatever mistakes that they have or that they did. (I3A/E1, line 106-110)

Salmah also believed that peer feedback was needed to help the students to learn or to write better. As well as general comment in the teacher feedback, Salmah also used peer feedback where her students were expected to do peer review activity:

Yes... yes they did [peer feedback]. I asked them to check each other's writing... Normally before they submitted their first draft to me... I mean the first time they submitted. And also after they have made the corrections... So they did that [peer review] again. (I3A/E1, line 123-127)

As for getting the peer feedback, Salmah used a specific checklist that she had adapted and asked her students to use. This indicated that Salmah had moved towards self-regulation when she decided to use and modify the peer-review checklist to be used in her writing classroom, with no assistance from others.

Yes... I give them a particular checklist for them to use as a guideline...for them to check their friends' work... (I3A/E1, line 136-137)

Yes, because when they have to... okay, first is my comments, my feedback right... and, of course, they understood with all the explanation and what not and after that they practiced by looking at their friends' work. So, in a way, they also knew how to check their own work... so yeah their writing improved. (I3A/E1, line 158-162)

Mazlina, on the contrary, opted for one-to-one consultation with her learners or having student-teacher review instead of having peer review or peer feedback. She believed teacher feedback was pertinent in the writing process where learners would benefit and progress.

... basically they [the students] have one-to-one review between the teacher or instructor and the student... no peer reviewing involved... (I3A/E2, line 130-132)

Mazlina asserted further:

Basically, we don't really dwell on the language as like in the proficiency course because by right they should be good at it already. What we stress upon is on how they use the language to actually explain their research... so the content is of course important but the topic that we give normally would be something that is very generic...(I3A/E2, line 87-92)

So feedback with regard to the grammar bit... Not so much. If they have made errors, we give sort of like point to the errors and then ask them to rectify themselves. But with regards to the... aaa... how they arrange the language, say for example if it is a research question, then it should be phrased like a research question. And if it's an objective or the rationale of

the study we would provide them with the input and later on when they work on their own paper, so... the language, the arrangement, as in the terms used, to describe the paper would have to be clear in that sense. So... we would point out to that. (I3A/E2, line 96-105)

She also believed that her kind of feedback was meaningful for her students. She preferred giving written feedback to her students.

...it has to be written because they [the students] will submit [their] draft, then we [the teachers] will look at it and then we will sort of point out what is wrong and then ask them to go back to their notes... all right, or go back to their readings and then they would amend... if let say, for example, they are not clear [with the written comments], then it will be verbal [oral feedback]. (I3A/E2, line 108-112)

This phenomenon already indicates a shift in Mazlina' practice when previously, in the Phase 2 of the action research study, both she and Salmah were observed to give mainly written feedback with very minimal oral feedback. The findings showed a transformation in Mazlina's beliefs and practice where, in the past, teacher feedback was quite general, focusing on the grammatical items mostly, but currently less focus was given to language items. This was, of course, particularly because the students were perceived to have acquired a certain level of English language proficiency which made the teacher concentrate more on the content and structure of the students' writing.

Revisiting the teacher participants' views on peer review activity

The two teacher participants had different perspectives and practices with regard to peer review activity. At this stage, Salmah believed that peer review activity helped the students to progress in their writing, especially when its purpose and how to go about the activity were clearly explained to the students. Salmah commented that:

... in my opinion, this activity [peer review] is helpful when the students know how to use it, all right. So, before we ask students to look at their friends' paper, we have to train the students first. Then only after they have the experience, then they will be able... then the activity was helpful for them. (I3B/E1, line 16-20)

Salmah's positive view on the peer review activity was indicated in her recent approach where she retained the use of peer review activity as part of her ESL writing pedagogy. Although a different checklist was used, her inclusion of peer-review indicated it was feasible in her writing class. She found it helpful in guiding the students to correct simple grammatical errors. This emphasis on grammatical errors had also been apparent earlier in the project. I3B

I think Mazlina has a point there but then for simple grammatical errors for example, the SVA, the tenses, they were able to edit their friends' work. They were able to scrutinize, they were able to detect. So, I think it did help but maybe not 100% but like 60% yes... I think it worked. (I3B/E1, line 37-41)

Salmah emphasized the benefit that she found in the peer review activity where she personally found the checklist helped the students to identify what was missing in their own written work as well as their peers'. When she was asked about how her students benefited from the peer-review activity, she responded:

OK, the students... well because of the checklist, I am sure the students benefited from it. For example if you have purpose and ideas so when they had this checklist, they were told to identify all those things and of course when those things were not there, of course they would tell their friends. And also in terms of the organization and the paragraph development, the checklist was, is clear... I mean, so when we talk about organization and paragraph development, so yeah, I think my students did benefit from it in the sense that they looked for all these things, and if these things were not there they would tell their friends and something was done about the essays. (I3B/E1, line 109-119)

When we talk about the organization, the development, so most of the time, they were able to help their friends. You know, they feel like this is

not enough, they will tell their friends, okay this is not enough whatever it is, supporting ideas, supporting details are not enough. (I3B/E1, line 157-161)

However, both teachers believed that due to students' level of proficiency, they sometimes did not manage to give a correct response when it came to language use.

... because they themselves were not that good in the language, so sometimes the suggestions that they made were more confusing. It's like the blind leading the blind ... (I3B/E1, line 161-166)

Salmah admitted that because of the level of language proficiency and being introduced to the peer review for the first time, the peer review activity was found difficult by the students at the beginning. However, after several practices she found that peer review activity was manageable and could be included as part of the formative collaborative writing activity. She said:

Our students are Malaysians, we are not used to criticizing people so, at first it was quite difficult I think for them to criticize their friends' work...but after doing this for one or two times, and sometimes I put them with another partner, another friend... so they enjoyed the session in the sense that they were able to [comment] "Okay...this one is not good and this one is good" but then they didn't know whether their comments were okay or not... so basically they were okay with the activity... (I3B/E1, line 177-189)

Peer feedback was not practised by Mazlina as she believed that her students needed a regular one-to-one written work review or consultation. With this approach, Mazlina could not only provide feedback but also she thought that during the consultation, she would be able to give extra input and guidance for her students to improve their writing. When we first introduced the peer reviewing activity as part of the formative writing assessment, Mazlina did not find it of

much help to her students. It needs to be pointed out that the level of success was very much determined by the individual teacher's expectations and target goals. Mazlina revealed that peer review activity did not help much with the students who had low proficiency level of English. This was her case previously. She claimed that:

I think what we were dealing with were the students who were not really proficient in the sense that they understand the grammar not as thoroughly as an English medium kind of students, so for example if you do peer reviewing, with these students it doesn't really work very well because they don't understand what they are looking for. (I3B/E2, line 22-27)

Mazlina added that although the students were trained for peer reviewing activity, what they might have learnt from the activity might not be in line with what they were expected to do for the current course. Mazlina expected her students to learn more than just reviewing simple sentence structures. This was indicated in her conversation:

...because in writing, it's much more complex than just a simple grammar, you need to see the structure, you need to look at the language and the expression used, which they are not very familiar. So, I think if let say, if we were to give them exercises like simple sentences maybe they can identify. (I3B/E2, line 49-56)

Another reason for not using the peer review activity was because of the different writing genre. The peer review checklist that had been developed did not fit with Mazlina's current writing course. According to Mazlina, having students coming from different faculties that required them to write based on their specialization made it even harder to implement peer review activity as the students did not share common knowledge. She claimed that:

...it is very difficult to do the peer review because within one class we have like students from different programmes... so it's not one common programme. Even if we have like common programme like engineering, they are majoring in different aspects of engineering, so quite difficult to actually ask them to do the peer review activity. That's why we abort the whole exercise altogether. (Interview 3, line 85-91)

Mazlina also found that the feedback given by the peers was not really helpful because she felt that the students were trying to be nice to each other and did not fully comment or transparently comment on their peers' essays. This is an interesting cultural issue.

4.3.4 Summary of Phase 3 findings

Phase 3 results from the survey, post-intervention interviews and the two follow-up interviews, revealed the immediate and long-term impact of the intervention on both teachers and students.

Immediate impact on the students was observed on their perceptions related to feedback and peer-review activity. Students were found to have positive feedback on teachers' feedback. The majority indicated that feedback received in the form of verbal response was useful and informative. Similarly, the students indicated their preference of collaborative learning where they responded positively on peer-review activity and feedback. Peer-review activity assisted students to a certain extent in developing their writing. Findings revealed that most of the students, be it the top performing or the low performing students, improved their writing in some way.

The intervention had been positively accepted by the teacher participants. They felt that formative assessment tasks for writing were useful in helping the students

to work through the writing process. The immediate impact of the intervention on teachers was evident when teachers indicated their willingness to adopt the activities into their regular teaching practice. A change in perspectives about peer-review also revealed the immediate impact the intervention had on teachers. Teachers who previously had not favoured the peer review activity revealed their intention to adopt the activity in their classroom. This was particularly that peer-review managed to introduce and develop collaborative practice in the ESL writing classrooms.

In terms of the teachers' pedagogical development, the teachers' pedagogical approach changed over time due to the nature of the course taught and the level of proficiency of their students. Despite the change of course taught, there were several developments identified in the teaching of writing. Findings revealed that a process-product approach to writing was practised by one teacher who still taught the writing course. However, the need for teacher guidance was emphasised and teacher-centredness was still in practice as the students were from the low and intermediate level of proficiency. Findings in this phase of study also revealed a change in teachers' beliefs particularly in facilitating feedback for students' writing where peer feedback was in practice and the focus of teacher feedback was not entirely on language items but included the content, the organization and coherence of the essay. Further, written feedback was preferred over oral feedback. With regard to peer-review activity, teachers indicated positive views about the practice of peer-review.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has presented findings from the three phases of the action research study. Phase 1 findings focus on the issues related to ESL writing pedagogical practice, ESL writing process and ESL writing assessment in place prior to the action research intervention. It was revealed from this phase's findings that issues pertaining to the pedagogical practice had connection to the teachers' beliefs, perspectives, and understanding of approaches to assessment. Data from Phase 1 indicated that the teaching of ESL writing was based on examination-oriented teaching. Therefore, the teaching of writing was influenced by the criteria set for assessing writing on which a standard marking scheme was based to ensure that students met the expectations. The focus of teaching was on the final written product rather than the process of learning to write. Another pedagogical issue was the teachers' conception of a good piece of writing. There seemed to be a direct influence of course objectives and assessment requirement on how teachers perceived a good piece of writing. It was revealed that teachers tended to view 'language use' as the main determinant of good writing among other writing components. However, it was also revealed that teachers were aware of the need to help their students by giving adequate writing practice and modifying their pedagogical approach. Class size, time, and practice were also identified as potential constraints in developing change. Data from Phase 1 also showed that the teachers' perceived roles in their ESL classroom had an influence on their pedagogical choice.

Issues identified in the ESL writing process include the pedagogical approach, students' participation, and feedback. The product approach was seen as dominating in the ESL writing classroom. Although the phases of process writing

were followed, concern for this ESL writing class was focussed on the final product, the completion of a written draft, which students would submit to their class teachers for reviewing and evaluation purposes. There was limited participation and collaboration among learners as the completion of the task was individualised. Another concern discovered about this writing process was the nature of feedback given to the students. Teachers believed feedback was important and that feedback on language forms should be the main emphasis. The focus on summative writing assessment had neglected the collaborative writing, formative assessment and formative feedback. The nature of feedback given by teachers varied depending on what would best suit their learners and their needs. In terms of peer feedback, there seemed to be little emphasis on peer feedback as attention, in practice, was given to students working individually.

Findings in Phase 1 also showed some issues pertaining to the ESL writing assessment: the teachers' perspectives on and understanding of assessment; the teachers' involvement in ESL writing assessment; and the assessment requirements and practice. The teachers' perspectives on and understanding of assessment were affected by organizational requirements and the long-situated practice of summative assessment, hence giving limited exposure to the formative purpose of assessment. Teachers' involvement in the ESL writing assessment was also an issue. It was found that one of the teachers was not involved in developing assessment tasks. This had somehow impacted on the teachers' knowledge about assessment. Findings related to assessment requirements and practice revealed the factors that were taken into account in designing an assessment task – students' background, topic, and time (e.g. when and how long to complete a task) – to address fairness in the assessment practice. Institutional

requirements also influenced the nature of assessment. In this case, summative assessment was the practice.

Phase 2 findings are related to the changes and challenges faced during the process of integration of formative assessment and process approach into the existing ESL writing classroom. At this phase, a writing intervention was used and implemented to scaffold the students' writing. Changes and challenges were noted in the pedagogical practice and students' learning development. In terms of the pedagogical practice, it was observed that teachers took up different roles to scaffold and establish student-centeredness and, at the same time, promoted collaborative learning between peers. The findings indicated a change in the pedagogical practice – moving from working individually to working in groups, extending learning beyond the classroom, and the occurrence of verbal response as a form of feedback and feed forward. Factors related to changes and challenges were also identified in Phase 2 findings. It was revealed that familiarity and topic selection for essay writing played a role in promoting changes and development of teaching and learning of ESL writing.

Data from Phase 3 revealed the immediate impact of the intervention on the students whereby the majority of the students were positive about the feedback received in the ESL writing classroom, and reported that it helped them in their writing development. Positive views among students were also gathered on peer collaboration and peer feedback. The survey data showed that students were found to benefit from the intervention, particularly from the peer review activity that contributed to an understanding of good writing and served as a useful guide for essay writing development. Another immediate impact observed on students was the development of a collaborative culture.

Similarly, the intervention had an immediate impact on the teachers where positive responses were gathered from the teachers regarding the writing intervention, which indicated the level of acceptability of the writing intervention among the teachers. Teachers were positive towards change and had indicated their change of perspectives particularly on the peer-review activity. In addition, the development of a collaborative culture between teachers and the researcher was seen as a positive impact of the research.

Phase 3 findings also revealed the development over time of the teachers' pedagogical practice. It was identified that at least one teacher had adopted and adapted the intervention in her current ESL writing classroom. Interview data from Phase 3 also revealed that the teachers' perspectives on the importance of feedback were positively retained and giving feedback to the students had become a common classroom practice. The nature of feedback – oral or written - given was still very much controlled by the needs of the learners as perceived by the class teachers. In terms of the peer review activity, it was noted from Phase 3 findings that teachers' readiness to adopt peer review activity was influenced by their personal experience, the nature of the writing course and writing genre, and students' language proficiency level.

The next chapter will discuss the findings presented in this chapter by addressing the research questions outlined at the beginning of this chapter. The chapter will also discuss the findings in relation to the literature review.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of this research project in relation to the research objectives and with reference to literature discussed in Chapter 2. . This discussion chapter is divided into six sections. Section 5.1 gives an overview of the findings described in Chapter 4. Section 5.2 discusses the findings on ESL writing teachers' pre-intervention conceptions about ESL writing pedagogy (Research Question 1). Section 5.3 articulates the development of a process-product approach and formative assessment for teaching and learning of ESL writing, as the outcome of the implementation of my action research project (Research Question 2). The section also presents a discussion of the findings related the development of change in teaching and learning of ESL writing. Next, Section 5.4 discusses the immediate and long-term impacts of the formative assessment and ESL writing pedagogy, which imply their potential value and effectiveness (Research Question 3). This involves clarifying how the teachers and students had changed their beliefs and practice in relation to the key notions of sociocultural theory. Section 5.5 discusses how the sociocultural concept of the ZPD could be refined to explain the process of teaching and learning of writing as a zone of writing development (zwd) (Research Question 4). Finally, Section 5.6 summarizes the key points of the chapter.

The findings were arranged in the sequence of the three phases of my action research study whereby Phase 1 addressed a research question that dealt with the two teachers' pre-intervention conceptions of ESL writing pedagogy. Phase 2

addressed the changes explored in the process of integrating formative assessment and elements of process writing into the existing ESL writing practice. Phase 3 focused on the immediate impact and the long-term impacts the intervention had on the research participants.

The key findings of this research are that, despite certain institutional and sociocultural constraints, there is evidence of change in the ESL writing teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices, and also evidence of positive development in their ESL students' writing. These changes were brought about through scaffolding: firstly that occurred in a ZPD (see Section 2.7.3) involving the two ESL teacher participants and myself as the action researcher, secondly in the scaffolding provided by teachers to their students. The sociocultural implications in relation to the tasks and the sociocultural constructs – scaffolding, mediation, and regulation - will be discussed by addressing research question 4 in Section 5.5.

5.1 Overview of the Findings

Several findings of this study were related to the two ESL teachers' conceptions of ESL writing pedagogy and the development of their practice. In Phase 1 of the study, it was firstly revealed that there was a strong connection between teachers' beliefs and their ESL writing pedagogy. Secondly, it was found that certain institutional requirements as one of the sociocultural aspects contributed to the teachers' understanding and beliefs about the teaching and learning of ESL writing and these factors consequently affected the teachers' pedagogical choices: a product approach and summative assessment practice in ESL writing. It was

also found that the two teachers perceived language accuracy as the main determinant of what constituted good or quality writing. In this phase of study, it was also revealed that the teachers' existing pedagogical practice had given limited opportunities for the ESL students to further develop their writing. Hence, the need for adequate writing practice and a change in the pedagogical aspects were observed. Another relevant finding from Phase 1 of this action research project was the views teachers held about peer-review activity in their ESL writing classrooms. Peer-review activity was undervalued to the extent that the two ESL teachers totally discarded the activity in their ESL writing classrooms. The two teachers believed that feedback on the ESL students' writing should give emphasis to language forms and structure. In addition, several issues in the ESL writing pedagogical practice - particularly related to the teachers' perspectives and understanding of teaching and assessing of ESL writing, institutional and course requirements, feedback, and collaborative practice - were also informed through the findings of Phase 1 of the study.

Findings from Phase 2 of this action research revealed the changes in the integration of the intervention in the ESL writing environment. It was found that, despite some socio-cultural constraints including institutional requirements, positive changes occurred in the teachers' conceptions, the teachers' pedagogical practice and students' learning development once they had become familiar with the writing tasks. Several challenges were encountered in the process of integrating formative assessment with a combined process-product approach. These included: establishing different roles for the two ESL teachers; the development of writing tasks specifically to introduce peer-review activity as part of the writing process; and the adaptability and feasibility of the pedagogical

process. Evidence of development within the ZPD was likely through the process of collaboration between the researcher and the two teacher participants, the two teacher participants and their students, and between students themselves. Collaboration led to a facilitation and development of formative concepts within the teaching and learning of ESL writing.

Findings from Phase 3 of this research revealed an immediate impact of the intervention on the ESL students. Positive responses were gathered from the students about the collaborative writing activities. Students were found to benefit from collaborative practice. However, these positive responses need to be viewed with caution as the students may have felt they should respond based on what was socially acceptable rather than with honest answers. The pedagogical intervention in this study also had an immediate impact on the teachers' perceptions of ESL writing pedagogy, particularly of the peer-review activity. Collaborative discussions involving myself and the two teacher participants also had a positive impact on the way these teachers perceived the teaching and learning of ESL writing, specifically on the usefulness of peer-review activity within a process-product approach to teaching writing.

In addition, the pedagogical intervention, introduced through the action research project, had a long-term impact on the teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice, particularly on the value of feedback. The nature of feedback given and the readiness for adopting peer-review activity as part of teaching ESL writing were still dependent on the constraints related to certain sociocultural factors. Nevertheless, the teachers retained their beliefs about the importance of feedback for learning development even though they were teaching different academic genre writing. Most importantly, the findings of this phase informed the adoption

of peer-review practices in the ESL writing classroom by one of the teacher participants.

5.2 ESL Writing Teachers' Pre-intervention Conceptions of ESL Writing Pedagogy

This section deals with the first research question, that is:

1. How are the teaching and assessing of ESL writing perceived by the Malaysian ESL teachers?
 - a) What is the current assessment practice of ESL writing in a Malaysian higher-learning institution?
 - b) What are the issues related to the teaching and assessing of ESL writing, in practice?

A product-oriented and examination-oriented approach is commonly practised in the Malaysian education system (Normazidah, Koo, & Hazita, 2012; Pandian, 2002). The practice is believed to have influenced the teachers' conceptions and their pedagogical practice. In this section, key issues pertaining to the teachers' early conceptions are discussed in three sub-sections. Section 5.2.1 discusses the relationship between teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice. Section 5.2.2 discusses the main factors affecting teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice. Section 5.2.3 discusses the findings on the teachers' conceptions of writing assessment. Finally, Section 5.2.4 discusses the teachers' knowledge of and attitude towards assessment.

5.2.1 Teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice relationship

Discussions of the teachers' beliefs and their relationship with teachers' pedagogical practice in the ESL writing classrooms are presented in three categories: the transmission of knowledge, the facilitation of learning, and knowledge transformation.

Transmission of knowledge

Results from the document analysis revealed that the teaching of ESL writing for the course under study was mainly based on the product approach, which impinged on the way teachers conceptualized their teaching of writing. The following sub-sections discuss how, an examination-oriented teaching, a teacher-centred approach and a product approach gave rise to the transmission of knowledge in the ESL writing classrooms, which was mainly object-regulated by the education system and the course requirements set by the institution.

Examination-oriented teaching

Tan (2006) claims that the Malaysian educational system places much emphasis on examination and the end results (see Section 2.4.3). Normazidah, Koo, and Hazita (2012), Pandian (2002), and Mohamad (2009) argued that teaching towards the examination neglects the communicative aspects of language teaching (see Section 2.2). In the case of this study, a teaching culture that includes teaching to the test was established in the teacher participants' beliefs about the teaching of ESL writing. This consequently developed rigidity in the teachers'

pedagogical practice and provided limited potential learning development as writing activities were specifically given to practise for the test. In this sense, teachers' pedagogical response was object-regulated where certain expectations were to be accomplished at the end of a course by which all the activities were geared towards the test. This is said to be the backwash effect of criteria-referenced learning outcomes whereby teachers focused their teaching only on the aspects that were going to be tested that indicated there was no other regulation that took place to promote social learning process.

In the case of this study, teaching emphasis was placed on the language aspects over the whole essay writing development which restricted students' learning of other important components of writing. As such, it could be claimed that assessment as part of an institutional requirement affects teachers' pedagogical belief and practice. With regard to this influence, similar results were found in a study by Turvey (2007), who investigated the trainee teachers' problems in teaching at London schools. She asserts that the assessment system provided a strong influence on the teaching practice. Burns and Knox (2005) also, in their study on teachers' attitudes and beliefs about grammar teaching in Australia, identified institutional influence as a factor that contributes to pedagogical beliefs.

Teacher-centred classroom

Mak (2011) asserts that teachers' beliefs and instructional decisions are influenced by the need to keep up with the sociocultural demands such as local teaching cultures, previous learning experiences, culturally influenced beliefs, and exposure to the teaching culture and model of language teaching. This indicated

that changes are required for teachers to function within the system. In the case of this study, teachers believed that a teacher-centred classroom was more viable when linked with the examination-oriented system. Teacher-centred classrooms, as reflected in practice, were perceived by the two participating teachers as appropriate mainly to accommodate the institutional requirements. The institutional requirement, which teachers viewed as part of their teaching goals for summative assessment, contributed to a conflict between teachers' beliefs and their actual classroom practice. The conflict required teachers to compromise their beliefs about their facilitative roles in the ESL classrooms for an authoritative role to oblige to the institutional requirement (see Section 4.1.1). This finding complements Phipps and Borg's (2009) that the ways the teachers act and their beliefs do not always agree. According to Hasim, Tunku Mohtar, Barnard, and Zakaria (2013), teachers' beliefs about their roles and their instructional decisions are influenced by their perceived need to survive and adapt to the teaching culture and classroom demands. Hence, in obliging the institutional requirement, teachers believed that in terms of knowledge transmission, teacher-centred learning was more appropriate,

Product approach to writing

Some studies suggest a product approach focuses on the writing outcomes, which fulfill a set of given requirements of a course or a programme (e.g. Badger & White, 2000; Brown, 2001). Similarly, Hyland (2003) asserts that the product approach to writing focuses on writing development as an outcome based on certain models of writing. Khansir (2012) also explained that the product approach to writing places emphasis on accuracy in language and he added that

the outcome should meet with a writing model. In the case of this study, a product approach was evident in the ESL teachers' early conceptions of teaching ESL writing when there were assistance, guidance, and control by the teachers based on a set of writing guidelines and standards. The students were expected to produce two sets of written product through a series of writing events (brainstorming, essay outline, first draft, and final draft) to be graded as part of continuous summative assessment, with emphasis on the element of accuracy in forms and essay structure. This finding concurs with Littlewood's (2009) claim about a product approach to writing (see Section 2.3.1.1) that emphasized grammatical structures and communicative functions.

While Badger and White (2000) describe the stages of a product approach to writing based on the kind of writing activities the students will go through (see Section 2.3.1.1), the case of this study indicated the stages were identified in the form of writing procedures for teachers to follow. Teacher participants used a clearly written guide provided by the institution of how the in-class timed essay should be carried out. The procedures seemed similar to a process approach in terms of the stages involved – pre-writing, drafting, and revising (Hasan & Akhand, 2010; Lee, 2006; Steele, 2004) – but they strongly emphasised grammatical structures and perceived writing as a linear process (see Section 2.3.1.1). The guide was actually meant to prescribe a standardized set of procedures for all writing teachers to follow. Within those procedures, students had to produce a set of writing tasks - essay outline, first draft, and final draft of an essay – as the product outcomes. What indicated the procedures as product-oriented was the focus of the writing tasks where they were all referring towards a final evaluated task against a certain set of criteria (Badger & White, 2000;

Brown, 2001). In this sense, the transmission of knowledge based on the product approach was evident and is mainly influenced by the two teachers' conceptions of knowledge transmission indicated in the preceding sub-sections – examination-oriented teaching and teacher-centred classroom.

The dominance of teacher centredness characterized this product approach to writing. In the product approach, writing is taught rather than learned. Hence, the teachers' role is seen as directive and confined by the defined curriculum (see Section 2.3). Results of phase 1 of this study clearly indicated that teachers were the input providers or information transmitters and evaluators who gave instructions to the students, at the beginning, and directed them to write according to a certain essay format. This finding was different from Wette's (2009) study on curriculum plans, decisions, and instructional practices of seven experienced ESL teachers of writing in New Zealand, where she found that "teachers were clearly makers of the instructional curriculum rather than transmitters of externally developed plans and prescriptions" (p. 143). The findings were different as her study was conducted in an entirely different context. The Malaysian educational system is very much examination-oriented which had extended to a goal-oriented classroom practice. The goal was to ensure that the students fulfilled the expected essay components and structures as required. This phenomenon of a goal-oriented classroom is regarded as a criterion for the product approach as suggested by some researchers (Badger & White, 2000; Brown, 2001; Khansir, 2012). The findings gave evidence that the ESL writing practice, in this particular context, was product-oriented (see Section 4.1.1, in Chapter 4).

Facilitation of learning

Facilitation of learning was observed to be developed through the practice of feedback and an individualized learning approach. A review article by Li and De Luca (2012), on the various studies related to formative feedback, revealed that feedback was evident in facilitating ESL students' learning as it is seen to result in positive outcomes (see Section 2.5).

In this particular study, the presence of an individualized learning approach and teacher feedback, with the absence of peer feedback, indicated that the teacher participants perceived teacher feedback as crucial in facilitating students' writing development. Nevertheless, the kind of teacher feedback given and the selection of learning approach were also influenced by the sociocultural context and demands.

Written and in-class oral feedback on common errors

Teachers chose to give general written corrective- and in-class oral feedback that focused on common errors. Corrective feedback at a superficial level focusing mainly on language accuracy was perceived by the teacher participants as a way to encourage the students to improve their writing. Corrective feedback was used by the teachers as they were expected to conform to the standard marking criteria and writing procedures specified in the course documents, which emphasised what to be assessed and how feedback was to be given to the students including using symbols to indicate errors in students' writing, providing comments on content and organization, checking the length of the essay, using a standard

marking scheme, giving general written comments, providing discussion sessions and one-to-one consultation. It was also noted that symbols, abbreviations, and comments in the form of phrases were marked on the students' first draft. In this kind of feedback, teachers were observed to focus mainly on the language forms and structure, with little emphasis on the content and organization of the essay. The finding apparently also supports those studies by Nik, Sani, Chik, Jusoff, and Hasbollah (2010) and Normazidah, Koo, and Hazita (2012) that English language teaching in Malaysia is still dominated by the correct use of language forms (see Section 2.2). In the case of this study, the two teacher participants believed that good writing constitutes having few grammatical errors, which seemed to be directly influenced by the stipulated procedures and the marking scheme. It was also found in this study that teachers' preference for, and choice of giving, feedback to facilitate learning among the students was influenced, among other things, by the class size. Due to the number of students in the writing class and the teaching hours, teachers commonly had limited time to evaluate the work of every individual student for detailed feedback. Hence, written corrective feedback together with general oral feedback that focused on common errors of students' writing was performed because the teachers believed that it was manageable for the given context. Hence, class size played a role in feedback practices. Similarly, Carless, Salter, Yang, and Lam (2010) in their study on developing sustainable feedback practices found that class size could facilitate feedback practice (see Section 2.5).

Individualized learning

Following from the product-oriented approach to writing instruction, learning was intended to be individualized in the sense that each student was responsible for meeting a certain level of expectations set by both the course and the teachers at a required time. Unlike a student-centred approach, individualized learning in the case of this study expected an individual student to work on his or her own with the help of a teacher at the beginning of the course. Students, in most of the activities, completed their writing tasks individually and peer-review activity was absent in both writing classrooms under study (see Section 4.1.1). This indicated that social interaction in the learning process only occurred between a teacher and a learner, a practice which limited students to receiving feedback only from the teacher leaving limited room for peer support, which consequently indicated the absence of co-construction of ideas and negotiation for meaning among students. This gives concern particularly on the extent students' learning could be developed (see 4.1.2). Keller (1968), in his reflective writing about learning reinforcement and teaching approach in the States, indicated self-pacing as one of the characteristics of individualized learning. Nevertheless, no inference about self-paced learning could be made in this particular study and as to why teachers practised individualized learning when in-class oral feedback practice was generalized to all students.

Knowledge Transformation

Knowledge transformation was seen as only one directional, that is from teacher to students, with minimal peer interaction. The absence of collaboration between peers would limit students in exploring and gaining knowledge from one another, as was suggested by Van Lier (1996) in his sociocultural view of learning development (see Section 2.7) concerning assistance from both more and less able peer collaboration. The approach that was put into practice by the teachers actually suppressed the co-construction of knowledge through social interaction though it might not have suppressed active knowledge construction through internal mental processing of individual students. In addition, the teacher-student relationship in the product-oriented and teacher-centred classroom limited the *negotiation for meaning* (NfM) between teacher and individual student especially when teachers saw themselves merely as directors, input providers and authorities in the class. This limited collaborative practice in the classroom opposed the principles of a communicative approach and the sociocultural theory of learning development that view social interactions as one of the tenets in fostering the exchanging and co-construction of ideas in the learning process. Donato (1994) asserts that the social aspect of language allows students to reflect on their learning experience. Similarly, Lantolf (2007) suggests that students could improve their learning through other people's experience. Negotiation for meaning (NfM) is a central tenet in communicative language teaching (CLT), where it refers mainly to the ability of learners to incidentally acquire language competence and learning skills through negotiation with other learners or with the teacher. The absence of collaboration in the ESL writing classrooms in this study

exemplifies an argument put forward by Pandian (2002) that communicative language learning, in Malaysia, was present only in the syllabus and little was translated into teaching.

5.2.2 Main factors affecting teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice

The present study seems to support other studies that teachers' beliefs and teaching practices are influenced by external and contextual factors (e.g. Phipps & Borg, 2009; Mak, 2009; Burns & Knox, 2005; Borg, 1997). It was revealed in the pre-intervention findings that the teachers' early conceptions about the teaching of ESL writing were strongly influenced by sociocultural demands such as institutional requirements and personal pedagogical experience.

Institutional requirement

Institutional requirement, as a contextual factor, seems to be an influence on the parity and disparity between beliefs and practice. This finding is consistent with most research, if not all, on teacher cognition and its relation to teachers' pedagogical decisions. Borg (2003), Phipps and Borg (2009), and Farrell (2011) proposed the various constituents – including the students, the socio-cultural system in operation, the tasks, the expected roles, the organizational requirement - that strongly influence the operationalization of teachers' cognitive processes into instructional decisions and practice. These constituents are believed to interact with the teachers' cognitive processes that consequently develop pedagogical understanding and subsequently become internalized as a set of rules or

orientations, which would then be transformed into an operationalized pedagogical practice.

In the case of this study, it was apparent that the pre-set institutional requirement had developed an impression of expected roles for teachers to perform in the ESL classrooms. This finding supports the argument forwarded by Mansour (2013) that constraints from the contextual factor may gradually develop a set of beliefs in teachers about teaching. Borg (2003) asserted that such contextual factors could modify teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice. The results revealed that the pre-set institutional requirements and procedures for writing seemed to have an adverse effect on the teachers' pedagogical choice. They seemed to constrain teachers from diversifying their ESL writing pedagogical practice (see Section 4.2). This finding also complements the finding found in a recent study by Matsuda, Saenkum and Accardi (2013) that teachers' ability to help their students was constrained by an institutional policy.

Personal pedagogical experience

It is also evident from the study that teachers' stored beliefs, derived from their accumulated and situated knowledge from personal pedagogical experience, stimulate their pedagogical principles in the teaching of writing. For example, the course aims and objectives, together with the expected outcomes for the essay writing evaluation, were found to lead the teachers to preconceived ideas of how feedback should be given and how students' essays would be evaluated. Another example is the teachers' perceptions of peer-review activity in the writing classrooms. The teachers' preference of not conducting the peer-review activity

in their writing classrooms was due to their negative experience in peer-review activity (see Section 4.1.2). The evidence supports Borg's (2003) claim that teachers' experiences can inform cognitions about teaching and learning which continue to have an influence on teachers' pedagogical practice

The results of this study on factors contributing to the teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice confirm that sociocultural context, namely the institutional requirement and personal pedagogical experience, does affect the teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice. Richardson (1996) in his review on studies about the role of attitudes and beliefs identified that one of the factors affecting teachers' beliefs is teachers' teaching experience. Similarly, Burns and Knox (2005) in their research on teachers' attitude and beliefs about grammar teaching also identified institutional constraints and teachers' personal experience as a factor that influence teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice.

5.2.3 Teachers' conceptions of writing assessment

Form-focused

The teachers perceived a standard assessment criteria and marking scheme that focused on language forms provided by the institution, as a main indication of good writing. It was identified in the documents that the biggest weight was given to the language component (see Section 4.1.3); hence in evaluating the students' written work, the emphasis was on the language use followed by other components – content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics - as outlined in the marking scheme. The teachers' conception of good writing was developed based upon institutional requirement. This development seems to fall within the

product approach to writing whereby as explained by Littlewood for example, (2009) the teaching emphasis was on writing grammatically correct sentences and following a structured model of writing in ways that consequently affected the pedagogical focus in the ESL writing classroom (Badger & White, 2000; Brown, 2001a).

Summative Assessment

In this study, summative assessment was identified as the central focus. Teachers' early conceptions of assessment were based on their exposure to the types of assessment being implemented and also on the examination requirement set for the course. The competitiveness of examinations also contributed to the adoption of a product approach as described in the earlier part of this chapter (see Section 5.2.1). The situation is similar to that studied by Carless in 2011 when he indicated that because of the strong emphasis on the examination, the teaching was entirely focused on preparing the learners for examination.

In this study, formative assessment was overshadowed by the summative assessment in the ESL writing pedagogical practice. It was found that teachers' limited knowledge and understanding of formative assessment were influenced by the amount of exposure to and practice of summative assessment. This is similar to the findings by Xu and Liu (2009), who in their study of EFL college teachers' assessment knowledge in China, also found that a teacher's knowledge of assessment is mediated by the teacher's personal experience. Burns and Knox (2005) also identified a relation between teachers' experience and teachers' beliefs (see Section 2.6). It could also be inferred that the exposure and

experiences gained from the summative approach to assessment (object-regulation) became cognitively distributed and regulated in the teachers' pedagogical practice (self-regulated) (see Section 2.7.3). This object-regulated action had influenced the teachers' perception and understanding of assessment. They viewed it as mainly for grading purposes and thus were not aware that the writing tasks given in the class could be regarded as continuous assessment to enhance learning while at the same time guiding students towards their summative writing assessment. In this case, it could be claimed that teachers' sociocultural background had an effect on their conceptions of assessment and pedagogical choice.

5.2.4 Teachers' knowledge of and attitudes towards assessment

Limited exposure to other than summative assessment had suppressed teachers' understanding of formative assessment, which consequently led teachers to a misconception of the formative assessment criteria. The teachers interpreted assessment as formal and mainly for grading purposes, which obviously reflected the summative assessment they dealt with. Neither teacher was really sure in defining formative assessment. The only indication of formative feedback made by the teachers was that only formative assessment required feedback. Classroom activities were for teaching and learning practice and were not associated with assessment. However, various definitions of formative assessment indicate that it focuses on the initiative to evaluate and assist students' learning. Useful and informative feedback and feed forward are the key elements of formative assessment (e.g. Cowie & Bell, 1996; Gipps, 2002; Wiliam, 2006; Hamilton, 2009). According to Heron (2011), both types of assessment – formative and

summative – do provide feedback. Hence the responses from the teachers in this study showed their limited knowledge of formative assessment.

One teacher had a better understanding of assessment than the other through experiencing a type of social interaction. The results suggest that not only prior knowledge is important but also that participation and collaboration within a community of practice could help in the knowledge development of an individual. It was revealed that one teacher had better understanding about assessment than the other because she had worked collaboratively with the Testing and Measurement Unit (TEMU) of the institution in setting and screening the examination questions (see Section 4.1.3). In this case, social interaction was seen to shape the teacher's thinking and identity through practice over time in a particular context that is in line with the sociocultural theory. Vygotsky (1978), Kozulin (1986), Barnard and Campbell (2005), and Crossouard (2009) all explain the importance of social interaction for cognitive development. In this study, the co-construction of ideas and understanding about assessment developed through the teacher's involvement with her more capable peers.

Despite having misconceptions about assessment, both teachers positively believed that the inclusion of formative and summative types of assessments could enhance learning and benefit the students. Whether formative or summative, assessment could be seen as a motivational factor to develop learning. This finding supports the claim made by Xu and Liu (2009) that teachers' knowledge is a complex, dynamic and ongoing process wherein the development of knowledge of assessment is possible if relevant support is provided.

In summary, teachers' pedagogical choices and decisions were influenced by several factors. Teachers developed their own conceptions and adapted their teaching approach to accommodate their knowledge, perceptions and understanding within the constraints of the teaching environment. The implementation of a product-oriented system also influenced how assessment was perceived and performed. Assessment was mainly summative in nature and had a significant effect on how knowledge was transferred and specifically in this context how writing was taught in the ESL classrooms. In addition, the development of the two teachers' understanding about assessment was mediated through the social interaction and collaboration with more capable peers.

5.3 Development of a Writing Pedagogy: the Inclusion of Process Writing and Formative Assessment

This section deals with the second research question, that is:

2. What are the changes explored in the process of integrating formative assessment into the current practice of teaching and assessing writing?

This section discusses the findings related to the development of the writing pedagogy. The findings will be discussed in three sub-sections: Section 5.3.1 discusses the evidence of change in the ESL writing teachers' pedagogical practice; Section 5.3.2 discusses the evidence of positive development in the ESL students' writing. Section 5.3.3 explores the changes in the teacher participants' beliefs about ESL writing pedagogical practice.

5.3.1 Evidence of change in ESL writing teachers' pedagogical practice

In introducing elements of process writing and formative assessment within the existing ESL writing classrooms, it was intended that teacher participants would begin to build a formative writing pedagogy that focused on their role, collaborative learning approach, process-product approach, and formative-summative feedback. Phase 2 of the study revealed that teachers had developed positive changes in their ESL writing pedagogical practice. The tasks, steps and emphasis given by the researcher in carrying out the intervention (see Section 4.2.1, Section 4.2.2, and Section 4.2.3) provided the scaffolding for teaching. The positive changes in the teachers' pedagogical practice were evidence that the scaffolding had an effect in the teachers' ZPD. By trying different pedagogical approaches, the teachers developed new perspectives in their teaching and assessing of ESL writing. Van Lier (1996) and Wertsch (1991) in their explanations of sociocultural theory explained that development occurs in different events in people's social life through interaction with objects, other people, and the environment.

Teachers' role

A change in the teachers' role reflected in their pedagogical practice indicated a change in their beliefs about teaching and learning. The study revealed an adoption of the facilitative role by the two teacher participants. They moved from being a direct instructor and information provider to a facilitator where they provided assistance and help particularly when the students had difficulty in completing certain tasks. This change could be due to other-regulation – that is, the researcher's intervention which emphasised student-centred activities – where

teachers felt the need to develop a student-centred environment by changing their roles in the ESL writing classrooms. Collaborative practice between researcher and the teachers also performed as other-regulation that enabled teachers to reflect on their roles. This study shared similar findings of a recent study by Hasim, Tunku Mohtar, Barnard, and Zakaria (2013) that teachers adjusted their roles to meet the classroom demands. In the case of my study, the teachers felt the need to fit in within the student-centred learning by shifting their authoritative role to a facilitative role.

Collaborative learning approach

Also, a shift from individualized learning to collaborative learning provided evidence of change in the teachers' pedagogical practice. Results of Phase 2 of the study indicated that the change in such practice appeared to be mediated by other-regulation - the briefing sessions prior to each intervention implementation - that encouraged teachers to get their students working in groups (see Section 4.2.4). The change was also believed to be self-regulated when in Cycle 2 of the action research teachers began to realize that collaborative practice led to positive development in students' learning whereby according to sociocultural theory, learning development is seen as a socially mediated process. The peer review activity, as part of the process-product approach also emerged as a support for change in the teachers' perspectives on their pedagogical practice through which collaborative work was encouraged, not only between students but also between teacher and individual students, and between teacher and students as a whole. The peer-review checklist that was included for the activity served as one of the tools for learning writing and promoting collaborative work between learners. A

review by Brill and Hodges (2011) of various studies on peer review concluded that peer review has the potential to promote collaborative function within the community of practice. In the case of this study, the peer review scenario gave evidence that peer review as part of the intervention could provide scaffolding for a change in the teachers' pedagogical practice. The construct behind peer-review that requires an active role on the part of learners and collaborative practice between learners as Liu and Carless (2006) explained, was able to create a shift in the teachers' view of their teaching and learning approach. More activities were conducted in pairs or group work and learning was no longer individualized. This finding contributes further to the literature especially in the field of peer review and its relationship to collaborative work along with other research in the same field (e.g. Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Hu, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2010).

Process-product approach

Peer-review activity was used as part of an intervention to promote process-product and formative assessment approaches in the ESL writing classrooms (see Section 4.2.1 and Section 4.2.2). The inclusion of peer review activity was to promote processes in the teaching of writing that encouraged peer collaboration (see Section 4.3.1 and Section 4.3.2) that acknowledged developmental approach in sociocultural theory. However, there was no clear evidence that this process-product approach became a self-regulated action among the teachers. It was revealed in the pre-intervention phase of the study that peer-review was included as a supplementary activity for the course but it was not practised by these teachers because they did not believe it would be effective. Some researchers have suggested positive outcomes of peer-review activity in writing classes (e.g.

Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 1999; Topping, 2009), but these two teachers had experienced the opposite, which had affected their views and practice of peer review activity. The rationale for not using the peer-review was strengthened by the institutional requirement (object-regulation) that demanded a product-oriented instead of process-oriented approach to writing. Institutional demands and teachers' personal teaching experiences provided strong influence on teachers' cognition and pedagogical practice. Similar findings were reported by Burns and Knox (2005) that institutional influences and constraints affect teachers' pedagogical beliefs. Mak (2009) also revealed that teachers' teaching experiences affected teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice. Borg (1997) as cited in Borg (2003) proposed a schematic conceptualization of teaching that represents teacher cognition and its relation to four components – schooling, professional coursework, contextual factors, and classroom practice - that would possibly have an effect on teacher cognition. He further indicated that contextual factors could modify teacher cognition and consequently influence classroom practice. Similarly, classroom practice and experience could influence teacher cognition unconsciously or through conscious reflections.

Feedback and feed forward

Research and reviews on feedback studies indicate that informative and consistent feedback practice is useful in the developmental learning process (e.g. Li & De Luca, 2012; Nurmukhamedov & Kim, 2010; Parboteeah & Anwar, 2009; Shute, 2008). However, research on feedback and feed forward has been described as an under developed area. Research findings appear to reveal no significant development in the manner feedback was given by teachers to the students.

Teachers have been reported as being accustomed to give oral feedback and written corrective feedback. The results in the while-intervention phase of this study showed no difference from the results indicated in the pre-intervention findings regarding teachers' early conception about feedback whereby focus was on giving oral response to the students and written feedback, which was limited to language form. In addition, feedback was only given when an essay was evaluated for grading purposes. This indicates that verbal forms of feedback had been a strongly established practice and would perhaps require more time and a strong need for a shift to occur (see Section 5.2.1 under the category facilitation of learning). This indicates that teachers' pedagogical practice or experience had become normalised and was difficult to change. This finding exemplifies the claim made by Borg (2003) that "cognition not only shapes what teachers do but is in turn shaped by the experiences teachers accumulate" (p. 95).

5.3.2 Evidence of development in students' writing

Collaborative learning and writing development

The implementation of a pedagogy that integrated the elements of process in an overall product approach and engaged teachers and students in formative assessment, in particular peer review, introduced a culture of collaborative learning and the process of negotiation towards meaning that would help students to develop their understandings. Liu and Carless (2006), Eksi (2012), and Hu (2005) suggest that peer review contributes positively in improving written texts because the activity allows students to take an active role and promotes collaborative work with peers. In like manner, findings of Phase 2 in this study

also provided evidence of positive development in students' writing (see Section 4.2.5). The findings revealed an increase in marks for essay writing for both top and low performing students for their first essays and second essays. It was also revealed that peer-review activity had triggered the thinking and reflective process among the students to the extent that they managed to review and improve their work and the work of others. This finding adds to Brill and Hodges' (2011) claim that peer review encourages students to be critical, to negotiate and to have constructive collaborative work. In this study, peer review activity could be regarded as a mediational tool for students' thinking and writing development. There were instances where essays were peer-reviewed beyond the language forms. In this case, peer-review activity together with the process-product approach and formative writing assessment provided a scaffold for the ESL students to be more critical of their writing as well as the writings of their peers.

Peer review and self-regulated learning

Peer review and peer feedback are said to allow students to explore ideas and negotiate meaning (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Hu, 2005). However, it is argued that students' writing development was enhanced through peer-review feedback only when mistakes were pointed out and suggestions were given to the writers (Nurmukhamedov & Kim, 2010). Results from earlier studies (e.g. Butler, 1987; Weaver, 2006; Shute, 2008; Topping, 2010) also proposed a similar argument where feedback is seen as less useful when it has limited information and is vague. Similarly, from this study it was revealed that peer-review feedback which was quite superficial and focusing on basic language forms and spelling (a criterion of a product approach) did not help students in developing their writing.

The result also suggests that weak students failed to benefit from the teacher's feedback when there was no explanation or suggestions given. This finding concurs with the study by Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, and Takashima (2008) which indicates that meaningful feedback from the teachers also has an influence on the students' writing progress. Nevertheless, through the use of the peer review checklist and the peer-review process, which served as object and other regulation, the students in the current study had developed an ability to evaluate their own piece of writing. This indicated that the object regulation (peer review checklist) and other regulation (peer-review process which includes negotiation with and feedback from peers) (Van Lier, 1996) involved in the peer-review activity had promoted self-regulated learning among the ESL writing student participants. This finding supports Liu and Carless' (2006) claim that peer review allows students to be active writers by "monitor[ing] their work using internal [i.e. self-] and external [i.e. peer] feedback [which is said to be] an element of self-regulated learning" (p. 280). A standard procedure and writing guide such as the proofreading and peer review checklist helped in the writing development process. It was revealed that exposing the students to proofreading exercises had assisted them in the peer-review activity through which all students were taught how to evaluate a piece of written work and how to use a peer-review checklist for the peer-review activity purposes. It was evident that by being exposed to proofreading exercises and the peer review checklist, students were able to identify mistakes beyond the language forms. This also indicates the necessity of setting a context and developing scaffolding for the students as they progress towards collaborative and self-regulated learning.

5.3.3 Evidence of change in teachers' conception of ESL writing pedagogical practice

Vygotsky (1978), in explaining his developmental theory, emphasized that 'processes' are important in developing change. In this study, there seemed to be evidence of change in the teachers' views of teaching and learning of ESL writing. Changes in the teachers' conceptions are recognized in three main areas, which are: modification of roles, acceptance of peer review activity into practice in the writing classroom.

Modification of roles

According to Van Lier (2004), the different roles that teachers adopt reflect their beliefs. It could be argued that the pedagogical processes in this study seemed to develop consciousness in the two ESL teacher participants to reflect on their roles as ESL writing teachers. It was noted that teacher participants, at the beginning of the research, identified their roles as facilitator but adopted a different role - a director and sole information provider - because they were influenced by the product and summative oriented education system (see Section 4.1.1). However, during the classroom observations, particularly in the second cycle of the action research, teachers were seen to shift their roles from a director to both an information provider and a facilitator where they assisted their students in the ESL writing classroom (see Section 4.2.4). This finding revealed that teachers through the integration process of the intervention managed to reflect and adjust their roles. This adds to the findings of a study by Farrell (2011) that the process of reflective practice helped teachers to realize of their roles in the classroom.

Emerging awareness of the role of facilitator appeared to benefit both the teachers and the students. The teachers seemed to develop awareness that learning would take place if assistance or further assistance was given to the students. This is in line with the claim made by Cakmak (2004) in his research that teachers were no longer a sole knowledge provider but their role had shifted to that of “a facilitator of learning” (p.15). However, the change of conceptions of the teachers’ roles held by these teacher participants was not particularly based on the changing roles of the students as claimed by Cakmak in his study. My findings revealed that the teachers’ conceptions had changed due to the collaborative practice between the teacher participants and the researcher. Burns (2003) suggests that collaborative practice contributed positively to curriculum change and professional development. Through collaboration, the two teacher participants were made aware of the different approaches to the teaching of writing. This indirectly influences teachers to construct or reconstruct their views about teaching. According to Farrell (2011), teachers become aware of their roles through reflective practice engagement in which the reflective practice allows them to explore, to decide on and to change their roles, if necessary. In this case, the intervention and the discussion sessions managed to facilitate reflective thinking of the two teacher participants that resulted in a change in their roles.

The context set for the teachers had given them exposure to develop collaborative practice in process writing. What the teachers gained from the collaboration was they referred to the procedures introduced from the intervention. Part of the procedures was encouraging teachers to help their learners by giving formative practice through a process-product writing approach and also introducing collaborative practice between teacher and students, and between students and

other students in the ESL classrooms. At this stage, the researcher was seen as an agent to provide scaffolding for the teachers by setting a context for them through the process-product approach and formative assessment intervention. The contextual support helped in promoting collaborative and formative learning that consequently helped in altering the teachers' beliefs and practice as part of professional development. Following the construct of continuity (Van Lier, 1996; Barnard & Campbell, 2005), it was also found that the process of establishing a routine for student-centredness and collaborative work between learners in Phase 2 of the action research study had contributed to the change in teachers' perceived roles. In fact, the development in teachers' beliefs and conceptions about the teaching of writing was scaffolded and co-constructed throughout the interaction between researcher, teachers, and learners that occurred during the intervention process. The process of development in teachers' beliefs as described matches with Van Lier's (1996) explanation relating to the notion of scaffolding for learning where the key to development is mediated by the participants' interaction with objects, people, and environment.

Acceptance of peer review activity into practice

From the findings, it was revealed that teacher participants had developed positive views on the use of peer-review activity in the ESL writing class. Peer-review activity as part of the formative assessment intervention had influenced the teachers' perceptions about the teaching of ESL writing. Consistent with many other theoretical and empirical findings (e.g. Clay & Cazden, 1992; Topping et al., 2000; Liu & Carless, 2006; Topping, 2009; Carless et al., 2010; Hyland, 2000, 2010; Yangin Eksi, 2012), the findings of this study revealed that the peer-review

process managed to develop positive outcomes in the students' learning development (see Section 4.2.5). The positive outcomes of peer-review activity as part of the process-based approach to writing that was seen as constructive development, indirectly, had promoted a change in the teachers' perspectives on the peer review activity itself (see Section 4.3.2) from being an unfavourable to an acceptable writing activity. Evidence of diversifying from teacher feedback to teacher-student feedback and student-student feedback indicated a shift in the teachers' conceptions of feedback in teaching and learning of ESL writing (see Section 4.3.2). The change in feedback practice indicated that the teachers valued collaboration as a way to promote learning and acknowledged students as agents of development.

The collaborative relationship, between the two teacher participants and me (the action researcher), through discussions and negotiations had also contributed to how these two teachers perceived the teaching of ESL writing. According to Burns (2003), collaboration with a wider community of practice, through which they share problems and concerns, could stimulate and contribute towards professional development. This supported the notion of co-construction when the exposure and the shared knowledge provided an opportunity for teachers to reflect and alter their perceptions. As suggested by McNiff and Whitehead (2006) and Lantolf (2007), through the knowledge and experience of others, one is able to better one's own learning and experience from a process of reflecting, recapturing, and changing which will later be internalized as a practice.

Also, the collaborative practice introduced in the intervention process highlighted the understanding that learning is a social process where students can develop their learning through an interactive process between their peers and their class

teacher (see Section 4.3.2). This also had developed a change in the teachers' perspectives on the teaching of ESL writing. It could be inferred from Phase 2 findings that there seemed to be a shift in the teachers' beliefs about classroom practice, which was from a teacher-centred classroom to a student-centred classroom (see Section 4.2.4). This gave an indication that there is a possibility for a change in the teachers' beliefs, gained from exposures or teaching experience, which subsequently would require them to regulate their altered beliefs into their practice as suggested in Woods' (1996) study, that teachers' set of beliefs system and knowledge structures reflected their classroom planning.

5.4 Immediate and Long-term Impacts of the Writing Intervention

In order to measure the level of success of the writing intervention it was felt necessary to identify both the immediate and long-term impacts it had on participating teachers and students. Hence, this section addresses the third research question:

3. What are the immediate and the long-term impacts of integrating formative assessment and the elements of process writing approach on the research participants?

This section discusses the findings related to the immediate and long-term impact of the intervention. The findings will be discussed in two sub-sections: Section 5.4.1 discusses the immediate impacts of the intervention on both teachers and students. Section 5.4.2 discusses the long-term impact of the intervention on the teachers' beliefs and practice.

5.4.1 Immediate impacts of formative assessment and process writing intervention

Students' writing development

An improvement in the students' writing was seen as an immediate impact of the research intervention. The intervention, which included not only the series of writing tasks – brainstorming, outlining, drafting, reviewing, redrafting – but also the formative assessment procedures in peer review activity that required students to work collaboratively, had created a positive, safe but challenging environment for the ESL students to build their critical thinking about their writing and the writing of their peers. Van Lier (1996) proposed that contextual support is necessary for development to occur. In the case of this study, the intervention (in the forms of formative assessment tasks and process writing procedures) and participation in such an environment provided scaffolds for learner autonomy where the students co-constructed their understanding and developed their cognitive capabilities mediated by the collaborative function and student-centred learning that were embedded in the process-product approach and formative assessment of writing. Students seemed to benefit much from the peer review and peer feedback, which adds to the findings of other studies such as those of Tsui and Ng (2000; 2010), Hu (2005), Liu and Carless (2006), and Eksi (2012) on peer review and its relation to the development of learning autonomy through the process of negotiation. The development of learning takes place when understanding is said to be appropriated by the students (Bakhtin, 1981; Barnard & Campbell, 2005).

Writing feedback by teachers

Improvement in giving feedback by the two teachers made an immediate impact on the students' writing development. From the survey findings, the ESL students claimed to have benefitted from oral feedback they received from their teachers. They found the feedback was helpful in improving their writing. Although the survey data might not present the actual situation as the students might have provided socially acceptable answers (see Section 4.3.1), the results of their essays provided evidence of improvement. This evidence aligned with the teachers' responses on students' writing performance (see Section 4.2.5). Although it was understood that there was no evidence of change in the focus of feedback (corrective feedback) given by the teachers, it could be inferred that oral feedback given by the teachers also assisted students' learning when teachers took up a facilitative role (see Section 4.2.4) that linked to an increase of frequency in giving feedback. It was found that useful and informative feedback was the key to promote formative writing. According to Parboteeah and Anwar (2009), types of feedback did not affect learning, rather the quantity, the quality, and the content of feedback influence learning.

It was also understood that both teacher feedback and peer feedback played significant roles in the learning development. This finding seemed to agree with those of other empirical studies (e.g. Carless, 2011; Diab, 2011; Hyland, 2000; Li & De Luca, 2012; Liu & Carless, 2006; Mustafa, 2012; Shute, 2008; Topping, Smith, Swanson, & Elliot, 2000; Yangin Eksi, 2012), which indicated the positive influence of feedback on learning. While some researchers claim that corrective feedback is less appropriate than elaborative feedback (e.g. Truscott, 1996;

Topping, 2010), others (e.g. Ferris, 2007; Russell & Spada, 2006; Bitchener, 2008) argued otherwise and have made this a controversial topic (Ferris, 2012). In this sense, though teacher participants were advised during the intervention process to provide formative feedback, it was identified that the teacher participants in this study kept on focusing on corrective feedback as they believed such feedback was appropriate for their students and part of the language teaching obligations. Since students did better in their written work, the use of corrective feedback could not be totally dismissed. At the same time it is hard to determine the kind of teacher feedback that works on the students. Giving and responding to feedback is a subjective process. Contextual variables such as the learner, the situation, and the instructional methodology also have to be considered (Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum, & Wolfersberger, 2010).

Expansion of classroom interaction

According to Van Lier (1996) and Wertsch (1991), one's cognitive capabilities are developed through interactions with one's environment. The expansion of classroom interaction between students and their socially mediated environment provides an opportunity for students to learn from tasks and instructions. At the same time, they share and develop ideas for their writing. This classroom interaction serves as a scaffold for improving their writing by using language as a communicative tool. However, there should be another tool other than language that could mediate the interaction. In the case of this study, the tentative application of a process-product approach and formative assessment facilitated classroom interaction which consequently developed a collaborative culture in the ESL writing classrooms. The change of classroom culture from teacher-centred to

student-centred promoted collaborative practice among students (see Section 4.3.1). The change provided opportunity for students to share, learn and negotiate meaning from their peers and be critical of their own written work as well as others' which is seen as a positive immediate impact of the intervention on students and at the same time supports the Vygotskyian concepts of learning from peers (Vygotsky, 1986).

In addition, the expansion of classroom interaction provided a constructive platform for the students to transmit and co-construct their knowledge where language serves as a tool to achieve certain aims. Kyratzis (2004), who reviewed studies about talk and interaction among children and the notion of co-construction in peer group and peer culture, concluded that through socialization, children developed both cognitive and linguistic competence. Empirical studies, as well as the theoretical contributions, have suggested that pair work and group work contribute positively to the development of learning (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Long, 1996; Barnard & Campbell, 2005; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Rivera & Herazo, 2002; Storch, 2005). In this study, students self-construct and subsequently re-construct their understanding based on their developing interactions which was made possible through pair- or group work. It could be claimed that the intervention particularly the peer review activity provided important scaffolding for student-centred learning and collaborative culture in the classroom that fits nicely in the sociocultural framework for it promotes a higher level of interaction and active learning among students. In this sense, language and peer review activity mediated the cognitive development of the students to enable them to respond and review their essays independently.

5.4.2 Long-term impacts of the writing intervention on teacher's beliefs and practice

Phase 3 findings revealed that the study's writing intervention with its formative orientation had a positive long-term impact on changing these teachers' beliefs about ESL writing pedagogical practice.

Transforming teachers' beliefs into practice

Based on the shift in teachers' conceptions about ESL writing, it was identified that some of their newly adopted conceptions were integrated in their ESL pedagogical practice four years later. It could be claimed that mediated activities and action from the other-regulated intervention had been internalized and eventually self-regulated as their own teaching principles. This process highlighted the importance of social interaction in cognitive development (Crossouard, 2009; DeVries, 2000; Kozulin, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). This process of change, of course, could not be seen as an immediate impact because cognitive development occurs through and over a period time as it involves several processes for development to occur and becomes self-regulated. Following the construct of regulation, Ozdemir (2011) asserts that self-regulated action could be achieved through planning, organizing, monitoring and evaluating. It could be inferred from the findings that the intervention managed to create a ZPD for the teachers to develop their thinking and perspectives and their pedagogical practice of ESL writing, which was achieved through an intervention and a collaboration of ideas between the teachers and researcher in this action research. The collaboration process matched with the one suggested by Vygotsky's (1978) collaborative interactions in which the concepts of tools and social mediation promote development.

Peer- review as teachers' self-regulated pedagogical practice

The use of peer review introduced in this study had a positive long-term impact on the teachers' pedagogical practice. In this case, the use of peer-review activity has been extended from Phase 2 of this action research study to one of the teacher participants' normal everyday teaching of ESL writing. This provides evidence that peer-review has become the teacher's regulated pedagogical practice. According to Barnard and Campbell (2005), co-construction of understanding occurred when effective scaffolding took place. In this case, the contextual support given through the researcher's intervention developed positive perspectives on the use of peer review activity in the ESL writing classroom through such object regulation. The regulated action is also believed to occur due to the repeated collaborative interactions between the teachers and myself during the discussion sessions of the action research. The process promoted and developed cognition and built teachers' understanding about the principles behind the peer-review activity. This understanding when appropriated further assisted the teachers toward self-regulated action (Barnard & Campbell, 2005). According to Vygotsky (1978) self-regulation occurs when a learner is independent from object regulation. Similarly Zimmerman (1994) suggests that self-regulated learning exists when learners become active participants of their own learning process. The notion of regulation was evident when a teacher adopted and adapted the peer-review activity to suit her groups of students within a particular academic writing genre: opinion-based essay.

Division of labour in the community of practice through multiple classroom interactions

Another long-term impact of this study is on the development of division of labour in the ESL feedback practices in the writing classroom. A shift from a teacher-centred to student-centred classroom and individualized learning to collaborative learning indicated the distribution of responsibility between teachers and students to ensure that students played an active role in the ESL writing classrooms hence promoting learner autonomy. In addition, a shift in terms of managing feedback in which there was development of practice from having merely teacher feedback to both teacher and peer feedback reflected an existence of the concept of division of labour or shared responsibility towards learning development within the ESL writing classroom practice. Within sociocultural theory, the development of learning is seen as a result of shared understanding (Mercer, 1995). According to Borg and Phipps (2007), teachers' beliefs influence their pedagogical choices. In this sense, the shift in the teachers' pedagogical practice revealed a change in teacher cognition about writing that was effected through the exposure given during the intervention. This also somehow informed that handover was achieved when teachers were able to decide and modify practices on their own (Van Lier, 1996; Barnard & Campbell, 2005). There was a need to exercise and allow room for collaborative feedback practice and at the same time acknowledge the students' differences and the ability of the capable peers to assist another peer (Vygotsky, 1978).

5.5 Understanding the Findings through Sociocultural Perspective

Based on research question 4, this section leads to a discussion of sociocultural implications in terms of the specific context, relationships and processes within a ZPD. I would like to argue that both the researcher and the teachers, and both teachers and students were engaged in a zone of proximal development (ZPD) through action research. The implications of these will be discussed in terms of the extent to which all participants (researcher, teachers, and students) moved from object-regulation through other-regulation towards self-regulation.

The central tenets of mediation, scaffolding and regulation will be discussed in relation to the action research processes and its findings, following Van Lier's six principles of scaffolding (see Section 2.7.3).

The main aim of this action research project was to explore the extent to which an intervention based on process approaches to teaching writing and formative assessment, including peer review of draft writing, influenced teachers' perspectives and promoted change in their ESL writing pedagogical practice to enhance students' learning. As such, I would consider the relevance of Vygotsky's theory of the ZPD to the teaching of writing in this, and relatable contexts (see Section 2.7). Under the developmental approach to learning, Vygotsky (1978) emphasised the importance of 'processes' in all occurrences of study into educational and cultural development and change in individuals. His concepts of developmental approach are seen as relevant to illustrate the relationship between the action researcher and the collaborating teachers.

The ZPD refers to the distance between what a person can do without assistance (zone of actual development) and what he or she could do with assistance

(potential development) from others – e.g. adult guidance and more or less capable peers (see Section 2.7.3). The basic structure of a ZPD is presented in Figure 5.1.

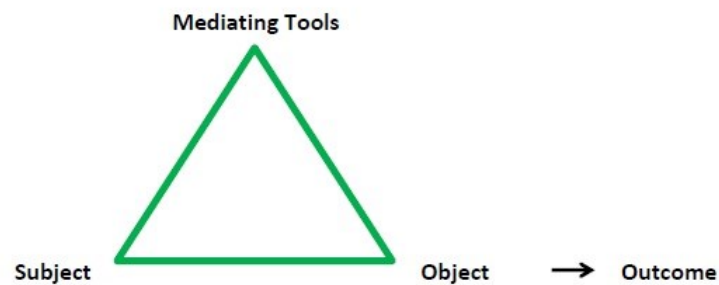


Figure 5.1: A diagram of activity for creating a ZPD

Scaffolding the teachers

In the case of this study, the relationship between the action researcher and the two participating teachers could be illustrated using the same concepts of activity (see Figure 5.2).

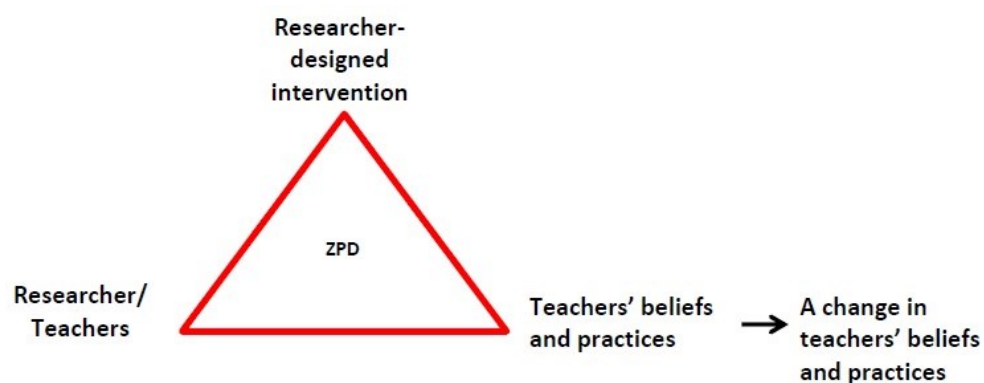


Figure 5.2: ZPD in the present study

The mediating tools refer to the sets of activities and procedures in the researcher-designed intervention. The intervention includes the plan of intervention, writing

tasks, and dialogic meetings (briefing sessions and feedback sessions), and classroom observation (see Section 4.2). In this context, the subjects are both the researcher and the participating teachers. It was the aim of this activity to develop a change in the teachers' beliefs and practices through the process of collaborative action research practice. The object reflected the actual level of the teachers' beliefs and practices and the intended outcome referred to the aim of this whole activity which was to develop enhanced capability in teachers' pedagogical practices by integrating the elements of process approach and formative assessment into the existing practice.

In this particular activity, Van Lier's (1996) six principles of scaffolding can be illustrated. Scaffolding occurs through the process of repeated actions where regular meetings were set up (see Section 4.2.3). The meetings involved both the researcher and the participating teachers that allowed a degree of continuity in the process through repeated actions; for example, regular meetings were conducted before and after each lesson. These meetings provided contextual support for the ESL teachers to integrate the researcher's intervention into the individual teachers' normal pedagogy. The inclusion of similar compare and contrast essay writing activities also was seen as a providing a contextual support that was safe but challenging because of the addition of other elements such as the peer-review tasks. Providing appropriate contextual support was necessary to enable teachers to adopt the intervention. The notion of intersubjectivity was achieved through the regular meetings where the researcher and the teacher participants were able to co-construct experiences, understandings, and solutions. As a consequence, the teachers were able to modify their pedagogical beliefs and practice and the researcher was able to modify the intervention because of their collaboration.

Similarly, in this particular action research project, a sense of flow was achieved from the synchronised cycle of actions: briefing-observation-feedback-, and the cycle continued twice. These actions were conducted collegially in tone and content. The handover took place when teachers were given the task for teaching at the end of each action research cycle. The process indicated a movement from object-regulation through self-regulation.

The collaboration between the researcher and the ESL teachers within the ZPD triangle enables teachers to use and develop the input gained from the collaboration process into the zwd. Data from interviews in Phase 1 (see Section 4.1) indicated that teachers were heavily object-regulated by the institutional requirement which caused the lack of autonomy in teachers. When the intervention was introduced into the two cycles of Phase 2, the first cycle of the action research was regulated by the researcher. This was intended to scaffold the teachers into the teaching of writing based on an integration of process-product approaches and elements of formative assessment. Cycle 2 observed teacher autonomy where they exercised self-regulation. Further self-regulation by teachers was indicated in Phase 3 of this research.

Through the action research process, a change in teachers' beliefs and practices was observed. Nevertheless, although one teacher was found not developing a change in her practice, the intervention through the collaborative action research managed to change her perspectives about the feedback practice (see Section 4.3.3).

Scaffolding the students

To facilitate the establishment of formative assessment in the teaching and learning of ESL writing and to emphasize writing as a developmental process, the concept of ZPD was refined into *zone of writing development* (zwd) where the intended outcome was the students' improved learning.

The relationship between teachers and students could be illustrated using similar concepts of activity (see Figure 5.3).

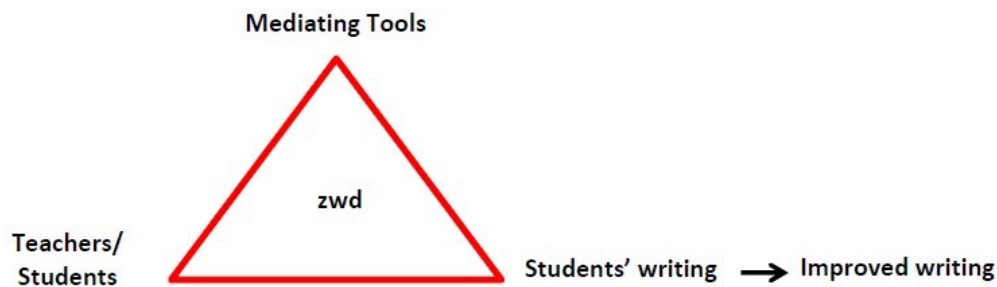


Figure 5.3: A zone of writing development for promoting ESL students' learning

The intended outcome of the activity involving the two participating teachers and their respective students was to enhance the students' knowledge and skills about writing towards better writing performance. This was to be achieved by engaging the students into a process-product approaches and formative assessment in the writing classrooms. The mediating tools included the work plans, writing tasks, process writing procedures, peer-review checklist, and feedback from teachers and peers. Teachers in this study used the mediating tools to provide scaffolding for their students. In this case, teachers were seen as agents of change where they provided a series of tasks to their students to ensure the continuity of the lesson

and writing activities. Teachers gave writing tasks according to the planned and modified intervention: brainstorming, organizing ideas, writing an outline, writing a first draft, peer-review activity and giving feedback, and writing a final draft. The intervention was set within their normal classroom where students learnt from their own class teacher and using their own writing period and classrooms for the course. However, teachers also provided challenge to their students by providing new tasks, such as the peer-review activity where students have to evaluate the work of their peers. In this activity, the inter-subjectivity was evident when students managed to co-construct their understandings through NfM of teacher and peer feedback. The writing activity and procedures set for these students also provided contingent assistance where they were able to improve or amend their draft writing based on the feedback received either from their teachers or their peers. Flow was achieved through the synchronized cycle of activities stipulated in the planned intervention. Handover took place when students were able to complete the writing task on their own, particularly on revising their written draft to be submitted to the teacher.

While the above may seem to be one-directional, in fact there was mutual scaffolding as although the primary facilitators were the teachers, the students worked collaboratively to improve their own and each other's writing. The peer-review activity had particularly increased students' motivation and performance because the students had opportunities to share and assist their peers (See Section 4.2.5). This supports the idea that social learning led to improvement. Also, the contingent actions of the students enabled the teacher to modify her own actions, and thus enhance her own level of skills and knowledge to a higher plane.

The intended outcome, in this case, was partly achieved because there was evidence of students' writing improvement and at the same time there was also evidence that a small number of students did not improve their writing.

Viewing from the theory of ZPD, Figure 5.4 represents the system for ESL writing that integrates formative assessment activities and displays the interconnectivity of subject-tool-object which appears in both ZPD and ZWD.

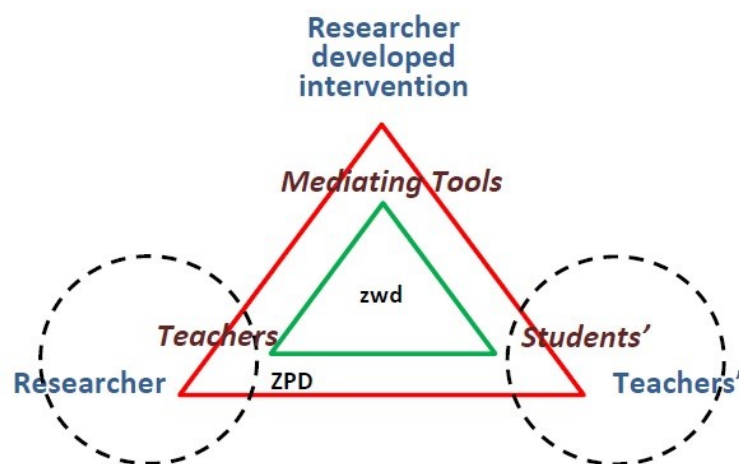


Figure 5.4: System for ESL writing that integrates formative assessment

The green triangle refers to the system of activities within zwd whereby the subjects are the ESL writing teachers who are directly involved in teaching and providing input/feedback to the students of ESL writing. Meanwhile, the objects are the ESL students' writing outcome that will be affected by the teachers' action through the use of tools in their pedagogical practice. In this case, the tools refer to the language, the writing tasks and procedures, and feedback that mediate learning.

The red triangle, on the other hand, represents the activities that occur within the ZPD that includes the ZWD. The red triangle displays the interconnectedness of

activities related to a system and cultures between the researcher and the ESL writing teachers. In this situation, the subject refers to me as the researcher who is responsible in developing and providing ESL writing intervention to the ESL writing teacher participants who are seen as the objects of the system. The objects are subjected to the goal of this research that is to develop awareness, a change in perspectives and pedagogical practice of teaching and assessing writing among ESL writing teacher participants so as to promote writing development in ESL learners.

Refining ZPD to zwd for ESL writing practice

Conceptually, the broad zwd circle represents the zone of writing development where the usual writing processes (pre-during-post) occur and develop. The zwd also represents a learner's actual development which is identified as ADL in Figure 2.1. This zwd is then surrounded by four other circles – Teacher, Assessment, Learner, and Feedback. These four circles represent the agents of mediation which carry the role of input providers and receivers. These mediation agents work collaboratively with one and another to promote writing development, indicated by the double-headed arrows. It is important to note that the collaboration that occurs among the agents will develop a scaffold for ESL learners to move their knowledge of writing towards the potential zone. It also provides a scaffold to support a pedagogical change to improve teaching and promote learning. The extent of potential development is represented by the zone within the broken lines of the two circles. Similar to the concept of Vygotsky's ZPD, this zwd recognizes individual differences where learners are expected to be

able to perform according to their own capability with the help of others. This is indicated by the different lengths of the dashed arrows pointing towards the ZPD. The zwd cycle is continuous and will be repeated to achieve writing development through the integration of formative writing tasks/assessment. Figure 5.5 below represents my framework of ZWD which is within the ZPD and focuses specifically on the three notions of ZPD: scaffolding, mediation, and regulation (See Section 2.7.3).

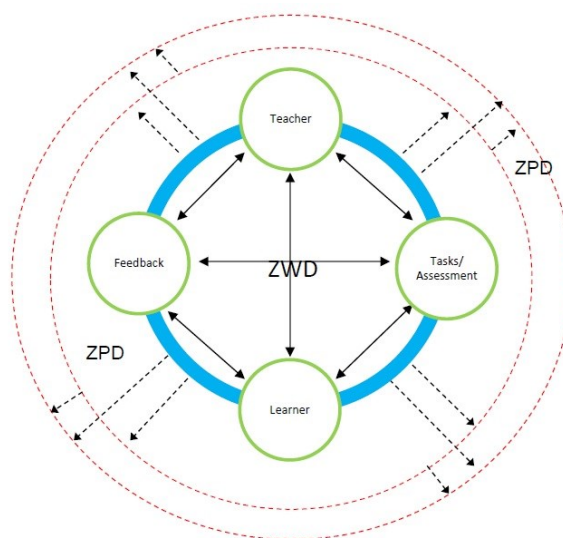


Figure 5.5: The concept of zwd within the ZPD

The notion of ZPD for the intervention process of the action research project will be observed through Van Lier's (1996, p. 195) six key features of scaffolding. The features are a set of repeated actions or occurrences over a period of time, providing contextual support through structured activity (the principle of continuity); creating a safe, but challenging, environment for learning development (the principle of contextual support); developing/promoting mutual

engagement towards the same goals to be achieved (the inter-subjectivity of attention); having an alternative principle that allows modification of actions (the contingency principle); ensuring natural flow of interactions through synchronized actions (the flow principle); and making close observations to determine the learner's readiness to take up a task independently (the handover principle)

Following the same notions of ZPD – scaffolding, mediation, and regulation - the zwd is intended to incorporate the role of writing tasks and writing practice as formative assessment which is mediation towards a potential zone of writing development (see Figure5.5). Generally, zwd is looking at the zone of proximal development in ESL writing learners. The need for extending the concept of ZPD to zwd for ESL writing is to highlight that in the writing class room, teachers are not the sole agents of development; learners themselves can be agents of development.

In the ESL formative writing assessment process, teachers are seen as an agent or a mediator to learning development by providing writing input and writing feedback. Learners are also agents to the teaching development when they subconsciously provide information related to their writing progress whereby this information is then used to inform practice and subsequently allows teachers to use the information for the feed forward process. The zwd is intended to encourage learners to be responsible for their own writing and the writing development of other learners through a collaboration process between the four components in the zwd – teacher, learner, assessment, feedback. Collaboration and communication occurs among these four components and are important aspects in writing development. Collaboration, communication, teachers,

learners, assessment tasks, and feedback from both teachers and learners are seen as beneficial to the teaching and learning development in the ESL writing classroom.

Additionally, the rationale of creating the zwd is to ease the challenges of changing the current practice of teachers and learners which is built on the present educational system, routines and their perspectives of assessment. This view of zwd fits neatly into the ZPD framework and can be applied to the Malaysian ESL educational setting. The incorporation of zwd within the ZPD framework will also humanize assessment in the ESL classroom.

I perceived that zwd is a subset of ZPD in which zwd specifically refers to the learning processes that occurred within the ESL writing classrooms with specific reference to the interactions between teacher and students during the writing process.

Following the concept of ZPD - scaffolding, mediation, and regulation - zwd is developed to differentiate the different skills taught in the language classroom – reading, writing, listening and speaking – that involve different pedagogical approach and requirements. Also, zwd is needed to differentiate the activities that occur between the researcher – the ESL teachers (see Figure 5.2) and the ESL teachers – ESL students (see Figure 5.3), within the ESL writing context.

zwd involves teacher and students working collaboratively through the writing the intervention (tasks and procedures) which was appropriated by the teachers to scaffold the students' learning and later internalized by the students based on the received feedback for the purpose of writing development through a process-product and formative assessment to writing (see Section 4.2.5 and Section 5.3.2).

In this case, the study looked into the evidence of object-regulation, other-regulation towards self-regulation resulted from the action research project. Also, the findings indicate the relation between ZPD-zwd-ZPD which represent the interactions that occur between (1) researcher and teacher and (2) teacher and ESL learners that reflect the scaffolding from more capable peers or persons.

The sociocultural implication is observed in this study where the following describes the extent to which all participants (teachers, students, and researcher) moved from object-regulation through other-regulation towards self-regulation.

a. Teachers

Phase 1 findings indicated that teachers' pedagogical conception was object-regulated in that their teaching perspectives and pedagogical practice were mainly driven by the needs to fulfill the course objectives and institutional requirement (see Section 4.1.1). However, a change in teaching perspectives and practice indicated that other-regulation (the researcher and the writing intervention) managed to share and provide supports for understanding the process-product approach and formative assessment particularly in the practice of peer review (see Section 4.2.5). Findings of Phase 3 gave evidence that one of the teachers adopted and adapted the use of a peer review checklist and had changed her initial ideas about peer review activity, which indicates a transition from other-regulation to self-regulation (see Section 4.3.3).

b. Students

It was also evident from this research that students had moved from object-regulation through other-regulation towards self-regulation. In the first cycle of the action research, students' learning was object-regulated by the course requirements where students were required to produce a compare and contrast essay and the need to complete the newly introduced peer review checklist. However, writing development was observed particularly in the second cycle of the action research when other regulation such as teacher feedback and peer feedback provided supports for students to improve their writing. A move towards self-regulation was evident when students were observed to develop confidence in using the peer review checklist and were able to work independently to review their essay and the work of their peers.

c. Researcher

In the study, the researcher also experienced a positive development. In carrying out this research, I had moved from object regulation to other regulation towards self-regulation. The initial stage of my research was guided by the related literature, institutional requirement, educational policy and my personal teaching experience that mediated my research focus. Then my understanding of research was further developed through the supervisors' assistance and feedback. They are referred as other-regulation. Self-regulation was achieved when I managed to carry out the action research, systematically collected data, modified actions to appropriate context, and was able to demonstrate action research through

the sociocultural lens, as well as positioning myself as researcher-collaborator.

Generally, the evidence of self-regulation indicated that the co-construction of ideas was present within ZPD and the ideas were then appropriated. Self-regulation reflects empowerment in teachers, students, and action researcher.

5.6 Summary of discussion

Throughout this study there was evidence of development in the ESL teachers' conceptions and pedagogical practice. The development occurred in socially mediated interactions through both collaborative action research and collaborative learning in the ESL writing classrooms. Results of the study indicated that teachers' ZPD was activated during the collaborative action research process whereby the scaffolding provided by the researcher at the beginning of the research and during the first cycle of the collaborative action research observed a development of change in the teachers' pedagogical practice. Each teacher participant had developed her own perspectives based on the experience gained from the specific context of her ESL writing classroom. The sharing of ideas between researcher and the teacher participants had developed collaborative practice and thus distributed cognition was evident. The collaborative practice also had contributed to the development of principles for a formative approach in the writing pedagogy, resulting from the collaboration process that indicated a change in the teachers' perspectives on teaching and assessing of ESL writing.

In addition, there was also evidence of development in the students' writing and change in the learning process. The zwd was evident and further enhanced through the peer-review activity introduced into the ESL writing classroom as a process-product oriented and formative approach to the teaching and learning of writing. Similar to the ESL teacher development of perspectives in teaching and assessing writing, the students also benefited from the collaborative practice that was encouraged through peer-review activity and the classroom interaction. The intervention set an environment for collaborative practice where students learned from their teachers as well as from their peers. The writing tasks, particularly the peer-review activity, mediated the collaborative practice which contributed to the sharing of knowledge and promoted critical thinking in students for their writing development.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, will provide an overview of the study, summarize the key findings of this research, and present the limitations of the study. The implications of the study will be discussed and suggestions for further research will also be presented in this final chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6. Introduction

The purpose of this research project was to explore the ESL teachers' pedagogical perspectives and practices of ESL writing and assessment and to promote the development of formative assessment and elements of process writing through a writing intervention, within the constraints of the context. It was also the aim of this research project to explore the extent to which writing intervention influenced teachers' perspectives and teachers' pedagogical development, and students' learning development. This chapter gives an overview of the study including the methodology and research design, summary of the key findings, limitations of the study, implications of the study, and suggestions for further research.

6.1 An overview of the study

Based on the above purpose of the study, four main research questions were formulated to guide this research. The following are the research questions for the study:

1. How are the teaching and assessing of ESL writing perceived by the Malaysian ESL teachers?
 - a) What is the current assessment practice of ESL writing in a Malaysian higher-learning institution?

- b) What are the issues related to the teaching and assessing ESL writing, in practice?
- 2. What are the changes explored in the process of integrating formative assessment into the current practice?
- 3. What are the immediate and the long-term impacts of integrating formative assessment and the elements of process writing approach on the research participants?
- 4. To what extent can a sociocultural perspective contribute to understanding the findings of the pedagogical intervention?

To achieve the purpose of this study, a multi-method approach to data collection: interviews, document analysis, observations, briefing sessions, discussion/feedback sessions, and survey questionnaires, was adopted. The data analysis for qualitative data was subject to a grounded theory approach for thematic analysis and descriptive statistics for quantitative data.

The study has provided information on the importance of English language and the expectations in the Malaysian education system with its past and recent education review and development. The study has also generated information on the ESL teachers' perspectives and pedagogical practice, and the constraints to effective practice in the teaching of ESL writing in a Malaysian context. The findings of this study have provided empirical evidence on how teachers' perspectives influenced teachers' pedagogical practice that consequently affected the students' development of learning. The findings also revealed the extent that the teaching and learning of writing could be enhanced through the integration of elements of a process-product approach and formative assessment in the ESL

classrooms. The study also gave evidence to the relevance of a sociocultural perspective in promoting an understanding of teaching and learning development in the Malaysian ESL writing classrooms. Such evidence could be used to enlighten and guide the stakeholders for future decisions in curriculum development and teacher training and development programmes in Malaysia. Such findings also may be applicable to relatable contexts.

6.2 A Summary of the key findings

The findings of this study focused on the two ESL teachers' beliefs and practice of teaching and assessing writing and their development of pedagogical practice in the ESL writing classrooms. The two key findings derived from the findings of this research are that, despite institutional or sociocultural constraints, 1) there was evidence of change in the ESL writing teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices; 2) through research led writing intervention, there was evidence of positive development in the ESL students' writing.

The findings from Phase 1 of the intervention showed that formative assessment was not, apparently, in practice prior to the study due to the institutional emphasis on summative assessment. Teachers seemed to have limited relevant professional development, limited understanding of formative assessment, and little opportunity to apply formative assessment in ESL writing classrooms. The teachers' beliefs and practice of teaching ESL writing were very largely influenced by the institutionalized examination-oriented system. Several other sociocultural constraints had also hindered the opportunity to practise formative assessment in the teaching of writing. Thus, based on the limitations and issues

discovered in Phase 1 of the study, a pedagogical intervention was designed and implemented through a collaborative action research project to promote elements of formative assessment and process-product approach to writing. The implementation was based on the three main constructs of sociocultural theory: scaffolding, mediation, and regulation.

The findings of Phase 2 identified the changes and challenges observed during the implementation and integration of the designed intervention. Data from the classroom observations revealed a change in the teachers' pedagogical practice, which was seen as a consequence of change in their beliefs about the teaching of writing to their ESL students. It could be claimed that the change in the teachers' conceptions about the teaching of writing was a result of exposure and collaboration in formative assessment and process-product approach to writing that was part of the intervention integration process. Data from Phase 2 findings also revealed evidence of development in the students' writing with support from the researcher-teacher collaborative practice and student's collaborative practice, particularly in the peer-review activity. While it is commonly understood that teachers' beliefs influence their classroom practice, the findings also revealed that implementing a change in practice was necessary to create a shift in the teachers' beliefs about writing and their pedagogical approach.

Despite the evidence of positive developments, challenges were observed in the way feedback was administered in assessing ESL writing. Oral feedback and impromptu in-class feedback were the only practices of these teachers in previous semesters. It was also found that the acceptability of the intervention depended on the practicality of the task and whether or not it matched with the teachers' prior beliefs and conceptions about the teaching and learning of writing. The findings

indicated that the familiarity of teachers and students with the tasks was an important factor in accepting change and promoting development in learning. The findings in Phase 3 of the study indicated some impacts that the action research project had on the ESL writing teachers' beliefs, classroom practice, and students' writing development. There was also evidence of continuous change in the teachers' perspectives and pedagogical practice even some time after the intervention process was completed. This indicated that the formative process was regulated not only in the students' writing but also in the teachers' pedagogical practice whereby teachers were able to reflect, decide, and develop an eclectic kind of approach to teaching and learning that worked for their particular students and course. In addition, data from the post-intervention interviews revealed the immediate impact the intervention had on both teachers and students, and the two follow-up interviews with the teacher participants revealed the long-term impact of the intervention process on the teachers' perspectives and practice. The collaborative culture in the classroom mediated by the peer-review activity managed to develop a change in the way teachers viewed the peer-review task. Findings from Phase 3 of the study also revealed that the teachers' perspectives on the importance of feedback were positively retained and the provision of formative feedback to the students had become part of their usual classroom practice. Thus, it may be argued that what had been innovatory at the stage of the intervention became normalised within three or four years.

6.3 Limitations of the present study

Although the present study, to a certain extent, has contributed to the understanding of teachers' conceptions and pedagogical practice in the ESL writing within the research context, its limitations should also be acknowledged. The number of participants involved, the location of the study, and the overall research method employed for the purpose of this research limit the possibility of generalising the findings outside the context under study. The first limitation is the number of participants involved in this study. The teacher participants involved in this study were only two ESL writing teachers who volunteered and met the criteria set for the purpose of this study. Thus, the findings gathered from these two teachers could not represent the other ESL teachers' responses within and outside the research setting. However, it would be useful to elicit from all the ESL writing teachers in the same context their perceptions and pedagogical practice in the teaching and assessing of ESL writing. In addition, the participants should also involve the key personnel of the institution to gather their responses and feedback regarding the institutional policy related to teaching and assessment in their institution.

The second limitation is the location of the study. This study was carried out at a local higher learning institution in Selangor, which has a majority of ethnic Malay students. As such, the results reported could be different from other institutions, in Malaysia, that have different multi-ethnic distributions. Thus the findings of this study are limited to the context of the selected institution and could not be extended to other institutions in Malaysia.

Next, using collaborative action research as my research approach, the findings only represented the two writing classes and two ESL teacher participants involved in this study and could not be generalised even to other writing cohorts of the same institution. However, further research using the same research design within the same context with a larger sample is possible to gain insights into the teachers' and students' perceptions of teaching, learning, and assessing of writing.

Another limitation of the present study is the number of cycles conducted during the action research project, which was mainly related to time constraints. As this research was conducted during the teaching semester, the time available was only 14 weeks of teaching classes. Hence, the research was restricted to only two cycles. To introduce another cycle within the limited time available would have meant to hurry the process which would move the teachers from their comfort zone. Also, it would have been preferable to have had more than two cycles to enable the researcher and the teachers to have further opportunities to try out, reflect, and modify the intervention. Nevertheless, within the two cycles, there was evidence of positive change in the teachers' beliefs and practice and improvement in the students' writing.

The last limitation is the data collection technique for classroom observation. Initially, I wanted to audio- or video-record the teachers' teaching of writing to add to my non-participant observation. However, this idea had to be discarded because both teacher participants refused to be recorded in the classroom. Therefore, I used observation checklists to assist and guide me with classroom observations. For future research, it would be beneficial to have classroom teaching video-recorded as it would be easier for a researcher to search for details

in various aspects of teaching. By depending on the checklist, I had to limit the teaching criteria to be observed and might have missed some important evidence.

6.4 Implications of the present study

Classroom teaching and learning are essentially social activities requiring real time interaction between individual teachers and students, therefore, physical, psychological and social factors need to be taken into account when designing a curriculum. The key findings of this study provide implications for the consideration of ESL teachers, teacher educators, and policy makers in Malaysia. These are outlined in the following sub-sections.

6.4.1 Implications for teachers

Collaborative action research practice between teachers and researchers allowed an integration of ideas related to ESL writing pedagogical approach and practice. The collaboration of two ESL teachers and the researcher managed to develop, to a certain extent a positive change in the ESL pedagogical approach with an aim to improve teaching and learning and to promote a formative and process-product oriented approach to the teaching of writing. Similar action research projects could provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice and develop their teaching strategies to enhance students' learning. Moreover, researching collaboratively would enable teachers to share experiences, ideas, problems and to co-construct possible solutions.

Also, the results from the peer-review activity indicated positive outcomes that could guide teachers to form different perspectives on what and how peer-review activity could be implemented in the ESL writing classrooms. A change in teachers' perspectives is seen as an initial step for changing the classroom practice. The results would be insightful indeed for teachers who have unfavourable experiences of, or attitudes about, peer-review activity in their writing classes. As noted in Section 6.2, if teachers are given the chance to try out new strategies, such as peer-review, in safe and supported context, positive results may change their negative perceptions.

6.4.2 Implications for teacher educators

The lack of understanding and practice of formative assessment and process approach to writing indicates a need for teacher educators to look into the current curriculum of teacher training. It also indicates an urgent need to develop and provide professional development for in-service ESL teachers, particularly on the practice of formative assessment if the initiative proposed by Malaysia Examination Syndicate, to promote 'humanizing assessment' (Malaysia Examination Syndicate, 2007) is to be accomplished.

Through collaborative action research, it was found that teachers managed to evaluate their classroom teaching and change their pedagogical conceptions for teaching and learning development in their ESL writing classrooms. As such, further study in relation to collaborative action research specifically on the methodology and technique is seen as useful to contribute to the theory of research design especially for classroom research. Furthermore, teacher

participation in collaborative action research should be encouraged in in-service programmes as it serves as a platform for teacher professional development where through this collaborative activity, a reflective practice is encouraged. This will help teachers in training to be critical in reviewing and developing change in their pedagogical practice. Hence, it would be worthwhile to explore how action research could become part of the teaching practice to give insightful ideas for professional development.

The limited use of feedback in this study emphasised the way feedback could assist learning. There is a need for teacher educators to educate the teachers in training about the importance of feedback and the various feedback procedures that could be used to support and promote students' learning. Exposing teachers to the various forms of feedback, particularly for ESL writing, would provide opportunities for teachers to select the most appropriate type of feedback to be given to their own students. The same goes for the notion of feed forward, which seemed to have little emphasis in Malaysian ESL classrooms as most of the time teachers gave corrective feedback and tended to neglect giving the students extra input as feed forward.

6.4.3 Implications for policy makers

Moving towards humanising assessment by integrating formative assessment with the existing summative assessment requires a paradigm change in the national education policy as noted in Section 2.4.4. Thereafter, institutional policy makers need to examine the various factors that might support or hinder the proposed

initiative – a situational analysis such as was conducted in Phase 1 of the present study.

In addition, the lack of understanding of formative assessment points to a need on the part of the policy makers to consider giving adequate, appropriate and up-to-date information as well as opportunities for teachers to undertake professional development in areas such as formative assessment and process writing. This might require giving teachers time-out from their normal teaching to attend courses and programs, and possible financial as well as moral support. By providing such contextual support, teachers would be given an opportunity to make comparisons and construct their understanding about the teaching and assessing of writing which would then be translated into practice.

Institutional encouragement for professional collaboration is needed to instill the culture of sharing in the community of practice that could be achieved through the conduct of action research projects on a regular basis. As such, it is also useful for policy makers to equip the teachers with the knowledge of action research and make reflective practice as part of the ESL writing teachers' professional practice for pedagogical and learning development.

6.4.4 Theoretical implications

The present study has been informed by sociocultural theory from which several theoretical implications could be drawn.

Firstly, the findings reveal that teachers' conception about teaching and teaching practice need to be explored within broader context than merely the actual the classrooms because learning of writing is heavily influenced by sociocultural

factors. The beliefs of the teachers in the present study – and, according to empirical studies, teachers elsewhere – were strongly influenced by various national, institutional and sociocultural factors. Therefore, in trying to understand teachers' beliefs and practice and to develop change in the teachers' beliefs and practice, it is necessary to conduct a situational analysis of the broader context in which they work.

Secondly, in order to obtain an insider's perspective on how teachers' beliefs and practice could be changed, investigation could be most usefully be informed by operation within the paradigm of collaborative action research. But most action research studies focus on the cycles of the intervention in a specific context over a limited period of time: they rarely seek to find out the lasting impact of the intervention. Hence, the inclusion of a longitudinal aspect that requires a researcher to revisit her participants is indeed useful to find out whether or not change is genuinely sustained.

The key tenets of the sociocultural construct of ZPD – scaffolding, mediation, and regulation – are particularly helpful in understanding of the developmental processes involved in facilitating teaching and learning. It is recommended that other collaborative action research projects are framed in terms of a ZPD between the members of the team – research practitioners – each contributing particular experience, knowledge and skills, and each learning from others. The present study also refined the basic structure of the ZPD by formulating a *zone of writing development* (zwd) to show the specific processes by which students' writing skills could be improved through the basic constructs of SCT – scaffolding, mediation, and regulation – whereby both teachers and students were jointly engaged in the processes of teaching and learning. It is suggested that such

specialised zones of development could be devised for other learning outcomes in relatable pedagogical situations.

These theoretical implications are seen as important because, collectively, they may allow a deeper understanding of processes involved in teaching and learning. But it is the nature of theoretical frameworks to allow researchers not only to explain phenomena, but also to formulate better questions for further and deeper investigation.

6.5 Suggestions for further research

More research could be conducted in the area of writing and other related ESL skills. Since not many studies particularly in Malaysia look into ESL formative assessment and process approach to writing and the extent these two approaches could assist teaching and learning development, there is a need to further explore this particular area. Also, the findings of this study point toward the need to research the Malaysian teachers' beliefs and how these relate to pedagogical practice and learning development.

Further research on ESL writing feedback is needed to give insights into the patterns and ways feedback is established and managed for writing development. While much research on feedback and its implication for learning were found worldwide, research on either teacher feedback or peer feedback and its implication for the teaching and learning of ESL writing in Malaysia is underdeveloped. Hence the call for such research in the Malaysian context is necessary. Also, research on affordance and constraint with regard to peer review activity in the Malaysian ESL writing classroom is vital. There is a need to

investigate the effectiveness and how peer-review and peer feedback could be integrated into the existing writing curriculum, in Malaysia.

Another area for further research is the use of collaborative action research for promoting reflective practice. Collaborative action research for reflective practice is scarcely employed in the Malaysian educational setting especially for teaching and learning development. If there is, any such research would come only from the initiative of individuals. Hence, there is a need to expand the practice at group level and gain benefits from others' feedback as well. In order to achieve this, exposure to the benefits of collaborative practice is needed at institutional level. A need for greater theoretical understanding and acceptance of the validity of action research as an educational research approach and especially of collaborative action research was also observed.

Thus, a systematic programme could be developed to integrate professional development and (action) research. The first stage would be to carry out a situational analysis to identify resources and constraints, through the study of relevant documents, supported by surveys and/or interviews to obtain teachers' conceptions. The second stage would be to hold a series of professional development workshops focusing on the key problems to be solved (e.g. how to implement formative assessment, process writing, etc.). The final step in this second stage would be to require the participating teachers to construct or co-construct proposals for collaborative action research projects in their specific context, and for these proposals to be critique by colleagues. The third stage would be the modification, implementation, review and evaluation of these projects.

In addition, further research will be needed to look into how a sociocultural perspective could be refined or expanded to assist understanding of the developmental process within specified language skills such as reading, listening, and speaking. Research could also be conducted to further develop the constructs of *zone of writing development* (zwd) being proposed in this study and could be extended for understanding the developmental process in the teaching and learning of other subjects.

6.6 Final Statement

As an experienced teacher in Malaysia, I recognised the need to change in the teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practice because I could see that minimal learning development took place when teachers and students focused only on passing the examinations. As such, I decided that this would be my main aim in this project – developing a change in the teachers' pedagogical perspectives and practice. My intention was ignited further by the Malaysian government's (2007) initiative to focus on 'humanising' assessment. This is to promote formative assessment within the existing summative assessment system. In developing change in a community of practice, I believed collaborative action research would be best suited for the purpose where I could collaborate with other teachers to improve teaching and learning. So, following the action research design, I conducted my study in the field of ESL writing. Sociocultural theory enabled me to have a holistic understanding of the process of development - in the teachers' conceptions about teaching of writing, the development in the pedagogical

practice, the development of students' learning – due to its central concepts about learning development: scaffolding, mediation, regulation.

Going through the PhD journey has given me some insights about the teaching of writing where I learned that beliefs and practices are closely connected, and so curricular innovations have to be cautiously implemented in the classrooms. As a researcher, I gained so much about the process and procedures, the challenges and achievements of conducting a research project which has given me confidence to take up further research. Participating in the collaborative action research had alerted me to my different roles – such as learner, researcher, collaborator, facilitator, and colleague. The knowledge, skills and experience I have gained about researching will definitely be shared with my future research students, but also I acknowledge that I still have much to learn. My journey continues...

REFERENCES

- Abdul Halim, A. (2011). No to rote learning, *The New Straits Times*. Retrieved from <http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA268051406&v=2.1&u=waikato&it=r&p=ITOF&sw=w>
- Abdul Razak, H. (1956). *Report of the education committee*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: The Government Press Retrieved from <http://www.cpps.org.my/upload/Razak%20Report%201956.pdf>.
- Abdullah, M. R. T. L. (2009). *The writing strategies used by engineering ESL Malay learners*. Paper presented at the Conference of the International Journal of Arts & Sciences, Las Vegas.
- Mokhtar, A. A., Rawian, R. M., Yahaya, M. F., Azaharee Abdullah, M. M., Osman, M. I., Zakaria, Z. A., & Mohamed, A. R. (2010). Vocabulary knowledge of adult ESL learners. *English Language Teaching*, 3(1), 71-80.
- Akiko, K. (2003). Higher education reform: Challenges towards a knowledge society in Malaysia. *African and Asian Studies*, 2(4), 545-563.
- Akinwamide, T. K. (2012). The influence of process approach on english as second language students' performances in essay writing. *English Language Teaching*, 5(3), 16-29.
- Akta Pendidikan 1961*. (1984). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: International Law Book Service.
- Alderson, J. C. (2003). Diagnosing foreign language proficiency: a teaching/testing interface. In G. Poedjosoedarmo (Ed.), *Teaching and assessing language proficiency* (pp. 112-123). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Alhabshi, S. O., & Hakim, H. (2001, 1-2 September). *Dasar pelaksanaan sistem pendidikan kebangsaan*. Paper presented at the The Malay Education Congress, PWTC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Alis, P. (2006). *Language and nation building: a study of the language medium policy in Malaysia*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: SIRD.
- Alnufaie, M., & Grenfell, M. (2012). EFL students' writing strategies in Saudi Arabian ESP writing classes: perspectives on learning strategies in self-access language learning. *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal*, 3(4), 407-422.
- Annie, M.-N. W., & Hamali, J. (2006). Higher education and employment in Malaysia. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 7(1), 66-76.
- Anonymous. (1996). The language of assessment. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 67(8), 36-37.

- Antón, M. (2009). Dynamic assessment of advanced second language learners. *Foreign Language Annals*, 42(3), 576-598. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2009.01030.x
- Asmah, H. O. (1996). Post-imperial English in Malaysia. In J. A. Fishman, A. W. Conrad & A. Rubal-Lopez (Eds.), *Post-imperial English: status change in former British and American colonies 1940-1990*, (pp. 513-533). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Asmah, H. O. (1997). A discussion of the path taken by English towards becoming a Malaysian language. In M. S. Halimah & K. S. Ng (Eds.), *English is an Asian language: the Malaysian context* (pp. 12-21). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Persatuan Bahasa Modern Malaysia & The Macquarie Library.
- Asraf, R. M., & Ponnudurai, J. P. (2008). *Challenges in language assessment: are we ready?* Paper presented at the International Conference on Developments in the Pedagogy of International Languages: A Gateway for Practitioners, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Auerbach, C. F., & Silverstein, L. B. (2003). *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- August, S. (2005). Rethinking blogs as a qualitative research tool. *QRCA Views*, 24-31.
- Azman, H. (2002). Multilingual practices in rural Malaysia and their impact on English language learning in rural education. In A. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *Englishes in Asia: communication, identity, power and education*, (pp. 301-311). Melbourne, Australia: Language Australia
- Badger, R., & White, G. (2000). A process genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT Journal*, 54(2), 153-160. doi: 10.1093/elt/54.2.153
- Bajunid, I. A. (1995). Assessment of accountability systems in Malaysian education. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 23(6), 531-544.
- Ballantyne, J. (1989). University teaching around the world. *Teaching Sociology*, 17(3), 291-296. doi: 10.2307/1318075
- Barlow, L., Liparulo, S. P., & Reynolds, D. W. (2007). Keeping assessment local: The case for accountability through formative assessment. *Assessing Writing*, 12(1), 44-59. doi: 10.1016/j.asw.2007.04.002
- Barnard, R., & Campbell, L. (2005). Sociocultural theory and the teaching of process writing: the scaffolding of learning in a university context. *The TESOLANZ Journal*, 13, 76-88.
- Barnett, R. (2007). Assessment in higher education: An impossible mission? In D. Boud & N. Falchikov (Eds.), *Rethinking assessment in higher education: learning for the longer term*, (pp. 29-40). New York: Routledge

- Baroudy, I. (2008). Process writing: successful and unsuccessful writers; discovering writing behaviours. *International Journal of English Studies*, 8(2), 43-63.
- Baskaran, L. M. (2002). *Whose English? Whose/What Standard? The role of English in Malaysia*. Paper presented at the International Conference IPBA 24-26 September 2002, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia.
- Belbase, M. R. (2012). The process-genre approach: some ideas for teaching writing in Nepal. Retrieved 12 September 2012, 2012, from <https://neltachoutari.wordpress.com/2012/01/01/the-process-genre-approach-some-ideas-for-teaching-writing-in-nepal/#comments>
- Bell, B., & Cowie, B. (2001). *Formative assessment and science education*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Beynon, J., Ilieva, R., & Dichupa, M. (2004). Re-credentialling experiences of immigrant teachers: negotiating institutional structures, professional identities and pedagogy. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and practice*, 10(4), 429-444.
- Biggs, J. (2001). The reflective institution: Assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. *Higher Education*, 41(3), 221-238. doi: 10.1023/a:1004181331049
- Bitchener, J. (2008). Evidence in support of written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17(2), 102-118. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2007.11.004
- Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2009). The relative effectiveness of different types of direct written corrective feedback. *System*, 37(2), 322-329. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2008.12.006
- Bjørn, G. (2005). Innovation and action research. *International Journal of Action Research*, 1, 267-289.
- Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & Wiliam, D. (2003). *Assessment for learning: putting it into practice*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2003). In praise of educational research: formative assessment. *British Educational Research Journal*, 29(5), 623-637.
- Bloom, B. S. (1968). *Toward a theory of testing which includes measurement-evaluation-assessment*. Center for the Study of Evaluation of Instructional Programs Occasional Report No. Nine.
- Bloom, B. S. (1969). Some theoretical issues relating to educational evaluation. In R. W. Tyler (Ed.), *Educational evaluation: new roles, new means: the 63rd yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, (Vol. 69, pp. 26-50). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press

- Bloom, B. S., Hastings, J. T., & Madaus, G. F. (Eds.). (1971). *Handbook on the formative and summative evaluation of student learning*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, 36(02), 81-109. doi: 10.1017/S0261444803001903
- Borg, S. (2009). English language teachers' conceptions of research. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(3), 358-388. doi: 10.1093/applin/amp007
- Borg, S. (2011). The impact of in-service teacher education on language teachers' beliefs. *System*, 39(3), 370-380. doi: [10.1016/j.system.2011.07.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.07.009)
- Boulton-Lewis, G. M., Smith, D. J. H., McCrindle, A. R., Burnett, P. C., & Campbell, K. J. (2001). Secondary teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning. *Learning and Instruction*, 11(1), 35-51. doi: [10.1016/S0959-4752\(00\)00014-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0959-4752(00)00014-1)
- Boyapati, E. (2000). Learning: Student-centred vs teacher-centred. *Korean Journal of Chemical Engineering*, 17(3), 365-367. doi: 10.1007/BF02699054
- Bradley, E. H., Curry, L. A., & Devers, K. J. (2007). Qualitative data analysis for health services research: developing taxonomy, themes, and theory. *Health Services Research*, 42(4), 1758-1772. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6773.2006.00684.x
- Braine, G. (1996). ESL students in first-year writing courses: ESL versus mainstream classes. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 5(2), 91-107.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brill, J. M., & Hodges, C. B. (2011). Investigating peer review as an intentional learning strategy to foster collaborative knowledge-building in students of instructional design. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 23(1), 114-118.
- Brookhart, S. M. (2011). Educational assessment knowledge and skills for teachers. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 30(1), 3-12. doi: 10.1111/j.1745-3992.2010.00195.x
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Education.
- Bruner, J. S. (1962). Introduction. In E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar (Eds.), *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press
- Bruton, A. (2009). Improving accuracy is not the only reason for writing, and even if it were. *System*, 37(4), 600-613. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2009.09.005
- Brydon-Miller, M., Greenwood, D., & Maguire, P. (2003). Why action research? *Action Research*, 1(1), 9-28. doi: 10.1177/14767503030011002

- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods* (3rd ed.). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A. (2000). Facilitating collaborative action research : some insights from the AMEP. *Prospect*, 15(3), 23-34.
- Burns, A. (2003). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. (Reprint). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A. (2005). Action research: an evolving paradigm? *Language Teaching*, 38(02), 57-74. doi: 10.1017/S0261444805002661
- Burns, A., & Knox, J. S. (2005). Realisation(s): Systemic-functional linguistics and the language classroom. In N. Bartels (Ed.), *Applied linguistics and language teacher education*, (pp. 235-259). New York: Springer.
- Burns, A., & Richards, J. C. (Eds.). (2009). *Second language teacher education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A. (2010). Doing action research – what’s in it for teachers and institutions? *Classroom Matters*(29), 3-6.
- Butler, R. (1987). Task-involving and ego-involving properties of evaluation: Effects of different feedback conditions on motivational perceptions, interest, and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 79, 474-482.
- Camarinha-Matos, L. M., & Afsarmanesh, H. (2007). Results assessment and impact creation in collaborative research--An example from the ECOLEAD project. *Technovation*, 27(1-2), 65-77.
- Carless, D. (2011). *From testing to productive student learning: implementing formative assessment in Confucian-Heritage Settings*. New York: Routledge.
- Carless, D., Salter, D., Yang, M., & Lam, J. (2010). Developing sustainable feedback practices. *Studies in Higher Education*, 36(4), 395-407. doi: 10.1080/03075071003642449
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming critical: education, knowledge and action research*. London, England: Falmer Press.
- Cassell, C., & Johnson, P. (2006). Action research: Explaining the diversity. *Human Relations*, 59(6), 783-814. doi: 10.1177/0018726706067080
- Clark and Peterson. (1986). Teachers’ thought processes. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 255-296). New York: Macmillan.
- Clay, M., & Cazden, C. (1992). A Vygotskian interpretation of reading recovery. In L. C. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications*

and applications of socio-historical psychology, (pp. 206-222).
Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

- Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12(3), 267-296. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743\(03\)00038-9](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743(03)00038-9)
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London, England: Sage.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). London, England: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cole, M. (1984). The world beyond our borders: What might our students need to know about it? *American Psychologist*, 39(9), 998-1005.
- Connor, Ulla. (2002). New Directions in Contrastive Rhetoric. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36(4), 493-510. doi: 10.2307/3588238
- Corbin, J. (2009). Taking an analytic journey. In J. M. Morse (Ed.), *Developing grounded theory*, (pp. 35-54). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press
- Cowie, B., & Bell, B. (1996, 28-30 June). *Validity and formative assessment in the science classroom*. Paper presented at the Symposium on Validity in Educational Assessment, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Cowie, B., & Bell, B. (1999). A model of formative assessment in science education. *Assessment in Education*, 6(1), 101-116.
- Craig, D. V. (2009). *Action research essentials*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Cramp, A. (2011). Developing first-year engagement with written feedback. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 12(2), 113-124. doi: 10.1177/1469787411402484
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Cranbury NJ: Pearson.
- Crossman, J. M., & Kite, S. L. (2012). Facilitating improved writing among students through directed peer review. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 13(3), 219-229. doi: 10.1177/1469787412452980
- Crossouard, B. (2009). A sociocultural reflection on formative assessment and collaborative challenges in the states of Jersey. *Research Papers in Education*, 24(1), 77-93.
- Cumming, A. (1983). *Teachers' procedures for responding to the writing of students of English as a second language*. Paper presented at the Canadian Council of Teachers of English.

- Dawson, C. (2009). *Introduction to research methods*. Oxford, England: How To Books Ltd.
- DeLuca, R., & Annals, A. (2011). *Writing that works: a guide for tertiary students* (3rd ed.). Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2008). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. London, England: SAGE.
- DeVries, R. (2000). Vygotsky, Piaget, and Education: A reciprocal assimilation of theories and educational practices. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 18(2-3), 187-213.
- Diab, N. M. (2011). Assessing the relationship between different types of student feedback and the quality of revised writing. *Assessing Writing*, 16(4), 274-292. doi: 10.1016/j.asw.2011.08.001
- Diyanah, A. (2010, 24 July). Kuasai Bahasa Inggeris, *Berita Harian Online*. Retrieved from http://www.bharian.com.my/bharian/articles/KuasaibahasaInggeris/Article/print_html
- Donato, R. (2000). Sociocultural contributions to understanding the foreign and second language classroom. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 27-50). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press
- Donato, R., & MacCormick, D. (1994). A sociocultural perspective on language learning strategies. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(4), 453-464. doi: 10.2307/328584
- Earl, L. M. (2003). *Assessment as learning: using classroom assessment to maximize student learning*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.
- Ebel, R. L. (1980). Evaluation of students: implications for effective teaching. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2(1), 47-51. doi: 10.3102/01623737002001047
- Economic Planning Unit, M. (2006). The ninth Malaysia plan 2006-2010. Retrieved 4 September 2007, from <http://www.epu.jpm.my/rm9/english/cover.pdf>
- Education Committee, M. (1966). *Report of the education committee 1956 (Razak Report)*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Penchetak Kerajaan.
- Edward, D., & Mercer, N. (1987). *Common knowledge: The development of understanding in the classroom*. London, England: Methuen.
- Edwards, A., & Westgate, D. (1987). *Investigating classroom talk*. London, England: Falmer Press.
- Ellis, A. K. (2001). *Teaching, learning, assessment together: The reflective classroom*. New York: Eye on Education.

- Ellis, R., Sheen, Y., Murakami, M., & Takashima, H. (2008). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in an English as a foreign language context. *System*, 36(3), 353-371. doi: [10.1016/j.system.2008.02.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.02.001)
- Engels, F. (1879). *Dialectics of nature*. Chicago, IL: Kerr.
- Englert, C. S., Mariage, T. V., & Dunsmore, K. (2006). Tenets of sociocultural theory in writing instruction research. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (pp. 208-221). New York: The Guilford Press
- Examination Syndicate, M. (2007). *School assessment: monitoring growth*. Paper presented at the International Forum on Educational Assessment System, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Selangor.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2011). Exploring the professional role identities of experienced ESL teachers through reflective practice. *System*, 39(1), 54-62. doi: [10.1016/j.system.2011.01.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.01.012)
- Ferris, D. R. (2004). The “grammar correction” debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime ...?). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13(1), 49-62. doi: [10.1016/j.jslw.2004.04.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2004.04.005)
- Ferris, D. (2007). Preparing teachers to respond to student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(3), 165-193.
- Fluckiger, J., Vigil, Y., Pasco, R., & Danielson, K. (2010). Formative feedback: Involving students as partners in assessment to enhance learning. *College Teaching*, 58(4), 136-140.
- Foo, B., & Richards, C. (2004). English in Malaysia. *RELJ Journal*. Retrieved from <http://rel.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/35/2/229>
- Frey, J. H., & Fontana, A. (1991). The group interview in social research. *The Social Science Journal*, 28(2), 175-187. doi: [10.1016/0362-3319\(91\)90003-m](https://doi.org/10.1016/0362-3319(91)90003-m)
- Gabrielatos, C. (2002). EFL writing: product and process. (ED476839). <http://www.gabrielatos.com/Writing.pdf>
- Garfield, J. B. (1994). Beyond testing and grading: Using assessment to improve learning. *Journal of Statistics Education*, 2(1). Retrieved from www.amstat.org/publications/jse/v2n2/garfield.html
- Gibson, W. J., & Brown, A. (2009). *Working with qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Gill, S. K. (2002). *International communication: English language challenges for Malaysia*. Selangor: Universiti Putra Malaysia Press.

- Gilles, C., Wilson, J., & Elias, M. (2010). Sustaining teachers' growth and renewal through action research, induction programs, and collaboration.(Report). *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 37(1), 91-108.
- Gioia, D. A., & Pitre, E. (1990). Multiparadigm perspectives on theory building. *The Academy of Management Review*, 15(4), 584-602.
- Gipps, C. (1994). *Beyond testing: Towards a theory of educational assessment*. London, England: The Falmer Press.
- Gipps, C. (2002). Sociocultural perspectives on assessment. In G. Wells & G. Claxton (Eds.), *Learning for Life in the 21st Century: Sociocultural Perspectives on the Future of Education* (pp. 73-83). Oxford, England: Blackwell
- Gipps, C., & Stobart, G. (2003). Alternative assessment. In T. Kellaghan, D. L. Stufflebeam & L. A. Wingate (Eds.), *International handbook of educational evaluation* (Vol. 2, pp. 549-576). London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Gladman, A., & Freeman, D. (2012). Focus group methodology. In R. Barnard & A. Burns (Eds.), *Researching language teacher cognition and practice* (pp. 68-89). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Gordon, S. P. (2008). The power of collaborative action research. In S. P. Gordon (Ed.), *Collaborative action research: developing professional learning communities* (pp. 1-14). London, England: Teacher's College Press
- Gosling, D., & Moon, J. (2001). *How to use learning outcomes and assessment criteria*. London, England: SEEC Office.
- Grabe, W., & Kaplan, R. B. (1996). *Theory and practice of writing*. London: Longman
- Graham, S., Harris, K. R., & Mason, L. (2005). Improving the writing performance, knowledge, and self-efficacy of struggling young writers: The effects of self-regulated strategy development. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 30(2), 207-241. doi: 10.1016/j.cedpsych.2004.08.001
- Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools - A report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Washington, DC.
- Graham, S., & Sandmel, K. (2011). The process writing approach: A meta-analysis. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 104(6), 396-407. doi: 10.1080/00220671.2010.488703
- Gray, P. J. (2002). The roots of assessment: Tensions, solutions, and research directions. In T. W. Banta & Associates (Eds.), *Building a scholarship of assessment* (pp. 47-66). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

- Gronhaug, K., & Olson, O. (1999). Action reserch and knowledge creation: Merits and challenges. *Qualitative Market Research: A International Journal*, 2(1), 6-14.
- Guerrero, M. C. M. D., & Villamil, O. S. (2002). Metaphorical conceptualizations of ESL teaching and learning. *Language Teaching Research*, 6(2), 95-120. doi: 10.1191/1362168802lr101oa
- Hamilton, I. R. (2009). Automating formative and summative feedback for individualised assignments. *Campus-Wide Information Systems*, 26(5), 355-364.
- Hamp-Lyons, L. (2003). The impact of testing practices on teaching: ideologies and alternatives. In G. Poedjosoedarmo (Ed.), *Teaching and assessing language proficiency* (pp. 26-37). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Hanapiah, M. F. (2002). *English language and the language of development: a Malaysian perspective*. Paper presented at the International Conference IPBA 2002, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Retrived from <http://apps.emoe.gov.my/ipba/rdipba/cd1/article113.pdf>
- Harklau, L. (2006). Representing culture in the ESL writing classroom. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in second language teaching and learning* (6th ed.), (pp. 109-130). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Harlen, W., & James, M. (1997). Assessment and learning: differences and relationships between formative and summative assessment. *Assessment in Education*, 4(3), 365-379.
- Hasan, M. K., & Akhand, M. M. (2010). Approaches to writing in EFL/ESL context: balancing product and process in writing class at tertiary level. *Journal of NELTA*, 15(1), 77-88.
- Hasim, Z., De Luca, R., & Bell, B. (2011). Issues and challenges of using web blogs as a medium for research communication. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 16(1), 143-150.
- Hasim, Z., Tunku Mohtar, T. M., Barnard, R., and Zakaria, A. R. (2013). Metaphors used by Malaysian teachers-in-training: Implications for language teacher education. *Creative Education*, 4(9b), 74-77.
- Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Heritage, M. (2007). Formative assessment: What do teachers need to know and do? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(2), 140-145.
- Heron, G. (2011). Examining principles of formative and summative feedback. *British Journal of Social Work*, 41(2), 276-295. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcq049
- Heyman, R. D. (1983). Basic issues in the interpretive paradigm: a response to Messrs. Heap, Munby, and Olson. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 13(4), 429-433.

- Hickmann, M. E. (1985). The implication of discourse skills in Vygotsky's developmental theory. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *Culture, communication, and cognition: Vygotskian Perspectives*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press
- Hood, M. (2009). Case study. In J. Heigham & R. A. Crocker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 66-89). Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan
- Hora, M. T. (2012). Organizational factors and instructional decision-making: A cognitive perspective. *The Review of Higher Education*, 35(2), 207-235.
- Hu, G. (2005). Using peer review with Chinese ESL student writers. *Language Teaching Research*, 9(3), 321-342.
- Hyland, F. (1998). The impact of teacher written feedback on individual writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 7(3), 255-286.
- Hyland, F. (2000). ESL writers and feedback: Giving more autonomy to students. *Language Teaching Research*, 4(1), 33-54.
- Hyland, F. (2010). Future directions in feedback on second language writing: Overview and research agenda. *International Journal of English Studies*, 10(2), 171-182
- Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy and L2 writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16, 148-164.
- Hyland, K. (2008). Genre and academic writing in the disciplines. *Language Teaching*, 41, 543-562.
- Hymes, D. (1972). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Hymes, D. (2001). On communicative competence. In A. Durati (Ed.), *Linguistic anthropology: A reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- International Labour Organization, S. (2006). *Federal constitution*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_125966.pdf.
- IPTA sedia laksana program peringkat Bahasa Inggeris. (2006, 23 Mei). *Berita Harian*. Retrieved from http://www.mohe.gov.my/keratan_sub.php?navcode=NAV023&entryID=3254
- Iran-Nejad, A. (1990). Active and dynamic self-regulation of learning processes. *Review of Educational Research*, 60(4), 573-602.

- Jalaluddin, N. H., Awal, N. M., & Bakar, K. A. (2008). The mastery of English language among lower secondary school students in Malaysia: A linguistic analysis. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 106-117.
- Jin, G. (2008). Application of communicative approach in college English teaching. *Asian Social Science*, 4(4), 81-85.
- Joe, L., & Christina, M. (1997). Formative assessment and the paradigms of writing center practice. *The Clearing House*, 71(2), 106-108. doi: 10.1080/00098659709599336
- Johns, A. M. (1997). "Completely different worlds": EAP and the writing experiences of ESL students in university courses. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31, 39-69.
- Kam, H. W. (2002). English language teaching in East Asia today: An Overview. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 22(2), 1-22. doi: 10.1080/0218879020220203
- Kamimura, T. (2000). Integration of process and product orientations in the EFL writing instruction. *RELC Journal*, 31(2), 1-28. doi: 10.1177/003368820003100201
- Kaplan, R. B. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in inter-cultural education. *Language Learning Journal*, 16(1-2), 1-20. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-1770.1966.tb00804.x
- Kaplan, R. B., & Baldauf, R. B. (1997). *Language planning: From practice to theory*. Clevedon, England: WBC Book.
- Kassim, H., & Ali, F. (2010). English communicative events and skills needed at the workplace: Feedback from the industry. *English for Specific Purposes*, 29(3), 168-182. doi: [10.1016/j.esp.2009.10.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2009.10.002)
- Khader, F. R. (2012). Teachers' pedagogical beliefs and actual classroom practices in social studies instruction. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 2(1), 73-92.
- Khansir, A. A. (2012). The role of process and product approaches to the teaching of writing. *Language In India*, 12, 280-295.
- Keen, J. (2005). Assessment for writing development: Trainee English teachers' understanding of formative assessment. *Teacher Development: An international journal of teachers' professional development*, 9(2), 237 - 253.
- Kell, M. (2007). *Constructing identities-developing skills: Cases of workers with poor literacy skills*. Paper presented at the Learning and socio-cultural theory: Exploring modern Vygotskian perspectives workshop, Wollongong University.
- Keller, F. S. (1968). "Good-bye, teacher". *Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis*, 1, 78-79.

- Kember, D. (1997). A reconceptualisation of the research into university academics' conceptions of teaching. *Learning and Instruction*, 7(3), 255-275. doi: [10.1016/S0959-4752\(96\)00028-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0959-4752(96)00028-X)
- Kember, D. (1999). A reconceptualisation of the research into university academics' conceptions of teaching. *Learning and Instruction*, 7(3), 255-275. doi: [10.1016/S0959-4752\(96\)00028-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0959-4752(96)00028-X)
- Kim, T. (2011). Sociocultural dynamics of ESL learning (de)motivation: An activity theory analysis of two adult Korean immigrants. *The Canadian Modern Language Review / La revue canadienne des langues vivantes*, 67(1), 91-122.
- Kollar, I., & Fischer, F. (2010). Peer assessment as collaborative learning: A cognitive perspective. *Learning and Instruction*, 20(4), 344-348.
- Kormos, J. (2012). The role of individual differences in L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21(4), 390-403. doi: [10.1016/j.jslw.2012.09.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2012.09.003)
- Kozulin, A. (1986). Vygotsky in context. In L. S., Vygotsky (A. Kozulin, Trans.), *Thought and language* (pp. xi-lvi). Cambridge, England: The MIT Press.
- Kublin, K. S., Wetherby, A. M., Crais, E. R., & Prizant, B. M. (1989). Prelinguistic dynamic assessment: A transactional perspective. In A. M. Wetherby, S. F. Warren & J. Reichle (Eds.), *Transitions in prelinguistic communication* (pp. 285-312). Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Company
- Kunio, Y. (2001). *Globalization and national identity*. Bangi, Malaysia: UKM.
- Kyrtziz, A. (2004). Talk and interaction among children and the co-construction of peer groups and peer culture. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33, 625-649. doi: [10.2307/25064867](https://doi.org/10.2307/25064867)
- Lantolf, J. P. (1994). Sociocultural theory and second language learning: Introduction to the special issue. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(4), 418-420.
- Lantolf, J. P. (2007). Sociocultural theory: A unified approach to L2 learning and teaching. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *International Handbook of English Language Teaching* (pp. 693-700). New York: Springer
- Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, L. S. (2007). Sociocultural theory and second language learning. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (pp. 201-220). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Lavelle, E., Ball, S. C., & Maliszewski, G. (2013). Writing approaches of nursing students. *Nurse Education Today*, 33(1), 60-63. doi: [10.1016/j.nedt.2011.10.021](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2011.10.021)
- Lee, I. (2011). Formative assessment in EFL writing: An exploratory case study. *Changing English*, 18(1), 99-111. doi: [10.1080/1358684X.2011.543516](https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2011.543516)

- Lee, K. S., Hazita, A., & Koo, Y. L. (2010). Investigating the undergraduate experience of assessment in higher education. *GEMA Online™ Journal of Language Studies*, 10(1), 17-33.
- Lee, S. K., Lee, K. S., Wong, F. F., & Ya'acob, A. (2010). The English language and its impact on identities of multilingual Malaysian undergraduates. *GEMA Online™ Journal of Language Studies*, 10(1), 87-101.
- Lee, Y. J. (2006). The process-oriented ESL writing assessment: Promises and challenges. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15(4), 307-330.
- Lee, Y. M. (2013, 16 June 2013). Getting the right MES-sage across, *The Star*. <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2013/06/16/Getting-the-right-MESsage-across/> Retrieved 30 July 2013.
- Leki, I. (2001). Hearing voices: L2 students' experiences in L2 writing courses. In T. Silva & P. K. Matsuda (Eds.), *On second language writing* (pp. 17-28). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Li, J., & De Luca, R. (2012). Review of assessment feedback. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-16. doi: 10.1080/03075079.2012.709494
- Lim, H. E., & Normizan, B. (2004). Unemployment duration of graduates of Universiti Utara Malaysia: The impact of English language proficiency1. *Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies*, 41(1/2), 1-20.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Littlewood, W. (2009). Process-oriented pedagogy: facilitation, empowerment, or control? *ELT Journal*, 63(3), 246-254. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccn054
- Liu, Shih-Hsiung. (2011). Factors related to pedagogical beliefs of teachers and technology integration. *Computers & Education*, 56(4), 1012-1022. doi: 10.1016/j.compedu.2010.12.001
- Liu, N., & Carless, D. (2006). Peer feedback: The learning element of peer assessment. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11(3), 279-290.
- Lotbiniere, M. d. (2009). Malaysia drops English language teaching. *Guardian*. Retrived from www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jul/10/malaysia-tefl/print
- Mahathir, M. (1999). *A new deal for Asia*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Pelandok Publications.
- Mak, S. H.-y. (2011). Tensions between conflicting beliefs of an EFL teacher in teaching practice. *RELC Journal*, 42(1), 53-67. doi: 10.1177/0033688210390266
- Malaysia Examination Syndicate, M. (2007). Looking ahead: Introduction to national educational assessment system. *Educational Assessment System Forum*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Malaysia Ministry of Education and Malaysia Examination Syndicate.

- Malaysia Ministry of Education, M., & Malaysia Examination Syndicate, M. (2007). *Looking ahead: Introduction to national educational assessment system*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Malaysia Ministry of Education and Malaysia Examination Syndicate.
- Mallan, V. (2005). *Insights from revision strategies of four Malaysian native speakers of English in mainstream ESL classrooms*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Otago, Dunedin.
- Mandal, S. K. (2000). Reconsidering cultural globalization: the English language in Malaysia. *Third World Quarterly*, 21(6), 1001 - 1012.
- Mansour, N. (2013). Consistencies and inconsistencies between science teachers' beliefs and practices. *International Journal of Science Education*, 35(7), 1230-1275. doi: 10.1080/09500693.2012.743196
- Marlow, A., Spratt, C., & Reilly, A. (2008). Collaborative action learning: A professional development model for educational innovation in nursing. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 8, 184-189.
- Matsuda, P. K. (1997). Contrastive rhetoric in context: A dynamic model of L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 6(1), 45-60.
- Matsuda, P. K. (2003). Process and post-process: A discursive history. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12, 65-83.
- Matsuda, P. K., Saenkhum, T., & Accardi, S. (2013). Writing teachers' perceptions of the presence and needs of second language writers: An institutional case study. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 22(1), 68-86. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2012.10.001
- McDonough, K. (2006). Action research and the professional development of graduate teaching assistants. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90(1), 33-47. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2006.00383.x
- McKay, J., & Marshall, P. (2001). The dual imperatives of action research. *Information Technology & People*, 14(1), 46-59.
- McNiff, J. (1988). *Action research: Principles and practice*. London, England: Macmillan.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2000). *Action research in organisations*. New York: Routledge.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2002). *Action research: Principles and practice* (2nd ed.). London, England: Routledge Falmer.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2006). *All you need to know about action research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Mede, E. (2010). The effects of collaborative reflection on EFL teaching. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 3888-3891.

- Mehan, H. (1979). *Learning lessons: Social organisation in the classroom*. Cambridge, England: Harvard University Press.
- Mendonca, C. O., & Johnson, K. E. (1994). Peer review negotiations: Revision activities in ESL writing instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(4), 745-769. doi: 10.2307/3587558
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. London, England: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Meyer, W. H. (2009). 'When you just get a mark and a nasty comment, what's that called?' 'Summative assessment' Creating an enabling environment for formative assessment. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 27(2), 215-228. doi: 0.2989/SALALS.2009.27.2.8.871
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, M. A. (1994). *An expanded sourcebook: Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Mills, G. (2009). Action research in higher education. *Teaching and Learning*, 23(2), 58(52).
- Milne, R. S. (1970). "National ideology" and nation-building in Malaysia. *Asian Survey*, 10(7), 563-573.
- Ministry of Education, M. (2001). *Education development plan for Malaysia 2001-2010: Executive Summary*. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia Ministry of Education Retrieved from http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/format_liste_en.php?Chp2=Malaysia.
- Mohamad, F. (2009). Internet-based grammar instruction in the ESL classroom. *International Journal of Pedagogies & Learning*, 5, 34-48.
- MOHE. (2007a). *Mission & Vision*. Retrieved from <http://www.mohe.gov.my/sub1.php?navcode=NAV001&subcode=SUB006&lang=ENG>.
- MOHE. (2007b). *National higher education action plan 2007-2010*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia Retrieved from http://www.mohe.gov.my/transformasi/images/1_bi.pdf.
- MOHE. (2007c). Strategic action plan for national higher education 2007-2010. Retrieved 18 October 2007, 2007, from http://www.mohe.gov.my/transformasi/images/1_bi.pdf
- MOHE. (2010). *Syarat kemasukan ke institut pengajian tinggi awam*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Higher Education Retrieved from http://upu.mohe.gov.my/portal/arkib/1112_PEKELILING_STPM_STAM.pdf.
- Mohini, M. (2008). Globalisation and its impact on the medium of instruction in higher education in Malaysia. *International Education Studies*, 1(1), 89-94.

- mSTARonline. (2006). 33% pensyarah lemah Bahasa Inggeris. Retrieved 4 September 2007, from http://mstar.com.my/cms/content.jsp?id=com.tms.cms.article.Article_9
- Mansour, Nasser. (2013). Consistencies and inconsistencies between science teachers' beliefs and practices. *International Journal of Science Education*, 35(7), 1230-1275. doi: 10.1080/09500693.2012.743196
- Marlow, A., Spratt, C., & Reilly, A. (2008). Collaborative action learning: A professional development model for educational innovation in nursing. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 8, 184-189.
- Mourssi, Anwar. (2013). Theoretical and practical linguistic shifting from product/guided writing to process writing and recently to the innovated writing process approach in teaching writing for second/foreign language learners. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 3(5), 731-751.
- Murtagh, L., & Baker, N. (2009). Feedback to feed forward: student response to tutors' written comments on assignments. *Practitioner Research in Higher Education*, 3(1), 20-28.
- Murugesan, V. (2003). Malaysia promotes excellence in English. *ESL Magazine*, March/April, 26-28.
- Musa, N. C., Koo, Y. L., & Azman, H. (2012). Exploring English language learning and teaching in Malaysia. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 12(1), 35-50.
- Mustafa, R. F. (2012). Feedback on the feedback: Sociocultural interpretation of Saudi ESL learners' opinions about writing feedback. *English Language Teaching*, 5(3), 3-15.
- Mustapha, W. Z. W., Ismail, N., Ratan, D. S., & Alias, S. E. (2010). ESL students communication apprehension and their choice of communicative activities. *Asean Journal Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 2(1), 23-29.
- Naidu, M. M. (2007). *The use of written feedback and conferencing in improving students' writing*. Department of Modern Languages, Faculty of Education. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Johor Bahru.
- Nair, G. K. S., Rahim, R. A., Setia, R., Husin, N., Sabapathy, E., Jalil, N. A. A., & Seman, N. A. (2012). Malaysian graduates english adequacy in the job sector. *Asian Social Science*, 8(4), 143-147.
- Nassaji, H., & Tian, J. (2010). Collaborative and individual output tasks and their effects on learning English phrasal verbs. *Language Teaching Research*, 14(4), 397-419.
- Newman, M. (2008). 'Teacher-centred teaching' is way to improve learning, academic argues. *The Times Higher Education Supplement: THE*, (1834), 7. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/761083624?accountid=17287>

- Nik, Y. A., Sani, B., Chik, M. N. W., Jusoff, K., & Hasbollah, H. R. (2010). The writing performance of undergraduates in the University of Technology Mara, Terengganu, Malaysia. *Journal of Languages and Culture*, 1(1), 8-14.
- Nor Hashimah, J., Norsimah, M. A., & Kesumawati, A. B. (2008). The mastery of English language among lower secondary school students in Malaysia: A linguistic analysis. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 106-119
- Normazidah, C. M., Koo, Y. L., & Hazita, A. (2012). Exploring English language learning and teching in Malaysia. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 12(1), 35-50.
- Norrizan, R. (1992). *Learning ESL in Malaysia: A study of reinforcing and suppressing factors in two communities*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink?did=745717071&Fmt=7&clientId=8119&RQT=309&VName=PQD>
- Norton, B. (1997). Language, identity, and the ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(3), 409-429.
- Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology: A textbook for teachers*. London, England: Prentice Hall.
- Nunan, D.(1999). *Second language teaching & learning*. Michigan, USA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4), 589-613.
- Nurmukhamedov, U., & Kim, S. H. (2010). ‘Would you perhaps consider ...’: hedged comments in ESL writing. *ELT Journal*, 64(3), 272-282. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccp063
- Ohta, A. S. (1995). Applying sociocultural theory to an analysis of learner discourse: learner-learner collaborative interaction in the zone of proximal development. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 93-122.
- Ohta, A. S. (2005). Interlanguage pragmatics in the zone of proximal development. *System*, 33(3), 503-517.
- Omar, Z. (2010). What employers expect of graduates. Retrieved 3 October, 2010, from <http://www.graduan.com.my/Page/LearningCenter/YourOwnDesk/What-Employers-Expect-of-Graduates#ixzz11fCPNHPe>
- Ongkili, J. P. (1985). *Nation building in Malaysia 1946-1974*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: OUP.
- Osman, S. R. F., Ahmad, E. A., & Jusoff, K. (2009). Nurturing writing proficiency through theme-based instruction. *International Education Studies*, 2(3), 140-146.

- Ozdemir, E. Y. (2011). Self-regulated learning from a sociocultural perspective. *Education and Science*, 36(160), 298-308.
- Pålshaugen, Ø. (2006). Dilemmas of action research - an introduction. *International Journal of Action Research*, 2, 149-162.
- Pandian, A. (2002). English language teaching in Malaysia today. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 22(2), 35-52.
- Parboteeah, S., & Anwar, M. (2009). Thematic analysis of written assignment feedback: Implications for nurse education. *Nurse Education Today*, 29(7), 753-757.
- Parr, J. M., & Timperley, H. S. (2010). Feedback to writing, assessment for teaching and learning and student progress. *Assessing Writing*, 15(2), 68-85.
- Paulus, T. M. (1999). The effect of peer and teacher feedback on student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8(3), 265-289.
- Pharo, E., & De Salas, K. (2009). Implementing student peer review: Opportunity versus change management. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 33(2), 199-207. doi: 10.1080/03098260802276748
- Phipps, S., & Borg, S. (2009). Exploring tensions between teachers' grammar teaching beliefs and practices. *System*, 37(3), 380-390. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2009.03.002
- Pincas, A. (1962). 'Structural linguistics and systematic composition teaching to students of English as a foreign language'. *Language Learning* 12(3), 185-194.
- Poehner, M. E. (2009). Group dynamic assessment: mediation for the L2 classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 43(3), 471-491. doi: 10.2307/27785030
- Poehner, M. E., & Lantolf, J. P. (2013). Bringing the ZPD into the equation: Capturing L2 development during computerized dynamic assessment (C-DA). *Language Teaching Research*, 17(3), 323-342. doi: 10.1177/1362168813482935
- Prime Minister Office, M. (2009). Memartabatkan bahasa Melayu, memantapkan bahasa Inggeris: tawaran baru sistem pendidikan Malaysia. Retrieved 2 September, 2010, from <http://www.pmo.gov.my/tpm/?frontpage/content/2093/2099>
- Pritchard, R. J., & Honeycutt, R. L. (2007). Best practices in implementing a process approach to teaching writing. In S. Graham & C. A. MacArthur (Eds.), *Best Practices in Writing Instruction*. New York, NY: Guilford Press
- Priya, K. (2010, 25 July 2010). Change in the air?, *Sunday Star*. Retrieved 2 September, 2010, from <http://www.thestar.com.my/>

- Prowse, S., Duncan, N., Hughes, J., & Burke, D. (2007). '... do that and I'll raise your grade'. Innovative module design and recursive feedback. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12(4), 437-445. doi: 10.1080/13562510701415359
- Pryor, J., & Crossouard, B. (2007). A socio-cultural theorisation of formative assessment. *Oxford Review of Education*, 1-20.
- Puteh, M., Daud, S. M., Mahmood, N. H., & Azli, N. A. (2009). Quality issues facing Malaysian higher learning institutions: a case study of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia *Engineering Education Quality Assurance* (pp. 153-162); Springer US.
- Putih, A. (2004). *Language and nation building*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: SIRD.
- Radecki, P. M., & Swales, J. M. (1988). ESL student reaction to written comments on their written work. *System*, 16(3), 355-365.
- Ramanan, V., & Kaur, J. (2004, 29 March 2004). Too much rote-learning in varsities, says minister, *The New Straits Times*. Retrieved from <http://global.factiva.com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/ha/default.aspx>
- Rappa, A. L., & Wee, L. (2006). *Language policy and modernity in Southeast Asia Malaysia, the Philipines, Singapore, and Thailand*. Berlin: Springer.
- Razfar, A., & Rumenapp, J. C. (2011). Developmental context(s): Mediating learning through language ideologies. *Human Development*, 54(4), 241-269. doi: 10.1159/000330296
- Reichelt, M. (2005). English in Poland. *World Englishes*, 24(2), 217-226. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-971X.2005.00405.x
- Richardson, V. (1996). *Teacher beliefs and classroom performance: the impact of teacher education* (Vol. 6). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Richards, J. C. & Pennington, M. (1998). The first year of teaching. In: Richards, J. C. (Ed.), *Beyond training* (pp. 173-190). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2002). 30 Years of Tefl/Tesl: A personal reflection. *RELC Journal*, 33(2), 1-35. doi: 10.1177/003368820203300201
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rodrigues, S. (2006, 5 September 2006). 'A' in the exam, 'F' in job interview, *The Star*. Retrieved 2 September, 2010, from <http://www.thestar.com.my>
- Rosemala, I. (2008). *Factors affecting less proficient Esl learners' use of strategies for language and content area learning*. Doctor of Philosophy Thesis. Universiti Putra Malaysia. Selangor. Retrieved from http://psasir.upm.edu.my/5750/1/a_FPP_2008_41.pdf
- Rowntree, D. (1987). *Assessing students: How shall we know them?* London: Harper & Row.

- Rubin, J. (1971). A view towards the future. In J. R. a. B. Jernudd (Ed.), *Can Language Be Planned? Sociolinguistic Theory and Practice for Developing Nations*. Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii
- Sagor, R. (1993). *How to conduct collaborative action research*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Scriven, M. (1967). *Perspectives in curriculum evaluation*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally & Co.
- Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Shaw, S. D., & Weir, C. J. (2007). *Examining writing: Research and practice in assessing second language writing* (Vol. 26). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Shepard, L. A. (2000). The role of classroom assessment in teaching and learning. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching*. Washington: American Educational Research Association.
- Shohamy, E. G. (2006). *Language policy: hidden agendas and new approaches*. New York: Routledge.
- Shute, V. J. (2008). Focus on formative feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(1), 153-189.
- Sidek, H. M. (2012). EFL reading instruction: communicative task-based approach. *International Journal of Instruction*, 5(2), 109-128.
- Sim, J. (1998). Collecting and analysing qualitative data: Issues raised by the focus group. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 28(2), 345-352. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.1998.00692.x
- Singh, D. (1993). *An evaluation of the 1983 primary school ESL syllabus in Malaysia*. (MA Applied Linguistics Masters of Arts), University of Waikato, Hamilton.
- Smith, M. E., Teemant, A., & Pinnegar, S. (2004). Principles and practices of sociocultural assessment: foundations for effective strategies for linguistically diverse classrooms. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 6(2), 38-46.
- Søndergaard, H., & Mulder, R. A. (2012). Collaborative learning through formative peer review: pedagogy, programs and potential. *Computer Science Education*, 22(4), 343-367. doi:10.1080/08993408.2012.728041
- Stapa, S. H. (1994). *The effects of the writing process approach on writing apprehension and writing quality among ESL students at university level in Malaysia*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Glasgow, Glasgow.
- Stapa, S. H., Maasum, T. N. R. T., Mustaffa, R., & Darus, S. (2010). Workplace written literacy and its effect on the curriculum. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 8(1), 23-33.

- Stapa, S. H., & Majid, A. H. A. (2009). The use of first language in developing ideas in second language writing. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(4), 148-151.
- Steele, V. (2004). Product and process writing: a comparison. *Teaching English*. <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/product-process-writing-a-comparison>
- Stewart, D. W., Shamdasani, P. N., & Rook, D. W. (2007). *Focus groups: theory and practice*. London, England: SAGE.
- Stone, C. A. (1993). What is missing the the metaphor of 'scaffolding'? In E. A. Forman, N. Minick & C. A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning* (pp. 169). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press
- Storch, N. (2005). Collaborative writing: Product, process, and students' reflections. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14(3), 153-173.
- Storch, N. (2009). The impact of studying in a second language (L2) medium university on the development of L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 18(2), 103-118. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2009.02.003
- Su-Hie, T. (2007). Is teacher education makin an impact on TESL teacher trainees' beliefs and practices of grammar teaching? *ELTED*, 10(Winter), 42-62.
- Sufean, H. (2004). *Pendidikan di Malaysia: Sejarah, sistem dan falsafah* (2nd ed.). Selangor: Dawama.
- Sun, C., & Feng, G. (2009). Process approach to teaching writing aplied in different teaching models. *English Language Teaching*, 2(1), 150-155.
- Suppiah, P. C., Subramaniam, S., & Michael, A. S. (2009). From trash to treasure: Grammar Practice for the Malaysian ESL Learners/de la corbelle jusqu'au tresor: pratique de grammaire pour les apprenant d'anglais de la seconde du malaisie. *Canadian Social Science*, 7(5), 167-175.
- Supyan, H. (2008). Creating a bigger Z.P.D. for ESL learners via online forum in Malaysia. *College Teaching Methods & Styles Journal*, 4(11), 1-10.
- Susser, B. (1994). Process approaches in ESL/EFL writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 3(1), 31-47.
- Swain, M., & Sharon, L. (1998). Interaction and second language learning: Two Adolescent French Immersion Students Working Together. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82(3), 320-337.
- Talanquer, V., Novodvorsky, I., & Tomanek, D. (2009). Factors influencing entering teacher candidates' preferences for instructional activities: A glimpse into their orientations towards teaching. *International Journal of Science Education*, 32(10), 1389-1406. doi: 10.1080/09500690903019572
- Tan, K. E. (2006). Writing English essays with dominant discourses in Malaysian schools. *Jurnal Pendidik dan Pendidikan*, 21, 23-45.

- Tan, K. E., & Miller, J. (2007). Writing in English in Malaysian high schools: The discourse of examinations. *Language and Education*, 21(2), 124-140. doi: 10.2167/le663.0
- Tan, K. E., Mohamed, A. R., & Saw, K. G. (2009). Improving school English in Malaysia through participation in online threaded discussion groups. *Asian EFL Journal*, 11(2), 147-162.
- Tan, M., & Ong, S. L. (2011). Teaching Mathematics and Science in English in Malaysian classrooms: The impact of teacher beliefs on classroom practices and student learning. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 10(1), 5-18.
- Tan, P. K. W. (2005). The medium-of-instruction debate in Malaysia: English as a Malaysian language? *Language Problems & Language Planning*, 29(1), 47-66.
- Taras, M. (2005). Assessment summative and formative: Some theoretical reflections. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 53(4), 466-478.
- Taras, M. (2006). Do unto others or not: Equity in feedback for undergraduates. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31(3), 365-377.
- The Commissioner of Law Revision, M. (2006). *National language acts 1963/67*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Malayan Law Journal & Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad Retrieved from <http://www.agc.gov.my/Akta/Vol.%201/Act%2032.pdf>.
- Thomas, R. (2000). Historical and theoretical perspectives in language policy and planning. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 4(2), 196-213.
- Thornburg, D. G. (1990). Intergenerational literacy learning with bilingual families: A context for the analysis of social mediation of thought. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 25(3), 323 - 352.
- Tikunoff, W. J., & Ward, B. A. (1983). Collaborative research on teaching. *The Elementary School Journal*, 83(4), 453-468.
- Topping, K. J. (2010). Methodological quandaries in studying process and outcomes in peer assessment. *Learning and Instruction*, 20(4), 339-343. doi: 10.1016/j.learninstruc.2009.08.003
- Topping, K. J., Smith, E. F., Swanson, I., & Elliot, A. (2000). Formative peer assessment of academic writing between postgraduate students. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 25(2), 149-169. doi: 10.1080/713611428
- Trigwell, K., Prosser, M., & Taylor, P. (1994). Qualitative differences in approaches to teaching first year university science. *Higher Education*, 27(1), 75-84. doi: 10.2307/3448286
- Trotter, E. (2006). Student perceptions of continuous summative assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31(5), 505-521.

- Truscott, J. (1999). The case for "The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes": A response to Ferris. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8(2), 111-122. doi: 10.1016/S1060-3743(99)80124-6
- Tsui, A. B. M., & Ng, M. (2000). Do secondary L2 writers benefit from peer comments? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 9(2), 147-170. doi: 10.1016/S1060-3743(00)00022-9
- Tsui, A. B. M., & Ng, M. M. Y. (2010). Cultural Contexts and Situated Possibilities in the Teaching of Second Language Writing. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(4), 364-375. doi: 10.1177/0022487110364855
- Tuah, A. B. (2007). Looking ahead: A proposal towards a more holistic education assessment system in Malaysia. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Malaysia Examination Syndicate.
- Tunku Mohani, T. M. (2003). Dilemmas in test construction: quest and questions. In G. Poedjosoedarmo (Ed.), *Teaching and assessing language proficiency* (pp. 174-192). Orange Grove Rd, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Turvey, A. (2007). Writing and teaching writing. *Changing English*, 14(2), 145-159. doi: 10.1080/13586840701442950
- Ume, T. A., & Nworgu, B. G. (1997). Evaluation of teaching and learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 72, 63-70. doi: 10.1002/tl.7207
- Van Lier, L. (1996). *Interaction in the language curriculum*. Harlow: Longman
- Van Lier, L. (2004). *The ecology and semiotics of language learning*. New York, NY: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language* (A. Kozulin, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Walvoord, B. E. (2010). *Assessment clear and simple: A practical guide for institutions, departments, and general education* (2 ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Warrican, S. J. (2006). Action research: A viable option for effecting change. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 38(1), 1-14.
- Warschauer, M. (1998). Online learning in sociocultural context. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 29(1), 68-88.
- Weaver, M. R. (2006). Do students value feedback? Student perceptions of tutors' written responses. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31(3), 379-394.
- Weiskopf, R., & Laske, S. (1996). Emancipatory action research: a critical alternative to personnel development or a new way of patronising people?

- In O. Zuber-Skerritt (Ed.), *New Directions in Action Research* (pp. 121-136). London, England: Falmer
- Wertsch, J. V. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action*. Cambridge, MA: The Harvard University Press.
- Wette, R. (2009). Making the instructional curriculum as an interactive, contextualized process: case studies of seven ESOL teachers. *Language Teaching Research*, 13(4), 337-365.
- Wiliam, D. (2006). Formative assessment: Getting the right focus. *Educational Assessment*, 11(3 & 4), 283-289.
- Wiliam, D., & Black, P. (1996). Meanings and consequences: A basis for distinguishing formative and summative functions of assessment? *British Educational Research Journal*, 22(5), 537-548.
- Wiliam, D., Lee, C., Harrison, C., & Black, P. (2004). Teachers developing assessment for learning: impact on student achievement. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 11(1), 49 - 65.
- Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: adventures in theory and method* (2nd ed.). Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Wilson, M., & Sloane, K. (2000). From principles to practice: An embedded assessment system. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 13(2), 181 - 208.
- Wingate, U. (2007). A framework for transition: Supporting 'learning to learn' in higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 61(3), 391-405. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2007.00361.x
- Wong, B. E. (2007). Acquisition of the English definite article by Chinese and Malay ESL learners. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 4(2), 210-234.
- Woods, D. (1996). *Teacher cognition in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- www.pkpim.net. (2005, 4 September 2007). Sejarah pendidikan di Malaysia. from www.pkpim.net/modules/news/print.php?storyid=95
- www.portal.mohe.gov.my. (2010a). Admission to public university: e-guide. Retrieved 15 October 2010, 2010, from http://www.portal.mohe.gov.my/portal/page/portal/ExtPortal/STUDENT/GENERAL_STUDENT/Student_Admission_Public/eguide
- www.portal.mohe.gov.my. (2010b). Soalan lazim. Retrieved 2 October, 2010, from http://www.portal.mohe.gov.my/portal/page/portal/ExtPortal/MOHE_MAIN_PAGE/FAQ/JPT_Kemasukan_IPTA/6F2F957FE16B84BAE040160A92BF5188
- www.um.edu.my. (2010). *Syarat kelayakan khas program*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Universiti Malaya Retrieved from <http://www.um.edu.my/doc/File/underg/matrik.pdf>.

- www.upu.mohe.gov.my. (2010). *Syarat kemasukan ke institut pengajian tinggi awam*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Higher Education Retrieved from http://upu.mohe.gov.my/portal/arkib/1112_PEKELILING_STPM_STAM.pdf.
- Xie, X. (2008). *Interaction during teacher-fronted class time of English classes in a Chinese University*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Thesis. Victoria University. Wellington.
- Xu, Y., & Liu, Y. (2009). Teacher assessment knowledge and practice: a narrative inquiry of a Chinese college EFL teacher's experience. *TESOL Quarterly*, 43(3), 493-513. doi: 10.2307/27785031
- Yaacob, A., Nor, N. F. M., & Azman, H. (2005). Implementation of the Malaysian smart school: An investigation of teaching-learning practices and teacher-student readiness. *Internet Journal of e-Language Learning & Teaching*, 2(2), 16-25.
- Yang, M., Badger, R., & Yu, Z. (2006). A comparative study of peer and teacher feedback in a Chinese EFL writing class. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15(3), 179-200. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2006.09.004
- Yangin Eksi, G. (2012). Peer review versus teacher feedback in process writing: How effective? *International Journal of Applied Educational Studies*, 13, 33+.
- Yardley, L., & Marks, D. F. (2003). *Research methods for clinical and health psychology*. London: SAGE.
- Yasin, A. Y. M., Shaufil, W. M. H. W. M., Mukhtar, A. M., Ghani, N. I. A., & Rashid, F. (2010). The English proficiency of civil engineering students at a Malaysian polytechnic. *Asian Social Science*, 6(6), 161-170.
- Yean Tham, S. (2010). Trade in higher education services in Malaysia: Key policy challenges. *Higher Education Policy*, 23(1), 99-122.
- Kunio, Y. (2001). *Globalization and national identity*. Bangi, Malaysia: UKM.
- Zaidi. (2005). Bahasa Melayu timeline: A brief outline. Retrieved 2 September 2007, from <http://gii2.nagaokaut.ac.jp/gii/index.php?itemid=318>
- Zimmerman, B. J. (1994). Dimensions of academic self-regulation: a conceptual framework for education. In D. H. S. a. B. J. Zimmerman (Ed.), *Self-regulation of learning and performance: issues and educational applications* (pp. 3-21). Hillsdale, NJ: Earlbaum

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Document analysis protocol

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL	
<p>Research location:</p> <p>Document Title:</p> <p>Date Obtained:</p> <p>Types of Document:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Document Name2. Obtained from3. Summary of the document content4. The Use/ Importance of document for the research	<p>Document Summary</p>

1

DOCUMENT TITLE :
 DOCUMENT CONTENT :
 APPENDIX LABELLED :
 SUMMARY FILE :

CATEGORY	QUESTION	DESCRIPTION	ANALYSIS
TYPE OF DOCUMENT	1. What is the document included in this document analysis?		
PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTIC	1. What is the physical characteristic of the document?		
DATE OF THE DOCUMENT	1. When is the document collected?		
AUTHOR	1. Who prepares the document?		
AUDIENCE	1. For whom was the document prepared/written?		
CONTENT	1. What is the focus of the document? 2. How are the materials organized? 3. How is the document useful/Why is the document important?		

Appendix B: Interview schedule

Interview schedule for the ESL educators	
1.	What do you think about the current assessment approach?
2.	Do you think that assessment can enhance learning?
3.	In what ways do you think assessment can assist learning?
4.	What do you know about formative and summative assessment?
5.	What do you think about formative assessment?
6.	What do you think about summative assessment?
7.	How is writing assessed in your ESL classroom?
8.	Can you please elaborate on the tasks given to assess writing?
9.	What will be the criteria of a good writing? Could you explain further?
10.	Will the learners get feedback from the assessment task completed by them?
11.	What kind of feedback is usually given to the learners?
12.	How often are learners given feedback when completing their writing tasks?
13.	Is process writing being a part of the writing assessment?
14.	If you are given a chance to bring about changes in the writing assessment, what would they be?
15.	Do you think that the present writing assessment helps learners in developing their writing skills? Please explain.
16.	When designing writing tasks for your learners, what are the factors that you take into considerations?

BRIEFING & DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

BRIEFING

1. Introduce the tasks
2. Explain the general aim of the task
3. Give out procedures to disseminate the task
4. Go through with the teachers of the procedures
5. Give sets of tasks to be given to students

DISCUSSION

1. Get teachers feedback on the lessons and tasks used
2. Discuss any issues/problems encountered during the lesson.
3. Discuss any possible ways to improve the tasks
4. Re-confirm of any changes made with the teachers

Appendix D: Observation checklist

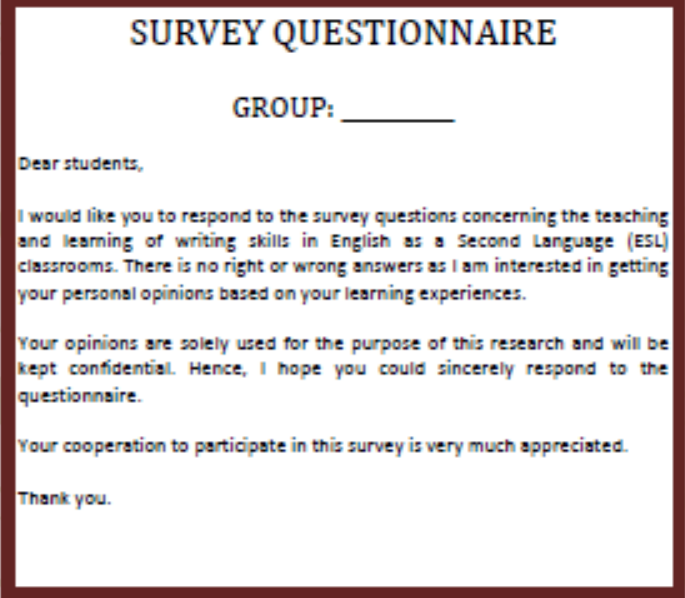
OBSERVATION CHECKLIST						
Group: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		Day: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>				
Date: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		Start: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>				
Cycle: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		End: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>				
Task: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>						
CATEGORY	FOCUS	CRITERIA	OBSERVED			NOTES
			YES	NO	NA	
Tasks & Teacher/Students Behavior	- Lesson Input	- Does teacher give input to learners? - Are the inputs relevant to the learners?	1	2	3	• What teacher does/students do? / How teacher responds/students respond?
	- Language Use	- Does teacher use TL all the times? - Does teacher use simple language that could easily be understood by learners? - Are students allowed to use other than TL in the class?	1	2	3	• What teacher does/students do? / How teacher responds/students respond?
	- Provide context	- In completing the task, does it require teachers to provide examples? - Does teacher provide relevant examples in helping students to complete the tasks?	1	2	3	• What teacher does/students do? / How teacher responds/students respond?
	- Are the examples given helped learners?		1	2	3	

1

CATEGORY	FOCUS	CRITERIA	OBSERVED			NOTES
			YES	NO	NA	
Tasks & Teacher/Students Behaviour	Activities/ Instructions	- Do the tasks set are clear for the teacher to use?	1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What teacher does/ students do? / How teacher responds/ students respond?
		- Do the tasks set are clear for students to use?	1	2	3	
		- Do the tasks allow the teacher to manage collaboration between learners(Pair, individual, active, passive)?	1	2	3	
		- Do the tasks allow flexibility for the teacher to use in the classroom?	1	2	3	
		- Do students have difficulty in understanding/ completing the tasks?	1	2	3	
		- Does any part of the tasks confuse the teacher/ students?	1	2	3	
		- Do the activities promote student-centeredness?	1	2	3	
		- Do the activities designed allow the teacher to provide immediate feedback?	1	2	3	

CATEGORY	FOCUS	CRITERIA	OBSERVED			NOTES
			YES	NO	NA	
Tasks & Teacher/Students Behaviour	- Creativity	- Do the tasks help the teacher to be creative? - Do the tasks require students' creativity?	1	2	3	• What teacher does/ students do? / How teacher responds/ students respond?
	- Motivational Aspects	- Do students respond positively to the tasks? - Are students able to relate/ respond to the tasks using their schemata/ cultural background? - Does the teacher feedback increase SS motivational level?	1	2	3	• What teacher does/ students do? / How teacher responds/ students respond?
			1	2	3	

Appendix E: Survey questionnaire



The image shows a survey questionnaire form with a title, a group identification line, and several paragraphs of text. There is a small empty box in the top right corner and a larger empty box at the bottom of the form.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

GROUP: _____

Dear students,

I would like you to respond to the survey questions concerning the teaching and learning of writing skills in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. There is no right or wrong answers as I am interested in getting your personal opinions based on your learning experiences.

Your opinions are solely used for the purpose of this research and will be kept confidential. Hence, I hope you could sincerely respond to the questionnaire.

Your cooperation to participate in this survey is very much appreciated.

Thank you.

Survey Questions on the Teaching and Learning of Writing in the ESL Classrooms

1.0 Student's Background

Please respond to the following question by writing the answers in the space provided.

- | | | | |
|------|--|---|--|
| 1.1 | What is your age? | : | |
| 1.2 | What is your gender? | : | |
| 1.3 | What was the name of your former school? | : | |
| 1.4 | What is your highest level of education? | : | |
| 1.5 | What grade did you score for your English language in SPM? | : | |
| 1.6 | What is your major at the current institution? | : | |
| 1.7 | What is your English level at the current institution? | : | |
| 1.8 | Where do you live? | : | |
| 1.9 | What is your father's occupation? | : | |
| 1.10 | What is your mother's occupation? | : | |

2.0 English Language Use

Please circle the appropriate response to the following questions.

Scale:
1 – YES
2 – NO

Questions		Response	
2.1	Is English your second language?	1	2
2.2	Do you speak English at home?	1	2
2.3	Do you use English language to communicate with your peers outside classrooms?	1	2
2.4	Do you always use English during the English lessons to communicate with your friends?	1	2
2.5	Do you always use English to communicate with your teachers?	1	2
2.6	Do you use English in any other classes apart from the English proficiency class?	1	2

Questions		Response	
2.7	Do you use other languages than English in during group discussions in your English lessons? (If your answer is YES, please go to item 2.10)	1	2
2.8	Do you use your first language when you speak to your teacher? (If your answer is YES, please go to item 2.10)	1	2
2.9	Are you allowed to use first language in your English class?	1	2
2.10	Please provide your reasons for using other languages than English either in your group discussions or when you speak to your teacher: _____		

Please circle the appropriate response to the following questions.

Scale:

1 - Always

2 - Sometimes

3 - Rarely

4 - Never

Questions		Response			
2.11	How often do you speak English with your family members?	1	2	3	4
2.12	How often do you use English language to communicate with your peers?	1	2	3	4
2.13	How often do you communicate in English in your class?	1	2	3	4
2.14	How often do you use your first language when you speak to your teacher?	1	2	3	4
2.15	How often do you read English reading materials?	1	2	3	4
2.16	How often do you use English reading materials for your references?	1	2	3	4

2

3.0 Attitudes & Interest in English Language Learning

Please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree to the following statements.

Scale:

- 1 – Strongly Agree
- 2 – Agree
- 3 – Neither Agree NOR Disagree
- 4 – Disagree
- 5 – Strongly Disagree

Statements		Response				
3.1	I like to learn English language.	1	2	3	4	5
3.2	I like reading English materials to improve my English language mastery.	1	2	3	4	5
3.3	I am ready to put all my effort in learning English as a second language.	1	2	3	4	5
3.4	I feel that learning a second language is as important as learning my first language.	1	2	3	4	5
3.5	I find that learning English is interesting and fun.	1	2	3	4	5
3.6	I find learning English as a second language is too difficult.	1	2	3	4	5
3.7	I learn English because it is part of the course requirements.	1	2	3	4	5
3.8	I feel bored when it comes to English lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
3.9	I think I can still survive without English.	1	2	3	4	5
3.10	I feel that English texts really slow my reading.	1	2	3	4	5
3.11	I am not motivated enough to learn English language.	1	2	3	4	5
3.12	I want to learn English so that I can easily communicate with others who do not speak my language.	1	2	3	4	5
3.13	I think learning English should not be made compulsory to all students.	1	2	3	4	5
3.14	I can still communicate with others using my first language.	1	2	3	4	5

4.0 English Language Learning Experience

Please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree to the following statements.

Scale:

- 1 – Strongly Agree
- 2 – Agree
- 3 – Neither Agree NOR Disagree
- 4 – Disagree
- 5 – Strongly Disagree

Statements		Response				
4.1	There are many interesting activities carried out during English lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	Teacher usually uses activities in the textbook.	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I am always given a chance to participate in the classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5
4.4	Activities in the English language classroom are usually conducted in groups.	1	2	3	4	5
4.5	I see teacher as the authority in the class that cannot be questioned.	1	2	3	4	5
4.6	I can freely give out my ideas to the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
4.7	During the lessons, I am allowed to ask questions.	1	2	3	4	5
4.8	I am given enough time to respond to the tasks given in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
4.9	I am allowed to use L1 to express my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
4.10	Teacher always give immediate feedback to any questions asked.	1	2	3	4	5
4.11	Teacher motivates the students by giving positive remarks/response and praises.	1	2	3	4	5
4.12	I have difficulty to follow the lessons taught.	1	2	3	4	5
4.13	The feedback/responses given are usually helpful in helping me to master certain skills.	1	2	3	4	5
4.14	Individual responses are always encouraged compared to choral responses.	1	2	3	4	5
4.15	Reading, writing, listening, speaking are taught as a separate skills.	1	2	3	4	5

5.0 Previous Experience in L2 Writing Classrooms

Please indicate to what extents do you agree or disagree to the following statements.

Scale:

- 1 – Strongly Agree
- 2 – Agree
- 3 – Neither Agree NOR Disagree
- 4 – Disagree
- 5 – Strongly Disagree

Statements		Response				
5.1	I was taught on how to write good sentences.	1	2	3	4	5
5.2	I was taught on how to organize ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
5.3	I was asked to draw an outline before writing a draft.	1	2	3	4	5
5.4	I learned to write, most of the time, from a group discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
5.5	I was made aware of the grammar use in the writing class.	1	2	3	4	5
5.6	My written work was marked and given to me immediately.	1	2	3	4	5
5.7	I was given enough practice to improve my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
5.8	I was free to choose the topics to write.	1	2	3	4	5
5.9	Most of the tasks given were to be completed individually.	1	2	3	4	5
5.10	Teacher tried very hard to help me with my writing by giving input in the area that I was weak at.	1	2	3	4	5
5.11	Activities for writing were given to me in a sequence order – brainstorming, outlining, drafting, reviewing, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
5.12	When I had difficulty in writing, teacher would ask my peers to help me.	1	2	3	4	5
5.13	I was taught on how to review my essay.	1	2	3	4	5
5.14	I enjoyed my writing classes.	1	2	3	4	5

6.0 Perceptions on the intervention

Please indicate to what extents do you agree or disagree to the following statements.

Scale:

- 1 – Strongly Agree
- 2 – Agree
- 3 – Neither Agree NOR Disagree
- 4 – Disagree
- 5 – Strongly Disagree

Statements		Response				
6.1	I enjoy my writing classes.	1	2	3	4	5
6.2	There are various activities given in the writing class.	1	2	3	4	5
6.3	I am given ample practices to further improve my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
6.4	The tasks given during English lessons are really helpful towards helping me to write better.	1	2	3	4	5
6.5	The different outlines given have made me aware of different formats for writing a compare and contrast essay.	1	2	3	4	5
6.6	Model texts have helped me to understand on how compare and contrast essay is written.	1	2	3	4	5
6.7	The use of mind mapping helps me in generating and organizing my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
6.8	I like the use of Venn-diagram to generate and differentiate between ideas for compare and contrast essays.	1	2	3	4	5
6.9	Venn diagram helps me to see clearly the points/ relevant ideas for my compare and contrast essay.	1	2	3	4	5
6.10	I am given enough practice to write thesis statements.	1	2	3	4	5
6.11	I am now clear of what a good thesis statement should be.	1	2	3	4	5
6.12	The task given to me during pre-writing activities help me a lot in writing a draft for compare and contrast essay.	1	2	3	4	5

6.13	Activities for writing are given to me in a sequence order – brainstorming, outlining, drafting, reviewing, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
6.14	I do not feel that I am being evaluated whenever I complete the tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
6.15	The tasks given really help me in improving my writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
6.16	Teacher always provides positive feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
6.17	Teacher provides relevant input/feed forward to further assist me in writing.	1	2	3	4	5
6.18	The exercises on how to organize main ideas and supporting details is really useful.	1	2	3	4	5
6.19	After completing all the tasks, I now feel more confident to write an essay.	1	2	3	4	5
6.20	Peer reviewing and proofreading activities enable me to identify the characteristics of good essays.	1	2	3	4	5
6.21	The activities allow interactions between friends.	1	2	3	4	5
6.22	Whenever I have problems with my writing, teacher always guide me through.	1	2	3	4	5
6.23	I am really motivated to learn writing.	1	2	3	4	5
6.24	The video-viewing session helps in giving ideas on the topic to write.	1	2	3	4	5
6.25	Topics for writing tasks are interesting enough and easy to search on.	1	2	3	4	5
6.26	Topics for the essay allow me to relate to my background knowledge and culture.	1	2	3	4	5
6.27	The peer reviewing task allows me to share and exchange ideas with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
6.28	The self-reviewing task makes me aware of the needs to double check and makes use of the peer-review comments to improve my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
6.29	The peer-reviewing activities allow me to discuss and negotiate with my partner on the comments given.	1	2	3	4	5
6.30	After going through the writing tasks, I can now understand the steps towards writing good essays.	1	2	3	4	5

6.31	The proofreading checklist defines clearly the major areas which I have problems in.	1	2	3	4	5
6.32	The proofreading checklist helps me to apply the grammar skills that I learn in grammar lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
6.33	I am now able to organize my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
6.34	Through the peer reviewing task, I feel more confident to check my friends' essays.	1	2	3	4	5
6.35	After going through the peer reviewing and proofreading tasks, I am now confident to review my own essay.	1	2	3	4	5
6.36	The peer reviewing checklist is easy to understand and use.	1	2	3	4	5
6.37	The steps given in the proofreading checklist is clear and easy to follow.	1	2	3	4	5
6.38	Verbal response given by teacher in class really helps me with my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
6.39	Feedback given by teacher on my writing draft helps me to improve my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
6.40	Materials given for writing activities are relevant and useful.	1	2	3	4	5
6.41	The poster presentation activities really build my confidence to use English for communication.	1	2	3	4	5
6.42	I am able to get oral feedback through the group presentation activities.	1	2	3	4	5
8						

Appendix F: Follow-up interview guide

Interview Guide (Session 1)

1. Could you tell me about your writing class for the semester?
I think that it would be important to focus the teacher's attention on the semester that has just passed (not the future)
 - a. What kind of activities did your students do in learning to write?
 - b. Did you follow specific guidelines for the teaching of writing?
 - c. What was the main focus in the teaching of writing?
 - d. What do you think of your students' ESL writing ability?
2. How was feedback given to the students?
 - a. What kind of feedback did you give to your students? Why?
 - b. In what ways do you think the students gained from the feedback received?
Or, to what extent did your students' writing improve as a result of this feedback?
 - c. Did your students give each other feedback on their writing? When/ How?
 - d. What evidence do you have that such peer feedback was useful?
 - e. Do you find the students improve in their writing with the kind of feedback given? Why?
3. What is the aim of your teaching in ESL writing?
 - a. How do you find the set objectives affect your teaching approach?
 - b. In what ways has assessment influenced your teaching?
4. What changes, if any, will you make to your teaching of writing next semester?

Appendix G: Letter of invitation

Zuwati Hasim
7A Gadsby Place
Hillcrest
Hamilton
New Zealand

Date: 13 April 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,

A LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

I, Zuwati Hasim, would like to invite you to participate in my collaborative action research which will be conducted in two stages.

The first stage of data collections will involve interviews with the ESL educator participants and document analysis which will take place in April, 2008. The second stage of data collections will be conducted over a 10-week duration (beginning of July 2008 till mid October 2008, taking into considerations of public holidays and mid-term break) which involves approximately a total of thirty (30) contact hours of writing lessons.

During this 10-week period, your participation (if you so choose) will involve using and implementing the researcher-developed-intervention for writing assessment tasks, observing, discussing, reflecting on the draft of researcher-developed-intervention. This collaborative work will be used to evaluate and revise the intervention to be used in the ESL writing classroom.

The method of data collection especially observations, document analysis, and interviews will not be obtrusive in nature. In addition, the gadgets used for recording and timing will not interfere with the normal proceedings of the lesson.

For more information about this study, you may refer to the Information Sheet attached together with this letter.

If you agree to participate, please read carefully the Information Sheet together with the Consent Form before signing it. Please send the signed consent form to my address as indicated above. You will be notified on when the interview will take place. Should you have any further questions regarding the study, you are most welcome to address it to me or my supervisors at the following email address:

1. Zuwati Hasim – zh51@waikato.ac.nz/ tolkienjrr2003@yahoo.com
2. Assoc Prof Dr Beverley Bell – beebell@waikato.ac.nz
3. Dr Rosemary De Luca – deluca@waikato.ac.nz

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

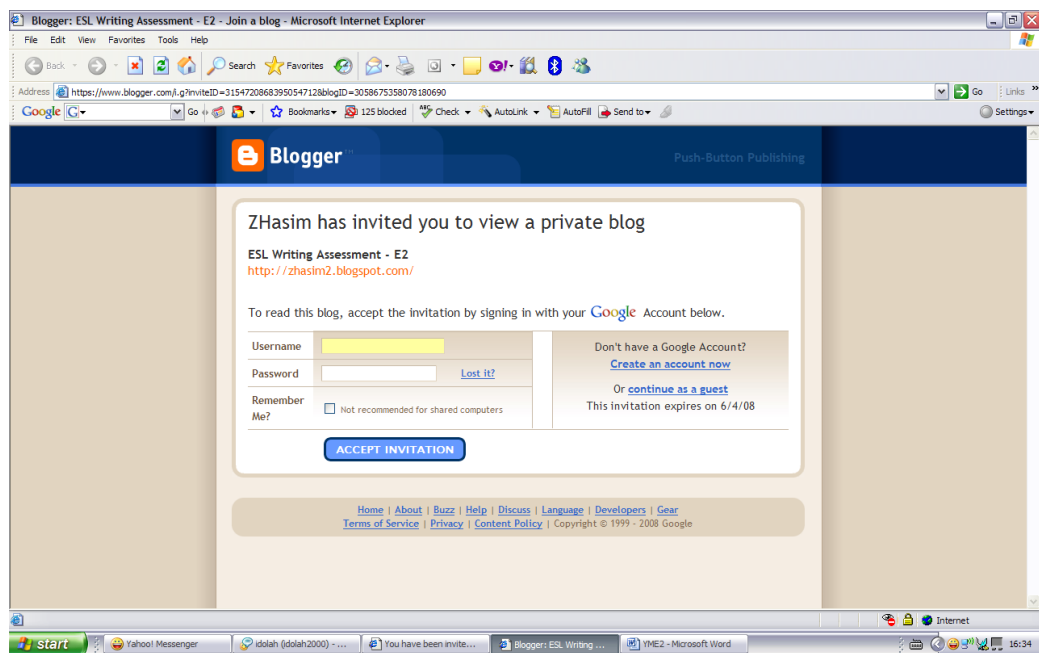
Yours sincerely

(ZUWATI HASIM)

Appendix H: Guidelines for blog access

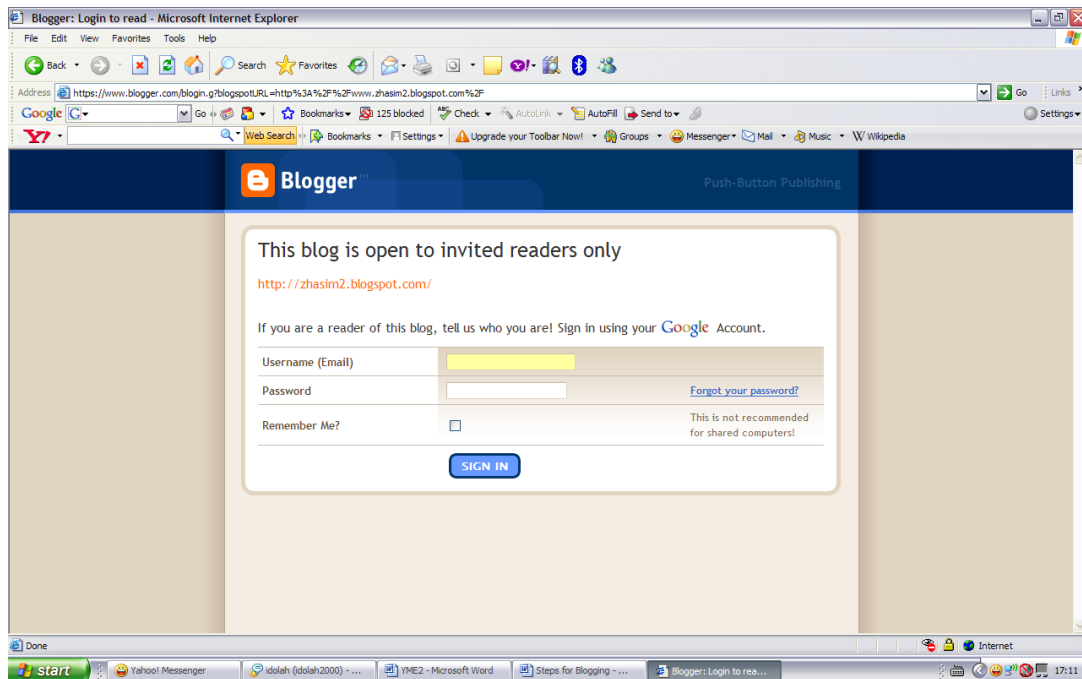
Steps for Blogging

1. Click on the link in the invitation email to the blog
2. This screen will appear:



3. Go to CREATE AN ACCOUNT NOW.
4. You need to create an account and let me know of your new account address so that I can register your GMAIL in my web blog.
5. Next, check your GMAIL, there will be a re-invitation but to your GMAIL instead of your YAHOO mail.
6. Next, go to www.zhasim2.blogspot.com

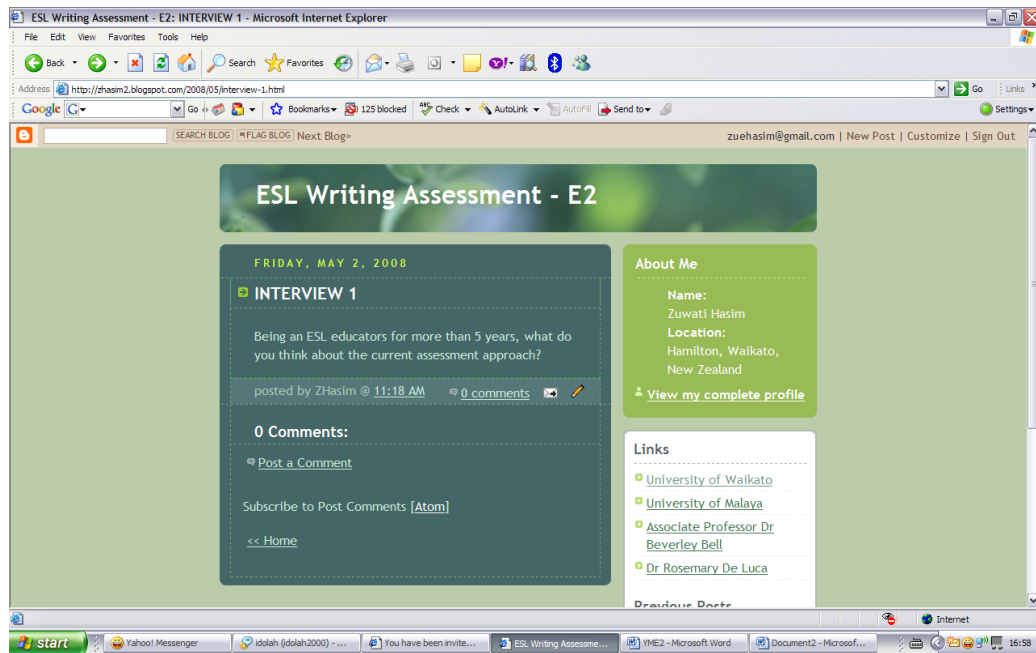
7. The log in screen as below will appear:



* Please note that this blog is only for invited readers, thus cannot be viewed by others except the researcher and the interviewee.

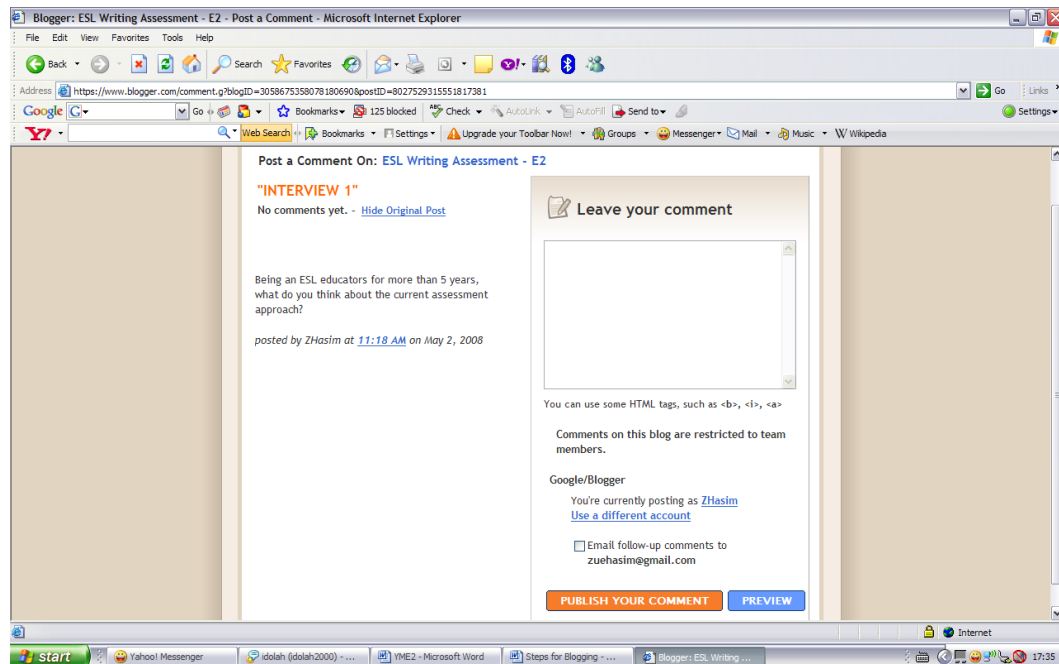
8. Log in to the web blog using your GMAIL Username & Password

9. This screen will appear:



10. Next, click on the INTERVIEW 1 button and you can respond to the question by clicking the POST A COMMENT button.

11. When you click the POST A COMMENT button you will see the screen below:



12. Then, type your responses in the LEAVE YOUR COMMENT box.
13. Please tick the box with “email follow-up comments to zuehasim@gmail.com”. Then click on PUBLISH YOUR COMMENT button.
14. Before you logout, just check whether your comments are already posted in the web blog. If you encounter any problems, please email me at:

zuehasim@gmail.com

OR

zh51@waikato.ac.nz

15. Thank you for your patience and cooperation!

Appendix I: Course schedule/ scheme of work

SEMESTER 1, 2008/2009
Scheme of Work

WEEK	WRITING	READING	LISTENING / SPEAKING	GRAMMAR
1 16/6-20/6	Better Sentence Variety *Supplementary	Chapter 1	Chapter 1 Presentation Introduction to Presentation Skill (Content)	Review : Tenses
2 23/6-27/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay structure (An introduction to Writing Essays) Paragraph Structure (Topic sentence, Body, Concluding sentence) Steps in Writing an Essay 	Chapter 2	Chapter 2 Presentation Introduction to Presentation Skill (verbal and nonverbal)	Unit 9 Reflexive and Reciprocal Pronouns Unit 10 Phrasal Verbs
3 30/6-4/7	What is compare and contrast Essay Chapter 6 (pg 135-160) CC essay Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point by Point only Introduction Thesis Statement Balanced Development Cohesion Conclusion 	Chapter 3	Chapter 3 Individual Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution of readers to students Discuss presentation for Readers 	Unit 24 Adjectives : Comparative & Equatives Unit 25 Adjectives : Superlatives
4 7/7-11/7	Language Focus Chapter 6 (pg 161-164) Transitional Expression *supplementary	Chapter 4	Chapter 4	Unit 33 Preferences : Prefer, Would prefer, Would rather Unit 34 Necessity : Have (Got) to, Don't Have to, Must, Must not, Can't

5 14/7- 18/7	Sample essay & writing practice	Chapter 5	Chapter 5	Unit 36 Future Possibility: May, Might, Could Unit 37 Conclusions : Must, Have (Got) To, May, Might, Could, Can't
6 21/7- 25/7	Peer editing Exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce peer edit check list *teachers discuss with students on basic editing	Chapter 6	Chapter 6 Individual Presentation (readers)	Unit 18 Indefinite Past Unit 19 Present Perfect & Simple Past Tense
7 28/7- 1/8	Sentence Problems *supplementary	Mid-semester Practice Paper	Chapter 7 Individual Presentation (readers)	Revision for Mid sem exam
2/8	MID-SEM EXAM			
4/8 – 10/8	MID – BREAK			
8 11/8- 15/8	Timed-In-Class Practice Essay Essay topic given <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline 1st draft Final Draft 	Chapter 7	Chapter 10	Unit 16 Present Perfect: Since and For Unit 17 Present Perfect: Already and Yet
9 18/8- 22/8	Additional Grammar practice	Chapter 8	Listening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice Paper 	Unit 20 Present Perfect Progressive & Present Perfect

10 25/8-29/8	Assessed Timed-In-Class-Essay Essay topic given • Outline • 1 st draft • Final Draft	Chapter 9	Listening • <i>Listening Test</i> Speaking • Practice role play	Unit 26 Adverbs : Equatives, Comparatives, Superlatives
11 1/9-5/9	Additional Grammar Practice pg 261 *Discuss the assessed topic with students	Chapter 10	Role Play	Unit 32 Gerunds and Infinitives
12 8/9-12/9	Supplementary Activities	Supplementary Material	Role Play	Unit 30 Infinitives of Purpose Unit 31 Infinitives with Too and Enough
13 15/9-19/9	Practice Paper (Final) *Submission of marks	Practice Paper (Final Exam) *Submission of marks	Revision *Submission of marks	Revision
14 22/9-26/9	Revision	Revision	Revision	Revision
29/9 – 8/10	REVISION PERIOD			
9/10 – 19/10	FINAL EXAMINATION			

TEXTBOOKS

Reading : Interactions 2 – Silver Edition, McGraw Hill
 Listening & Speaking : Interactions 2 – Silver Edition, McGraw Hill
 Writing : Engaging Writing, Longman
 Grammar : Focus on grammar 3, Longman

Appendix J: Course outline

UNIVERSITY, MALAYSIA

Department	English Language Division
Programme	English Language
Course Title	English Language Level Four
Course Code	LCM4000 (not actual code)
Status	Required course
Level	Level 4
Credit Hours	-
Contact Hours	LC 0400 (20 contact hrs) LCM4000 (16 contact hrs)
Pre-requisites (if any)	LC 0300 / LCM3000 or by EPT placement
Teaching Methodology	Individual, pair-work, group work.
Method of Evaluation	Course work: 60% Final Examination: 40%
Instructors(s)	To be determined
Semester Offered	Every semester
Course Objectives	<p>GRAMMAR At the end of the course, students will be able to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. know the grammar items (Appendix 1) 2. understand the grammar items (Appendix 1) 3. apply the knowledge of the grammar items (Appendix 1) to construct meaning 4. analyze grammatical errors <p>WRITING At the end of this course, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. understand the format of comparison and contrast essays 2. apply skills and strategies in writing 3. analyze information 4. synthesize information 5. evaluate their writing progress <p>READING At the end of the course, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. comprehend reading texts 2. apply a range of skills and strategies in reading 3. analyze information from reading texts 4. evaluate their progress

	<p>SPEAKING At the end of the course, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. apply communication skills 2. analyze and synthesize information and ideas for their presentation <p>LISTENING At the end of the course, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. comprehend listening texts 2. apply a range of skills and strategies in listening 3. analyse listening texts
Learning Outcomes	<p>GRAMMAR At the end of the course, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. know the grammar items (Appendix 1) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 recognize the grammar conventions 2. comprehend the grammar items (Appendix 1) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 explain the grammar conventions 3. apply the knowledge of the grammar items (Appendix 1) in constructing meaning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 construct grammatically correct sentences 4. analyze grammatical errors <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 identify, analyze and correct grammatical errors <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1.1 discover errors in sentences 4.1.2 correct errors in sentences <p>WRITING At the end of this course, the students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. understand the format of comparison and contrast essays <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 distinguish different formats of compare and contrast essays 2. apply skills and strategies in writing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 construct writing by generating and organizing ideas and by considering purpose and audience 2.2 produce a thesis statement 2.3 prepare drafts 2.4 modify writing at the word, sentence, and paragraph levels using feedback from others 3. analyze information <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 distinguish strong from weak thesis statements 4. synthesize information <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 categorize ideas 4.2 compile information

	<p>5. evaluate their writing progress</p> <p>5.1 set goals</p> <p>5.2 evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their writing</p> <p>5.3 revise and rewrite</p> <p>READING</p> <p>At the end of this course, the students will be able to:</p> <p>1. comprehend reading texts</p> <p>predict and describe connections between materials and their own knowledge</p> <p>distinguish main ideas from supporting details</p> <p>interpret and provide responses to texts</p> <p>infer information from texts</p> <p>2. apply a range of skills and strategies in reading</p> <p>use knowledge of the language to understand texts</p> <p>relate organizational features to comprehend texts</p> <p>apply contextual clues</p> <p>3. analyze reading materials</p> <p>relate texts to issues</p> <p>transfer information from linear to non-linear texts</p> <p>4. evaluate their progress</p> <p>identify strategies to aid reading and monitor their own progress</p> <p>SPEAKING</p> <p>At the end of this course, the students will be able to:</p> <p>1. apply communication skills</p> <p>1.1 demonstrate the use of stress and intonation to convey meaning</p> <p>1.2 discover the tendency for sounds to assimilate in connected speech and be able to use assimilation and elision in speech</p> <p>1.3 demonstrate presentation skills</p> <p>1.4 distinguish formal from informal speech</p> <p>1.5 apply a variety of speaking functions</p> <p>2. analyze and synthesize information and ideas for their presentation</p> <p>2.1 outline and combine information and ideas</p> <p>LISTENING</p> <p>At the end of this course, the students will be able to:</p> <p>1. comprehend listening texts</p> <p>comprehend lectures</p> <p>identify discourse markers</p>
--	---

	<p>2. apply a range of skills and strategies in listening 2.1 predict content 2.2 distinguish main ideas from supporting details</p> <p>3. analyse listening texts 3.1 listen for details 3.2 infer meaning from the speaker's tone 3.3 distinguish fact from opinion</p>	
Course Synopsis	The LCM4000/LC 0400 course is an integration of all four skills-Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Learners are to take an active role in learning the language. This course aims to guide learners in the language acquisition process one step at a time by providing input and giving them ample opportunity to practice.	
Course Outlines		
Weeks	Topics	State Chapters of the textbook /reference materials on each of the topic covered in each week.
References		Interactions 2. 2003. Integrated Skills Edition (Intermediate) McGraw Hill. New York
Proposed Start Date (Semester)		Semester 1, 2006/07
Batch of Students to be Affected		Semester 1, 2006/07

Appendix K: In-class timed essay procedure

<p>DOCUMENT TITLE : Timed In-Class Essay DOCUMENT CONTENT : Timed In-Class Essay Information APPENDIX LABELLED : Appendix B SUMMARY FILE : E:\DProt\DP_InClassTimedEssay_Analysis.doc</p>			
CATEGORY	QUESTION	DESCRIPTION	ANALYSIS
TYPE OF DOCUMENT	1. What is the document included in this document analysis?	Timed In-Class Essay Procedure	The Timed In-Class Essay document elaborates on the procedures that teachers have to administer in the class as part of the Writing assessment (CMA).
PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTIC	1. What is the physical characteristic of the document?	Printed piece of material in an A4 size.	The information for the timed in-class essay is outlined on one page of A4 paper.
DATE OF THE DOCUMENT	1. When is the document produced?	A term before Semester 1, 2008/2009	This document was used in the previous Semester and will be used for the current semester. The document was obtained from the LEM4013 Course Coordinator on the 18 th of June 2008 who is also the person who always prepares and keeps the document.
AUTHOR	1. Who prepares the document?	LEM4103 Course Coordinator	=
AUDIENCE	1. For whom was the document prepared/ written?	The document is prepared for the LEM4013 Writing teachers	This document is given to the LEM4013 Writing teachers only as to guide them with the procedures in carrying out the timed in-class essay.

PROCEDURE			
<p>1. What is the duration given for timed in-class essay?</p> <p>2. Where will the assessment take place?</p> <p>3. Is there any group work specified?</p> <p>4. How is the timed in-class essay conducted?</p>	<p>3 Writing class meetings, 3 hours for each meeting</p> <p>In-class: teachers have to make sure that both drafts are written in class and no essays should be brought out of the classroom.</p> <p>No</p> <p>Meeting 1 (3hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic is given to the class • Students to produce outline and write essay • Students to submit their outline and first draft at the end of the class <p>Meeting 2 (3hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st drafts and essay outlines are return to students 	<p>Timed In-Class essay is administered by the LEM4013 writing teachers during the writing class. Three periods of three hours each are taken for the purpose of this.</p> <p>During the first meeting, students are given a topic for them to write on. Students are required to come up with an outline followed by an essay. This has to be done in class. At the end of the class, students have to submit their work that comprises of the essay outline and the first draft.</p> <p>Once the essays are collected, teachers are to mark the students' first drafts by using abbreviations to indicate the mistakes that the students made in their writings. For example, teachers are asked to mark Sp if there is a spelling error, T to indicate errors in the tenses, and SS to show errors in sentence structure. Apart from that, teachers are to provide comments on the content, organization and the length of the essay.</p> <p>Then, in the next meeting teachers are to return all the drafts and the outlines to the respective students. During this second meeting, teachers are required to discuss generally on the common errors that the students have made. In this session as well, teachers have to conduct a one-to-one consultation sessions to provide comments for individual students. When the consultation is completed, teachers will collect all the outlines and the drafts and to make sure that no one will bring out the outlines and the draft outside the class. This is probably to control the originality of the students' essays.</p> <p>Students will meet again for the third time for the purpose of completing their timed in-class essay. In this meeting, teachers are to return the outlines and the first drafts to the students. Based on the comments given on their essay in the</p>	

E:\DP\rot\DP InClassTime\essay Analysis.doc

Page 2 of 4

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher makes discussions on common errors Teacher conducts consultation sessions Teacher collects all the outlines and the drafts <p>Meeting 3 (3hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher returns the first draft sets to the students Students are to write their final drafts Students are to submit their outlines+first drafts+final drafts at the end of the class. 	<p>previous meeting, the students are to write their final drafts. Once the final drafts are completed, they are to return all the sets to their writing teachers which include: the outline, the first draft, and the final draft.</p> <p>Teachers will then have to mark and give grades accordingly based on the standard marking scheme provided by the course coordinator.</p> <p>The procedures designed for the timed in-class essay somehow have some limitations in which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Limited time is given and student do not have ample practice; It is expected that students could progress by only having one essay comments and a discussion; Topic is given to the learners and is a must for them not to do the essay outside class, this restrict the students from getting resources for their writing; Having the fact that there are about 20-30 students per class, teachers have limited time to discuss in detail of the errors made. It does not indicate that students could work in groups or in pairs; what is understood from the procedure is that students are to work on their own. Input is given based on the common mistakes made by the students in their writings. No peer review is involved; hence it is again assumed that students are responsible for their own learning.
	5. How is the writing monitored?	<p>Teacher is to mark the first drafts (collected in the 1st meeting) after class by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> using symbols to indicate errors in 	

		<p>students writing. For example: Sp for Spelling; T for Tense; SS for Sentence Structure, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide comments on content and organization - Check the length of the essay. <p>Using a standard essay marking scheme</p> <p>General written comments are given on the students writing</p> <p>Discussion session</p> <p>Consultation: One-to-one</p>	
	<p>6. How is the writing assessed?</p> <p>7. What form of feedback given to the students?</p>		

Appendix L: Marking scheme

LCM4000
ESSAY MARKING SCHEME

SKILL AREA	CRITERIA		
CONTENT	Excellent to very Good : knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of topic • relevant to assigned topic.	4.0-5.0	5 marks
	Good to Average : some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of topic • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail.	2.5-3.5	
	Fair to Poor : limited knowledge of subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic.	1.0-2.0	
	Very Poor : does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • Or not enough to evaluate.	0-0.5	
ORGANIZATION	Excellent to Very Good : fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive	4.0-5.0	5 marks
	Good to Average : somewhat choppy • loosely organized but supporting details stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing	2.5-3.5	
	Fair to Poor : non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development	1.0-2.0	
	Very Poor : does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate	0-0.5	
VOCABULARY	Excellent to Very Good : sophisticated range • effective word/idiom choice and usage • word form mastery • appropriate register	4.0-5.0	5 marks
	Good to Average : adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice usage <i>but meaning not obscured</i>	2.5-3.5	
	Fair to Poor : limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice usage • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>	1.0-2.0	
	Very Poor : essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate	0-0.5	

LANGUAGE USE	Excellent to Very Good : effective complex constructions •few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions	6.5-8.0	8 marks
	Good to Average : effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions <i>but meaning seldom obscured</i>	4.0-6.0	
	Fair to Poor : major problems in simple/complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>	1.5-3.5	
	Very Poor : virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate	0.5-1.0	
MECHANICS	Excellent to Very Good : demonstrates mastery of conventions •few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing	1.75 - 2	2 marks
	Good to Average : occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing <i>but meaning not obscured</i>	1-1.5	
	Fair to Poor : frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>	0.5-0.75	
	Very Poor : no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate	0-0.25	

Model Text 1

Consuming Fresh Foods Instead of Canned Foods

Eating is an activity that we as humans do at least two times a day. We live in a world where the variety of food is immense, and we are responsible for what we eat. We decide what we are about to eat and how it will affect our bodies. The purpose of this essay is to compare and contrast the differences between eating fresh foods instead of canned foods. The three main differences are flavour, health benefits, and cost.

The most notable difference between these two kinds of foods is their flavour. Fresh foods have great flavour and taste because they keep all their natural conditions. Canned foods however, lack a lot of its flavour characteristics because there are some other chemical products added to the natural foods. It is logical that the fresh foods will have a greater taste and flavour when consumed just because of the time in which they have been prepared.

Comparing both types of foods we notice another difference. There is a health factor that affects both of them. Canned foods lose some of the original fresh food nutrients when stored, and also it has to be tinned with many conservatives and chemical factors that prolong the shelf life and apparent freshness of the food but could also become toxic if consumed too often.

Yet another difference between these two types of foods is the cost. Canned foods are much more expensive than fresh foods. Here the benefit of buying tinned foods is that they are easier to find, for example, in a supermarket instead of the market like the fresh foods, and they require less work to prepare than fresh foods, just open and serve.

Here are the main three differences between buying fresh foods and buying canned foods. As we can see it comes down to a personal choice, based on the time each person has, the money and the importance he/she gives to his/her nutrition and health. Therefore it is important that you consider your possibilities and choose the best type of foods for your convenience and lifestyle.

Source: http://www.eslbee.com/contrast_eating_fresh_or_canned_foods.htm

Model Text 2

Contrast Between Backpacking or Staying in Hotels

Traveling is one of the favorite hobbies almost all people have. There are several ways for traveling around the world, and they all include some good things and some bad things. Backpacking and staying in hotels are two of the most common ways of traveling, that's why they are used by most people. The major differences that could be discussed between these two ways of traveling are the costs, the safety of the staying, and the availability of plans.

Backpacking has been used by teenagers for a long time, and it has become really famous among young people who don't have a lot of money for traveling. By backpacking people could save a lot of money and travel with less money than what they would need for paying a hotel. As the travelers will need to sleep in a hostel, there will always be the issue of insecurity, as any kind of people could enter and sleep in a hostel. Hostels are not always available as there are a lot of people who use them, so change of plans will always be a possibility in this way of traveling. People who rely on backpacking for their trips should always have a backup plan.

Hotels are one of the most comfortable ways of traveling, but only if you have enough money. This way of traveling is mostly used by families and people who are wealthy enough to pay for good hotels. By staying at a hotel people will spend more money than they would spend in a hostel; of course a hotel will provide a high level of security to the traveler. To stay at most hotels, you need reservations, and once you have them you can rely on a place to sleep every night. In this way of traveling no backup plan is needed.

The two possibilities discussed above are really good; everything depends on the economic possibilities of every person. Personally I recommend staying at hotels even if they do not have an excellent quality because the services you get in exchange for your money could be the difference between having a good trip or a perfect mess.

Source: http://www.eslbee.com/contrast_backpacking_or_staying_in_hotels.htm

Appendix N: Researcher developed peer-review checklist

PEER / SELF REVIEW CHECKLIST						
Writer ID : _____		Group : _____				
Reviewer ID : _____		Date : _____				
Category	Peer Response		Criteria	Self-Response		Category
	YES	NO		YES	NO	
Purpose & Ideas			1. This essay meets the purpose (compare/contrast).			Purpose & Ideas
			2. 3 main ideas provided are relevant to the topic.			
			3. There is no repetition of ideas.			
			4. Ideas given are logical and original.			
			1. The essay correctly follows a point-by-point format/ block format (circle one that is appropriate).			
Organization & Paragraph Development			2. Introduction paragraph contains a clear thesis statement.			Organization & Paragraph Development
			3. Three main ideas are clearly stated in the thesis statement.			
			4. Thesis statement indicates the purpose of the essay.			
			5. Each body paragraph has its own topic sentence.			
			6. Only one main idea is stated in each topic sentence.			
			7. Topic sentences are clearly written.			
			8. Only one main idea is discussed in each body paragraph.			

Peer/ Self Review Checklist 1/3

Category	Peer Response		Criteria	Self-Response		Category
	YES	NO		YES	NO	
Organization & Paragraph Development			9. The ideas for body paragraphs are appropriately arranged according to the sequence made in the thesis statement.			Organization & Paragraph Development
			10. At least two relevant supporting details are given to elaborate on each main idea.			
			11. Supporting details provided are logical and does not confuse readers.			
			12. There are no redundant ideas in and between the body paragraphs.			
			13. Each body paragraph ends with a concluding sentence.			
Language Use & Flow			14. Conclusion paragraph is clearly written.			Language Use & Flow
			15. There is no insertion of new ideas in the concluding paragraph.			
			1. Correct cohesive devices are used that makes the essay run smoothly.			
			2. Words are appropriately used.			
			3. Adequate use of vocabulary.			
Language Use & Flow			4. Display correct use of subject-verb-agreement.			Language Use & Flow
			5. Display correct use of tenses.			
			6. Sentences are complete and there are no run-on sentences.			
			7. The essay is easy to read and readers can follow the sequence of ideas well.			

Peer / Self Review Checklist: 2/3

Category	Peer Response		Criteria	Self-Response		Category
	YES	NO		YES	NO	
Mechanics			1. Paragraphs have no errors in punctuation.			Mechanics
			2. Correct place of capitalization			
			3. No spelling mistakes			

Teacher's Comment:

Appendix O: Band marking scheme

ESSAY WRITING RUBRIC				
Category	Band Indicator			Band Score
	3 Excellent	2 Good	1 Poor	
Purpose & Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent knowledge of the subject Ideas are very relevant Substantial supporting details are given Thorough development of topic Very relevant to the purpose of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good knowledge of the subject Some ideas are relevant Adequate supporting details are given Good development of topic Somewhat relevant to the purpose of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited knowledge of the subject Ideas are mostly not relevant Lack of supporting details given Limited development of topic Not relevant to the purpose of writing 	
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very appropriate use of compare and contrast format Very strong consistency of organization in presenting ideas Ideas are very appropriately arranged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate use of compare and contrast format Some consistency of organization in presenting ideas Ideas are appropriately arranged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate use of compare and contrast format Lack of consistency of organization in presenting ideas Ideas are poorly arranged 	
Paragraph Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very clear thesis statement Supporting details are absolutely logical and promote understanding All topic sentences are very well written Substantial supporting details given Concluding sentence for each paragraph is very well written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear thesis statement Supporting details are logical and somehow assist understanding Some topic sentences are appropriately written Adequate supporting details given Provide good concluding sentence for each paragraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very vague thesis statement Supporting details are not logical and does not promote understanding Topic sentences are absent Lack of supporting details given Concluding sentence for each paragraph is poorly written or does not exist 	

Essay Writing Rubric: 1/2

Category	Band Indicator			Band Score
	3 Excellent	2 Good	1 Poor	
Language Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words are extremely appropriately used No errors of subject-verb-agreement Excellent use of cohesive devices Correct use of tenses Substantial use of related vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words are mostly appropriately used Some errors of subject-verb-agreement Excellent use of cohesive devices Correct use of tenses Adequate range of related vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words are mostly inappropriately used Major errors of subject-verb-agreement Use of cohesive devices is not apparent Incorrect use of tenses is obvious Limited use of related vocabulary 	
Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are extremely relevant and very clearly written It is extremely easy to understand what the writer is trying to convey Ideas are very well sequenced Excellent use of cohesive devices to link between ideas and between paragraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are somewhat relevant and clearly written It is easy to understand what the writer is trying to convey Ideas are appropriately sequenced Good use of cohesive devices to link between ideas and between paragraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are mostly not relevant and poorly written It is difficult to understand what the writer is trying to convey Ideas are poorly sequenced Poor or inappropriate use of cohesive devices to link between ideas and between paragraphs 	
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraphs are clear from punctuation errors Correct place of capitalization Have no spelling mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraphs have some punctuation errors Some incorrect place of capitalization Have some spelling mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraphs have major punctuation errors Major problem in the place of capitalization Have major spelling mistakes 	

Essay Writing Rubric: 2/2

Appendix P: Ethics Approval

Dean's Office
School of Education
Te Kura Toi Tangata
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Phone +64 7 838 4456
Ext 8283
www.waikato.ac.nz



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Wāikato

MEMORANDUM

To: Zuwati Hasim
c.c. Associate Professor Beverley Bell
From: Dr Rosemary De Luca
School of Education Research Ethics Committee
Date: 25 February 2008
Subject: Research Ethics Approval

The School of Education Research Ethics Committee has considered your application for ethical approval for the research project:

Understanding Tertiary Educators' Perspectives on Enhancing ESL Undergraduates' Communicative Competence in Writing through Assessment

The Committee noted that proposal is well-prepared and that the web-log discussions are a very good data gathering tool.



I am pleased to advise you that your application has received ethical approval.

The Committee wishes you all the best with your research.

Dr Rosemary De Luca
Chairperson
School of Education Research Ethics Committee

I note that this application was reviewed by the full Committee. This note is necessary because Assoc. Professor Beverley Bell and I are your doctoral supervisors.

Appendix Q: Approval to conduct research in Malaysia

	<p>UNIT PERANCANG EKONOMI <i>Economic Planning Unit</i> JABATAN PERDANA MENTERI <i>Prime Minister's Department</i> BLOK B5 & B6 PUSAT PENTADBIRAN KERAJAAN PERSEKUTUAN 62502 PUTRAJAYA MALAYSIA</p>	
		<p>Telefon : 603-8888 3333 Telefax : 603-888</p>
<p>Ruj. Tuan: Your Ref.: UPE: 40/200/19/2236 Ruj. Kami: Our Ref.: Tarikh: Date: 30 March 2008</p>		
<p>Zuwati Hasim 7A Gadsby Place Hillcrest Hamilton New Zealand</p>		
<p>APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA</p>		
<p>With reference to your application dated 3 December 2007, I am pleased to inform you that your application to conduct research in Malaysia has been approved by the Research Promotion and Co-Ordination Committee, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department. The details of the approval are as follows:</p>		
<p>Researcher's name : ZUWATI BINTI HASIM Passport No. / I. C No: 740227-13-5588 Nationality : MALAYSIAN Title of Research : UNDERSTANDING TERTIARY EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON ENHANCING ESL UNDERGRADUATES' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN WRITING THROUGH ASSESSMENT"</p>		
<p>Period of Research Approved: 3 YEARS</p>		
<p>2. Please collect your Research Pass in person from the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department, Parcel B, Level 4 Block B5, Federal Government Administrative Centre, 62502 Putrajaya and bring along two (2) passport size photographs. You are also required to comply with the rules and regulations stipulated</p>		

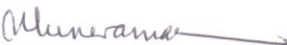
from time to time by the agencies with which you have dealings in the conduct of your research.

3. I would like to draw your attention to the undertaking signed by you that you will submit without cost to the Economic Planning Unit the following documents:

- a) A brief summary of your research findings on completion of your research and before you leave Malaysia; and
- b) Three (3) copies of your final dissertation/publication.

4. Lastly, please submit a copy of your preliminary and final report directly to the State Government where you carried out your research. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,


(MUNIRAH ABD. MANAN)
For Director General,
Macro Economic Section,
Economic Planning Unit.
E-mail: munirah@epu.gov.my
Tel: 88882809/2818/2958
Fax: 88883798

ATTENTION

This letter is only to inform you the status of your application and **cannot be used as a research pass.**

C.c:

Ketua Setiausaha,
Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi,
Aras 7, Blok E3, Parcel E,
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan,
62505 Putrajaya

(u.p: En. Mohd Azmin bin Yusoff)

(Ruj. Tuan: KPT.R.620-1/1/1Jld.5 (37))

Appendix R: Student's consent form

The Consent Form

The ESL student's Consent

I have read and understood the details of this research project. I have also had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. I understand that there will be no harm to my institution and myself as participant and that institution's and my identity will remain anonymous.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this project anytime, prior to the analysis of the data, in writing without myself, my faculty/center being affected in any way.

Having received adequate information, I agree / disagree to participate in this research.

Signature : 

Name : 

ID : 

Writing Group: 

Date : 24 June 2008

Please sign and return this form to the following address:

Zuwati Hasim
7A Gadsby Place
Hillcrest
Hamilton
New Zealand
zh51@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix S: A sample of peer-review in Cycle 1

PEER /SELF REVIEW CHECKLIST

Student Writer ID : 082231 Group : 54
 Peer Reviewer ID : 082909 Date : 29/7/2008.

Category	Criteria	Peer Response		Self-Response		Negotiated Response
		YES	NO	YES	NO	
Purpose & Ideas	1. This essay compares/contrast items clearly.	✓		✓		-This essay contrast items clearly
	2. Main Ideas are relevant to the topic.	✓		✓		- Materialistic, stylish and knowledgeable are main idea for the topic
	3. Adequate examples are given to illustrate the main ideas	✓		✓		-Example given in the essay relevant to the main ideas.
	4. Ideas and information included in the essay are only relevant to the topic and the purpose of writing.	✓		✓		- Ideas and information included in the essay related to the topic of 'women in the past and women in present'.
Organization	1. The essay correctly follows a point-by-point format.	✓		✓		-the essay correctly follows a point-by-point format.
	2. The essay correctly follows a block format					
	3. The writer follows a consistent order when making the comparison between ideas throughout the essay.	✓		✓		The essay written fluently and systematically. It is consist of main idea and elaboration in order.
	4. The ideas are appropriately arranged.	✓		✓		The main ideas are appropriately systematic throughout entire essay.

Peer/Self Review Checklist: 1/3

Category	Criteria	Peer Response		Self-Response		Negotiated Response
		YES	NO	YES	NO	
Paragraph Development	1. Introduction paragraph contains clear thesis statement.	✓		✓		At the introduction paragraph, there is state clear thesis statement which is women nowadays can be conclude into four more apply know led
	2. Details provided are logical and does not distract readers.	✓		✓		Reader can understand fluently on the logical points and the essay does not distracting
	3. Each body paragraph has its own topic sentence.	✓		✓		Each body paragraph has its own topic sentence
	4. Topic sentences are clearly written.	✓		✓		→ the most notable different is their materialistic. → the contrast of women are stylish.
	5. Adequate supporting details given related to each main idea.	✓		✓		Its supporting details given related to each main idea.
	6. Each paragraph has a concluding sentence and conclusion is well written.		✓		✓	→ there is no conclusion at each paragraph.
Language Use	1. Words are appropriately used.		✓		✓	→ there is a lots of sentence which in grammatical error. → it is reflects that women in both era 1 the sentence are complete and follows correctly on subject-verb agreement.
	2. Sentences are complete and display correct subject-verb agreement.	✓		✓		the using of cohesive devices is correct → otherwise we can conclude them unpredictable creatures.
	3. Uses correct cohesive devices.	✓		✓		The uses of tenses are correct → past continuous tense and → present perfect tense.
	4. Uses of correct tenses.					The uses of vocabularies are weakness and low.
	5. Adequate use of vocabulary.		✓		✓	

Peer/Self Review Checklist: 2/3

Category	Criteria	Peer Response		Self-Response		Negotiated Response
		YES	NO	YES	NO	
Flow	1. Ideas are relevant and written clearly.	✓		✓		the main points are relevant and fluently written.
	2. The essay is easy to read and readers can follow the sequence of ideas well.	✓		✓		readers can understand and follow the organized of essay.
	3. The use of correct and appropriate cohesive devices makes the essay run smoothly.	✓		✓		The uses of cohesive devices are understood fluently entire story/essay.
	4. It is easy to understand what the writer is trying to say.	✓		✓		The essay is easy to understand.
Mechanics	1. Paragraphs have no errors in punctuation.	✓		✓		There is no errors in punctuation.
	2. Correct place of capitalization	✓		✓		The uses of small letters and capital letters is written fluently.
	3. No spelling mistakes		✓			Wrong - woman Right - women

Teacher's Comment:

Appendix T: A sample of peer-review in Cycle 2

PEER / SELF REVIEW CHECKLIST

Writer ID : 081231 (N920)

Group : 54

Reviewer ID : 082922

Date : -

Category	Peer Response		Criteria	Self-Response		Category
	YES	NO		YES	NO	
Purpose & Ideas			1. This essay meets the purpose (compare/contrast).	/		Purpose & Ideas
			2. 3 main ideas provided are relevant to the topic.	/		
			3. There is no repetition of ideas.	/		
			4. Ideas given are logical and original .	/		
Organization & Paragraph Development			1. The essay correctly follows a point-by-point format/ block format (circle one that is appropriate).	/		Organization & Paragraph Development
			2. Introduction paragraph contains a clear thesis statement.			
			3. Three main ideas are clearly stated in the thesis statement.	/		
			4. Thesis statement indicates the purpose of the essay.	/		
			5. Each body paragraph has its own topic sentence.	/		
			6. Only one main idea is stated in each topic sentence.	/		
			7. Topic sentences are clearly written.	/		
			8. Only one main idea is discussed in each body paragraph.	/		

Peer / Self Review Checklist: 1/3

Category	Peer Response		Criteria	Self-Response		Category
	YES	NO		YES	NO	
Organization & Paragraph Development			9. The ideas for body paragraphs are appropriately arranged according to the sequence made in the thesis statement.		/	Organization & Paragraph Development
			10. At least two relevant supporting details are given to elaborate on each main idea. <i>by include examples</i>		/	
			11. Supporting details provided are logical and does not confuse readers.	/		
			12. There are no redundant ideas in and between the body paragraphs.	/		
			13. Each body paragraph ends with a concluding sentence.		/	
Language Use & Flow			14. Conclusion paragraph is clearly written. <i>Should include the restatement of the T-S.</i>		/	Language Use & Flow
			15. There is no insertion of new ideas in the concluding paragraph.	/		
			1. Correct cohesive devices are used that makes the essay run smoothly.	/		
			2. Words are appropriately used.		/	
			3. Adequate use of vocabulary. <i>(long enough)</i>		/	
			4. Display correct use of subject-verb-agreement.		/	
			5. Display correct use of tenses.		/	
			6. Sentences are complete and there are no run-on sentences.	/		
			7. The essay is easy to read and readers can follow the sequence of ideas well. <i>eg. fragment sentences</i>	/		

Peer/Self Review Checklist: 2/3

Category	Peer Response		Criteria	Self-Response		Category
	YES	NO		YES	NO	
Mechanics			1. Paragraphs have no errors in punctuation.		/	Mechanics
			2. Correct place of capitalization	/		
			3. No spelling mistakes		/	

Teacher's Comment:

Appendix U: A sample of writing outline

Topic :	The mode of communication between now and then.
I) Introduction :	Is the mode of communication now different with the mode of communication then?
Purpose of Essay :	To compare and contrast the mode of communication between now and then.
Thesis Statement :	The mode of communication between now and then differ in terms of costs, designs and functions.
II) Idea 1 : Costs	
Topic Sentence :	The most obvious difference between the mode of communication now and then is costs.
A-Item A :	The cost for communication's mode now is high because of the ^{high use of} technology.
B-Item B :	In contrast, the cost for the mode of communication in the past is low because of the absence of technology.
III) Idea 2 : Designs	
Topic Sentence :	The designs Design is another difference between the mode of communication now and then.
A-Item A :	The design for the communication equipments at present is more complex and sophisticated user-friendly.
B-Item B :	However, the design for communication equipments in the past is more complicated.
IV) Idea 3 : Functions	
Topic sentence	A-Item A : Yet another difference between these two mode of communication is their functions.

A. Item A: The function for the mode of communication now is more complex and sophisticated, suitable to our needs.

B. Item B: However, the function for the mode of communication in the past is limited.

V) Conclusion: Here are the main differences between the mode of communication now and then.

Appendix V: A sample of student's essay

Communication is the process by which people exchange information or express their thoughts and feelings. Nowadays, communication is used widely. People use telephone, radio or computers to send information. But do the mode of communications at present differ from the mode of communications in the past? If there ^{are} what are the differences? This essay is to compare and contrast the differences between the mode of communication ^{now} and ^{then}. The ~~the~~ three main differences are ^{using} telephone, ^{using} media and ^{using mails} ~~mailing~~ ^{correspondence}.

The most notable difference between the mode of communications in the past and at present is the telephone. A long time ago, ^{we} telephones were the only equipments that can be ^{used} to talk to someone. The telephones were corded which cannot bring to anywhere. As the time goes by, cellular phones are invented. During the good old days, people use to have a big and heavy ^{portable} cellular phone which functions the same as the telephones. Nowadays, people still use the telephones but the telephones are variety in designs, appearances and functions. These days, we have ^{be used to} a multifunction cellular phones ^{and} cordless telephones. These equipments can call people, can send instant messages and can be portable. ~~the~~ They are more in colours and beautiful in designs too besides light and small.

Another difference that can be noted is ~~media~~ ^{media}. There are many organizations that provide news and information for the public such as television, radio and newspapers. Newspapers in the past were black and white in colour. Besides that, they were limited in ^{www} ~~distribution~~. For radio and television, they had less broadcast and programmes. In the millenium years, newspapers have been improved in their appearance. They are more colourful and more information are provided. The radio and ^{the} television are also variety in of the appearance. They ~~also~~ have more ~~char-program~~ programmes and channels that can provide the public news and informations besides entertainment.

Last but not least, ^{the ways of} ~~mailing~~ ^{at} ~~in the~~ ^{correspondence} present are also differ from ~~the ways~~ ^{at} ~~people~~ ^{in the} ~~at~~ ^{past} ~~mail~~. At past, people used to post telegram to deliver news. This ~~at~~ would take a longer time ^{to deliver} and must be contained little information only. When people went to post a letter, it would also take a longer time and sometimes ^{delivered} ~~that~~ information ~~it~~ would not be secure. But in the present, we often use express carrier to post something to someone. This kind of delivery is not only express but also secure too. Another way of mailing is we use internet which is e-mail that ~~can~~ only takes a few seconds to post. It is also safe and secure.

In a nutshell, no matter which era we are from, we still use communication to transfer or provide or give information to someone else. The ways of communication people use nowadays are because of the invention of ^{the} new technology. People ~~in the~~ ^{at} ~~the~~ ^{past} also used the technology they had ^{one of} ~~the~~ ^{at} ~~that~~ ⁱⁿ ~~order~~ ^{to} ~~invent~~ ^{equipment} ~~s~~ to communicate. So, ~~the~~ ^{one of} ~~cause~~ ^s to have such differences between the mode of communications now and then is the technology.

Seen!

Proceed to Final Draft!